

# U9-U17 Team Allocation and Grading

All team allocation from U9 upwards is based upon grading and is handled by the club. Where there are multiple teams and numbers allow it, there are two ways in which our grading process is used to allocate a junior player to a team.

## Method One: Full Grading

For full grading, a junior player is graded across a range of skills and given an overall grade (A, B, C, D, etc.). Players are then grouped according to their ability, A grade players being allocated to A grade teams, B grade players to B grade teams, and so on. When players are allocated to teams using full grading, no social considerations about friendships are used — only the players' ability as determined by the grading process.

## Method Two: Social Grading

For social grading, players are still graded across a range of skills and given an overall grade. However, in social grading players can nominate other players they wish to be in a team with. Importantly though, these “friends” groups are placed in teams according to the ability of the lowest graded player.

E.g. Clara, Tommy and Kayne all want social grading and all name each other on their “wish list”. Clara is graded B, Tommy is graded C, Kayne is graded D. All three are placed in a D grade team that meets Kayne's ability.

What this requires of players is that they arrive for the club's grading days prepared, and with a clear idea about whether they want Full or Social Grading. What this requires of parents is that bring their children on time, and commit to the club's grading process in good faith and without trying to impose any external constraints or influences on the grading committee.



## Opting Out of Grading

Finally, although UUSC is committed to grading its players, it is always open to players and parents to opt of grading entirely. In such circumstances, the ungraded player will still be welcome to play at the club should teams and numbers permit, but ungraded players will be placed in the lowest available grade.

# How Does Grading Work?

It may not always be clear to parents what we are looking for when we grade. At grading we use drills, small sided games and full games to examine a range of core soccer skills as defined by the FFA's National Football Curriculum. These core skills differ depending on whether players are in the U9-U12 age range or the U13-U17 age bracket.

## What Are We Looking For?

### U9-U12 - Skills Acquisition Phase

From U9 to U12 the FFA's National Football Curriculum expects to see players develop abilities in the following four areas:

- First Touch
- Running with ball
- Striking the ball
- 1 v 1

During grading, we use a standard set of soccer drills and small sided games to assess each player's ability in these four core skills. Players are given a grade for each skill, and an overall grade as determined by the grading committee as a whole. Finally, we use full sided games to look at these skills in context, and to assess teams for overall balance.

### U13-U17 Game Training Phase

From U13 to U17 the FFA's National Football Curriculum expects to see players further develop the four core abilities mentioned above, but also to attain a set of tactical and match based skills related to:

- Ball possession
- Ball recovery
- Play Transition

We still use of drills and small sided games to assess core skill development, but we make greater use of large sided games to assess the three match based skills. Players are given a grade for each skill, and an overall grade as determined by the grading committee as a whole.

## Who Does the Grading?

A grading committee of experienced coaches and players with a head of grading is appointed by the Club President to oversee grading from U9-U17. No grader will assess players in age groups where there are possible conflicts of interest.



## How Are Results Communicated?

Once the results of grading are determined and teams allocated, all players and parents will be informed by email from the club secretary. Notification will involve a group email to all the players in each team. It is essential, therefore, that the contact details given at registration are accurate.

## What About Coaches and Managers?

Only when teams have been graded and determined will calls for coaches and managers be made for each team. Frequently coaches and managers are parents of players who have volunteered to take on the role so it is expected that coaches and managers will volunteer once the results of grading have been communicated. Where there are multiple volunteers to coach a single team, volunteers will be invited to either (a) agree to coach jointly, or failing such agreement to (b) submit an email to the head of grading explaining why they are the most suitable coach for the team this year.

In some instances, especially for A grade teams in older age groups (U15-U17), the club will already have secured the involvement of well qualified coaches and managers. In such cases, the club will make it well known in advance that suitable coaches are already in place for certain teams.

## What About Appeals?

Although our grading is conducted by experienced graders examining players against a pre-existing set of criteria, we understand that there are times when players and parents will be dissatisfied with the outcome. In such circumstances parents can appeal via our formal appeal procedure. In the first instance, parents must contact the club secretary by email to notify an intent to appeal at which point the secretary will provide them with details of the formal appeals procedure.

# Other Important Information

## Can my child play-up an age group?

Although we generally discourage it, there are circumstance in which it is perfectly acceptable for players to “play up” in an older age group. U5-U8 cannot play up. U9s or older wishing to play-up will normally need to be assessed at both their own age and the higher age, and the following considerations (amongst others) made:

1. Would a player be moving from an A grade team at their own age group to play in a B or lower grade team at the higher age group? If the answer is “yes,” then playing up would generally be ruled out.
2. Would moving a player up an age group disrupt the team numbers at their own age-group, thus leaving other teams short of players? Or would it displace players inappropriately at the older age group? If the answer to either question is “yes,” then playing up would generally be ruled out.
3. Aside from grading, does the player have the physical, emotional and social maturity to fit into an older team? If the answer is “no,” then playing up would generally be ruled out.

Playing-up can be a great opportunity to challenge capable players, however, the club believes that moving players into older age groups must be handled with care.

## What if we can't attend the grading days?

We understand that sometimes players cannot attend grading, but full assessment requires attendance. Where players have played before and their abilities are well known we can offer well informed but cautious assessments. Where a player is new to the club, or whose abilities are not well known, we are more likely to grade the player “unknown” and allocate to them in a lower graded team in the first instance.

## How flexible are team numbers?

Parents sometimes wonder why we can't simply add one or two more players to a team. However, we tend to be limit the number of players as follows:

- U5-U7: Acceptable = 5 or 7; Ideal = 6 (weekend games are 4v4)
- U8-U9: Acceptable = 8; Ideal = 9 (weekend games are 7v7)
- U10-11: Acceptable = 10 or 12; Ideal = 11 (weekend games are 9v9)
- U12-U17: Acceptable = 12 or 14; Ideal = 13 (weekend games are 11v11)

The reason we suggest these limits that larger team numbers tends to have a few detrimental effects. It reduces game time for each player, it means coaches spend less time coaching and more time managing subs, and allowing large teams (especially at U5-U8) can leave other teams short of minimum required number of players.

# Club Contacts

For general enquiries, or to initiate an appeals process:

[secretary@uminaeagles.com.au](mailto:secretary@uminaeagles.com.au)

For enquiries about club policies, or procedure:

[president@uminaeagles.com.au](mailto:president@uminaeagles.com.au)

For enquiries about registration:

[registrar@uminaeagles.com.au](mailto:registrar@uminaeagles.com.au)

For enquiries about team allocations, junior competitions, coaching or managing:

[juniors@uminaeagles.com.au](mailto:juniors@uminaeagles.com.au)

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