



PLAYER SELECTION – PLAYER GAME TIME

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Introduction

This policy defines what fair game time is for a player and what is required of players and coaches in determining that time.

Scope

The policy applies to coaches and players in 13's grade and above.

Background

The issue of equitable game time for players has been a recurring problem within the club. This policy seeks to address the issue by defining what is fair and reasonable game time and what is expected of players, coaches and the committee.

The policy seeks to be fair to all players: Those who excel in their skills and commitment to the game as well as those who are less skilled or less committed.

Game Time

Each player should, on average, spend at least one half of each game on the field.

The policy is based on the premise that all registered players are entitled to a fair - but not necessarily an equal - share of game time. A "fair share" is considered to be half a game but in reality will depend on the circumstances of a particular game. At any match some players may spend the entire time on the field while others play less than half of the game. Over a period of several games however, each player should get half the game time on average.

Coaches

The coach has complete direction on determining whom and when players are on the field. This policy does not seek to restrict the choices that a coach makes in fielding a team by imposing rigid rules but instead seeks to provide strong guidelines.

Many factors may be reasonably considered when selecting a side and determining how much time a particular player spends on field.

- Player commitment
- Discipline issues
- Skills balance within the side
- Player injury
- Significance of the game
- Strength of the opposition side
- Tactics employed by the opposition
- Team numbers
- Absenteeism etc.



A different mix of factors will influence what is fair for each player.

The main role of the coach is to develop the football skills of his players. A coach who makes every effort to regularly rotate the bench could not be criticised if a player does not achieve his quota of playing time by a small margin. On the other hand, if some players regularly spend long periods on the bench then the coach should be asked to justify his team selection

Implementing the policy to the letter does not necessarily address the issue of fairness because on field time does not equal playing time. A player placed in a field position where he would not touch the ball for the entire game would not get fair game time. The spirit of the policy is more important than the measured outcome.

Players

Players who display commitment and discipline deserve more playing time than those who do not. It is reasonable to expect that players in 13's and above earn their position in a team by displaying commitment to the game. Commitment means displaying a strong work ethic at training and during the game, exercising self-discipline, and working to improve skills and fitness in one's own time. Players should also be held accountable for their behaviour at training and at matches and should be regarded accordingly. Withdrawal of match time is a reasonable penalty to apply for disciplinary reasons. However, a player who lacks competence should not be deprived of game time for that reason alone. Development of a player cannot be predicted and one who is relatively unskilled at twelve could develop into a fine player a year later.

Club

In accepting a player registration the club assumes responsibility for the development of that player as a footballer. The club ensures that coaches are suitably accredited and that they abide by relevant codes of conduct and football policy. However, a further obligation in promoting football development is ensuring that player plays a fair share of the game. No one can develop as a footballer by sitting on the bench. The club must emphasise the need for coaches to accept this responsibility in the same way it does with codes of conduct and other policies.

Managing the Bench

The problem of managing the bench is crucial in implementing this policy but is problematic for coach whose primary role requires that he concentrate on the game. Ideally, someone other than the coach should manage the bench and that person could record game times for each player. Recording of game times cannot be made a mandatory requirement because it would place too great a burden on those coaches who receive scare support from parents. However, it is recommended that each team maintain game-time records where possible.

Disputes

A dispute regarding game-time can only be fairly assessed if a record of playing times is available. If a dispute does arise where records have not been kept then the records should be commenced as part of the dispute resolution. Where a player is not getting fair playing time the committee must at to ensure that the situation is corrected immediately.