



Selection policy for junior teams

The MCC Hockey Section has a strong commitment to junior sport, in particular it actively encourages participation by girls and boys in an all-inclusive environment. Playing junior hockey provides children with many opportunities such as:

- Having fun and making new friends
- Learning the value of sportsmanship
- Developing basic skills and learning the rules of the game
- Improving physical fitness
- Developing an appreciation of teamwork and team spirit
- Introducing children to competitive sport
- Long term membership of the club
- Participation, teamwork, fairness and enjoyment.

The Section's primary aims and concerns with conducting junior competitions include that:

- All children should be given an equal opportunity to participate
- The club shall develop the skills and game conduct of the children and will provide opportunities to allow them to participate in hockey to the best of their ability
- The club shall develop players that will have a life-long love of the sport and who will be able to successfully progress to play senior hockey
- We will cater for children across all age levels and will organise ourselves to successfully field teams as entered each year.

The Club enters teams in the Under 18, Under 16, Under 14, Under 12 and Under 10 age groupings. Hockey Victoria provides competition for these age groupings (except for Under 10's) in the following categories:

- Shield Competition
- Pennant Competition
- District Competitions (based on groupings of suburbs within general regions).

In determining the grading of teams to be entered, the aim is to ensure that all teams will be competitive, however it is club policy to enter teams in as high a grade as possible with the aim of fielding Shield and Pennant teams in all age groups.

Our philosophy for the U10 competition is based on the following principles:

- having fun
- providing quality and experienced coaching
- introducing children to the enjoyment of playing hockey and competitive sport
- learning new skills and the rules of the game
- immersing children in a team sport and team environment
- making new friendships and connections
- creating feelings of accomplishment, inclusion and self-worth
- to balance first and second year players within each team, strength, experience, ability and gender
- even numbers across each team.

The Club believes that it is important that children establish new friendships and the resilience associated with this process. We therefore, do not necessarily place children who attend school together within the same team.

In the U10 age group it may be possible to accommodate a request for children to be grouped together because of friendships or families sharing transport.

Players may nominate ONE (1) friend that they would like to be in the same team with, to be noted on their registration form. In the interests of creating balanced and evenly skilled teams, the U10 Age Group Coordinator will endeavour to meet all requests.



MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB HOCKEY SECTION INC

Selection process

The selection policy is intended to balance the needs of hockey players of all abilities and the needs of the club fielding multiple teams in multiple grades. The policy should be applied equally and fairly to all players.

The selection process is a matter of judgement, involving a number of considerations. In a team sport such as hockey, selections usually involve the balance of teams and not just factors about one player.

We ask that all players and parents/carers understand that the responsibility for selection falls to volunteers giving their time to administer and coach junior hockey at the club. In age groups where we have teams in Shield, Pennant or District Grades, a selection process will be carried out.

The selectors may also take into account factors other than player performance including their:

- commitment to the team, and
- commitment to the club (for example whether the player will perform ball person duties if required by a grade).

The aim of the selection process is to match those players to the team which best suits the players' abilities but also allows the club to field balanced sides, with equal numbers between the teams where possible (the preferred number of players in any team is ideally 12-14).

Team selection for all grades will be held initially during pre-season training. All players will train within their respective age groups as a squad during pre-season while the selection process is underway. Players unavailable for training during this period should ask the coaches to consider their previous performances in a request for selection. In addition to performance at training, coaches will also consider prior season performance and achievement.

To constantly improve the selection process it is important that communication between Coaches, Team Managers, Age Level Coordinators and the Head Junior Coach be consistently maintained.

Within an age group, players will be promoted to a higher grade or relegated to a lower grade depending on their form and development.

While it will be desirable to stabilise a squad of players for the team within the first 6 matches, players may still be promoted to a higher grade or relegated to a lower grade anytime during the season. As such, all squads and teams are subject to change during the season, due to factors such as rapid improvement/development, injuries and unavailability and opportunities for players to try playing in different positions.

Initial team selection does not affect a player's chances of being moved throughout the season.

All player promotion/demotion decisions will only be communicated with the players involved following discussion of all coaches in the age group and the age group coordinator.

It is the responsibility of the coach of the team from which the player was in to explain to the player the reasons for the move. Players that have been moved will be given feedback by their new coach as to their performance and any subsequent changes will be based on the merits of their performance.

When a team is short of players, replacements must be drawn firstly from the lower teams in the same age group. This may leave the lowest team in the age group short and, in this case, replacements may be drawn from the immediately lower age group. In practice, other factors such as fixtures and venues may impact on this policy.

In all cases it will be the sole responsibility and discretion of the Head Junior Coach and team coaches to determine which players play up and these decisions will be conducted in line with this policy. Team Managers must then liaise with the Age Group Coordinators in organizing replacement players once nominated by the coaches.



MELBOURNE CRICKET CLUB HOCKEY SECTION INC

Playing in higher age groups

Players are expected to play the season in the age group that corresponds to their year of birth. For example, in any year the U12 age group would comprise players that would celebrate their 11th or 12th birthday during that year.

Our policy is for players to play in their own age group. Exemptions to this policy may be allowed in exceptional circumstances. Written requests with reasons should be directed to the Junior Chair prior to pre-season training commencing and will be considered by a Junior Section sub-committee.

Where a player normally plays in a particular age group, he or she shall not play in a higher age group unless that team is short of players for the match in question.

Relevant factors the subcommittee may consider when deciding as to whether a player can play in a higher grade include:

- Hockey skills
- Physical readiness
- Communication skills
- Understanding positional play
- Ability to play in multiple positions
- Capacity to improve
- Playing form at training and games fitness
- Safety and welfare of the player
- Commitment
- Attitude

Composition of the relevant teams and impact on both the higher and lower age group teams will be considered, including in relation to:

- Team numbers
- Skill level
- Tactical and strategic consideration
- Double up rules.

While each case shall be considered on its merits, the committee will also take into account factors including age group and team balance. It should be clear that in the event that a player is granted permission to play in a higher age group that the player would be graded against the standards of the higher age group.

The committee may consent to a player playing in a higher grade on either:

- a temporary basis to help balance teams (the player may be required to play in their normal team in that week also); or
- on a whole of season (permanent) basis or for a part of the season. However this would be very unusual and is generally not supported by the club.

The Melbourne Cricket Club Hockey Section Inc. A00514314 is affiliated with, but a separate legal entity to, the Melbourne Cricket Club.