



# EASTLAKES MCU JUNIOR FOOTBALL & NETBALL CLUB

## CLUB GUIDELINES

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Eastlakes MCU Junior Australian Football & Netball Club (JFNC) understands its responsibilities to all our players, supporters and parents. We will create an environment where all players will thrive and enjoy their sport. This will be achieved with positive input from all concerned and without an aggressive stance from parents, coaches and players.

Eastlakes MCU JFNC is dedicated to football and our community. The club aims to develop well rounded young Australians through the proper football and Netball environment, which teaches respect, humility, integrity, reward through effort and fair play at all times. This includes:

- To make all people proud of being associated with our club.
- To promote, advance, foster and cultivate the game of Australian Rules Football.
- To provide an environment for every player which allows freedom of expression, creativity and a love of football.
- To recruit, educate, retain and recognise the myriad of volunteers at all levels who provide the community club infrastructure.
- Encourage our coaches to facilitate player learning and participation with recognition that success is not measured by winning.
- Provide a football program which systematically develops in our players the key football attributes of technique, ball skill, football intelligence and a sense of fair play.
- Strive to constantly improve our Club football knowledge base through proactive policies that aim to create the best football learning environment for our players.
- To ensure that all team coaches and assistant coaches are qualified in accordance with AFL requirements or in the process of obtaining such qualifications.
- To develop and implement an integrated range of programs, which promote fun, enjoyment, skill development, social skills and the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle.
- To have all officials, players, volunteers and supporters abide by the Eastlakes MCUJFNC Code of Conduct at all times.
- To never forget that the Club exists based on Volunteers and good will to serve its players and supporters.

As a club, we acknowledge that AFL football is a skilful, competitive, contact sport and that it is often very emotive. However, football should always be fun. The Committee of Eastlakes MCU JFNC expects that all players, coaches, officials and parents act in a manner that supports the Code of Conduct and at all times provide encouraging and positive behaviours. Eastlakes MCU JFNC has a zero-tolerance policy in relation to breaches of the Code of Conduct. Further, all club members and affiliates have an obligation to adhere to and assist in the implementation and management of the code of conduct.

Players witnessed exhibiting inappropriate behaviours or breaches of the code, should be addressed by the coach/manager/official at the earliest opportunity (subbed from the ground where necessary) and counselled, positively, about what is acceptable behaviour. Repeated



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breaches may result in extended 'bench time', or in exceptional circumstances a club imposed suspension may be applied.

Parents exhibiting inappropriate behaviours or breaches of the code, should be approached by a member of the committee or other official at the earliest opportunity and reminded in a courteous manner about their (and the club's) obligations under the code of conduct and encourage positive behaviour. Concerns should be immediately communicated to the Club Officials. Depending on the severity of the breach, or repetitive nature thereof, offenders may be asked to leave the ground, and in exceptional circumstances a club imposed suspension may be applied and Wagga District Junior AFL authorities will be informed.

Parents should be aware that penalties for their breach will also be applicable to their children. Club penalties / sanctions imposed for breaches of the code shall be determined by a club sub-committee, of no less than 3 and no more than 5 persons, constituted at the discretion of the President.

Today's parents have an important role in the delivery and support of sporting activities for their own and other children. With it comes a clear responsibility to act in a constructive and encouraging manner at all times.

### **UMPIRES**

We urge parents and players to show respect to all match day umpires. Umpires are naturally a crucial component of our game and aggression or abuses toward umpires will not be tolerated. Please note that players at all levels may incur a club suspension for poor behaviour towards opposition players and umpires.

### **JUNIOR PLAYERS**

A football club is not a child minding centre. We expect all parents to help out but understand that parents have work commitments. However, we would appreciate help from parents in some form as we are a non-profit organisation where many volunteers sacrifice their time and work commitments for the benefit of children. Ultimately, it's about choice.

All parents will be required to assist with match day responsibilities and fund raising activities when required by your team manager.

The club has appointed a number of dedicated coaches, please support them. Finally, don't sit on the boundary, get involved. Children love to see their parents show interest in their football prowess.

### **INJURED PLAYERS**

Our club has qualified people in administering first aid during home games and must be allowed to treat injured players without interference from parents.



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### GRIEVANCE POLICY

Our club's policy on anyone wishing to lodge a grievance against another player, coach or manager is that they must contact the President or Secretary of the club and inform them of the issue. This must be promptly followed up in writing within three (3) days of the matter being reported. The relevant coach and/or manager, as well as the alleged offender will be asked to prepare reports in response to the grievance raised and the matter will be directed to the committee for consideration.

### PLAYING IN OLDER DIVISIONS IN POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to highlight the benefits of players playing in older age divisions not only to assist the club when player numbers may be short in a particular age division but also to develop players that are physically capable in playing in the next age division. This will also ensure coaches allow these opportunities to be spread amongst multiple players.

All players are required to play in their own age group in the first instance. However, players are encouraged by the club to help out teams in older age divisions that may not have enough numbers. At the start of each season coaches will be asked to prepare a list of players who are both physically capable and willing (including parents' consent) to play in the next age division if the need arises. These kids will be selected by their own coach in consultation with the coach/manager of the next age division to ensure the players selected each week are compatible with the needs of the team for that particular week. Players will be generally selected on a rotation basis so during the home and away season those listed players all have an opportunity to experience the next level. During final series, it will be at the two relevant coach's discretion who is selected to play.

To give an incentive to players to play up and assist older age divisions they are to average at least one quarter of the playing time per week for home and away games. During finals series it will be at the coach's discretion but players can expect to receive at least the same amount of playing time as preference would be given to the players registered in that particular age division.

Also, during the home and away season players who are playing up a grade should not be asked to play for opposition teams. If the opposition numbers need boosting their extra players should either be from their own age group or younger players that willingly volunteer to play for the opposition. It is recognised that kids playing in an older division are less likely to help out if they are required to play for the opposition each week.

It should be noted that to qualify for finals in an older age division players will need to have played at least three (3) competitive games (where a team sheet is handed to the AFL) in that age division or the one below.

#### Summary

- Kids enjoy playing in older age divisions. It helps develop their skills and confidence.
- It will also improve our player's and our team's adaptability and versatility.



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- Equitable rotations of listed players and a minimum level of playing time is critical to keep an incentive for the players to volunteer each week to help out.
- Younger players will not be requested to play for opposition teams. If they do not willingly volunteer they will play for our club and players in the relevant age division will be selected by the coach to play for the opposition.
- These guidelines are minimum standards that must be upheld to ensure an adequate incentive is provided for younger players to play whilst recognising that players in that age division get preference and the majority of game time.
- If any parent has any concerns regarding his/her son's football on game day, feel free to consult the relevant coach or team manager in the presence of the club president or coaching coordinator. **THIS MUST NOTE BE DONE ON GAME DAY BUT AT A CONVENIENT TIME IN A PRIVATE AND COURTEOUS MANNER.** You must approach the club president to arrange such a time.

### COACHING APPOINTMENTS POLICY

The Eastlakes MCUJFNC has determined to make all coaching positions vacant at the end of each season. The coaching appointment process now encourages the rotation of coaches through a two-year cycle (with the same group of kids) to encourage multiple coaches to apply for coaching positions.

The rationale being:

- Kids benefit from a number of coaches through the course of their junior career, getting a diversity of learning experiences and multiple mentors.
- It is an opportunity to tap into more of the parental resources within the club helping us to identify interested parties, making more positions available and participation more accessible.
- This will in time develop a pool of experience, with former coaches and aspiring coaches adding to the team support.

### APPOINTMENT PROCESS

At the end of each season we will call for expressions of interest in all coaching positions. Application forms are available on the club website and must be forwarded to the club president by September 30. Where more than one person is interested in a head coaching position we will discuss alternatives (i.e. assistant and/or dual coaching roles, team manager, team runner) with the applicants. If required, a three-person selection panel appointed by the committee will make an appointment, with the following considerations:

- Incumbent coach nominating for a second season receives favourable bias to capitalise on their experience and reward their effort.
- There will be no bias for third season. If a coach is appointed for a third season due to no suitable alternative applicant in the opinion of the selection panel there is an expectation the third-year coach will aim to identify and groom a potential successor during that season.



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- There will be bias towards an incumbent coach when nominating for a third season if the age group is moving from a non-competitive age group to a competitive age group (i.e. u11's to u12's).
- If an applicant has dedicated previous years in an assistant coaching, manager or game day runner roles they will be viewed favourably in selection process.
- Prospective coaches are required to nominate a suitable runner and also their thoughts on a previous coach filling this role.
- Ultimately where there are multiple applicants the coaching selection panel will still aim to appoint qualified and competent coaching staff to ensure the continued development of the players.

Aspiring and retiring coaches are encouraged to take on support roles whenever possible, building a core of experience and expertise around our teams.

### COACHING PHILOSOPHY

It is the intention of the Eastlakes MCU Junior Football and Netball Club that all coaches will conduct themselves in line with the following philosophy:

- To create a safe and fun environment for children to learn the skills of Australian Football.
- To encourage children to make new friends.
- To teach new disciplines.
- To teach them to respect their team-mates, coaches, umpires and opposition.
- To play fair at all times.
- To teach that winning is a natural thought but not the reason we coach or play.
- We as coaches treat each player equally and instil in our players that they are all important members of our club.
- Most of all, always enjoy your coaching.

### COACHING PRINCIPLES

- Fun
- Safety
- Focusing on developing skills and tactics
- Encourage kids to form new friendships
- Team-building – encouraging equality
- Winning is important but not the reason we coach
- Continually challenge ourselves
- Plan well e.g.: Training and Game Day
- Introduce game oriented skills
- Introduce decision making skills
- Adopt your own style of coaching
- Young players require a lot direction and help, i.e. pulling up mistakes
- Delegate to help out



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- Remember you may not always be right. Accept help if provided
- Encourage players to work together to achieve their aim
- Set goals – Players and coaches
- Remember the age group you are coaching. Train and prepare accordingly
- Have passion for the game but not at the expense of being able to have a laugh
- Stick with the club philosophy no matter what
- Get the kids to set team rules – with your help
- Show your players via training drills how you want them to play, not by just talking about it
- Remember children's attention spans. Don't rave on. A couple of pointers per quarter
- Try and replicate game day set ups in your training
- Vary training each week
- Think up training drills relevant to your game plan
- Don't use drills just because your old coach used them
- Ask players their view on playing and training. Maybe an anonymous survey
- **Remember they are all kids!**

### ROTATIONS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to highlight the benefits of player positional changes in AFL and align player and parental expectations with coaching practice, by establishing a consistent approach across all teams within each age group.

Non-specialisation is major attraction of AFL at the junior level. Under NSW AFL rules there are mandatory rotations of players through the three playing zones (backs, midfield and forwards) for the Auskick Rookies, Pro's and under 10 age groups. Players do begin to specialise more as they get older, but versatility remains an essential and attractive feature of AFL right through to the elite level.

To ensure all players continue to develop their skills in multiple positions the Eastlakes MCUJFNC has developed the following coaching guidelines for the respective age groups. Coaches are required to adhere to these guidelines throughout each season:

#### **Auskick Rookies – Under 10**

All players rotated through all three zones every game (minimum of one quarter of playing time per zone). This is consistent with the modified rules for these age groups.

#### **Under 11 – Under 12**

All players should be rotated through backs, midfield and forwards over a two to three game period (i.e. given an opportunity to play in different positions every few weeks)

All players must get at least three full quarters of playing time every game and an equal amount of playing time over the course of the season, numbers permitting.



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### Under 13 – Under 15

As players mature they may spend more time playing in a primary position, but they still need to play multiple positions throughout the course of the season. We know children all develop and mature differently. For example, some kids may be tall at age 12 but midsized by age 15. If experienced in a range of positions, they will adapt far more easily to this change in relative body size. The elite development programs (Giants and Swans Academy) also expect versatility from players. It is expected that coaches rotate players through a minimum of 2 playing zones (backs, midfield and forwards) in a 2 to 3 game period. COACHES PLEASE NOTE the term rotate means starting a player in the position at the beginning of a game, not moving a player into a position for the last quarter when the game has been won (i.e. you need to know as a coach how a player responds to the challenge of playing in a position when the game is in the balance not when the result has been determined).

All players are to average at least three quarters of playing time per week for home and away games if numbers permit.

All players are to average at least 2 quarters of playing time per week in finals games.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL TEAMS IN FINALS CONTENTION – The policy in regard to positional rotations for the final home and way game as well as all finals games is at the coach's discretion.

#### Summary

- Kids enjoy playing multiple positions. It maintains their interest and level of stimulation.
- Regular positional changes improve our player's and our team's adaptability and versatility. Everyone benefits.
- Equitable rotations and playing time is critical for the long-term strength of each age group, with healthy retention rates strongly correlated to equality of opportunity.
- Provides incentives for capable players to play in older divisions to assist the club and develop their football skills.
- These guidelines are minimum standards that must be upheld to ensure optimal development of every player, team and age group.
- If any parent has any concerns regarding his/her sons football on game day feel free to consult the relevant coach or team manager in the presence of the club president or coaching coordinator. THIS MUST NOT BE DONE ON GAME DAY BUT AT A CONVENIENT TIME, IN A PRIVATE & COURTEOUS MANNER. You must approach the club president to arrange such a time.