

## Grading Policy 2024

This policy applies to all members, volunteers, staff and visitors of North Lakes Blues Netball Club including but not limited to, players, umpires, team officials, volunteers, parents/guardians, spectators and staff. The responsibility of implementing this Grading Policy rests with the North Lakes Blues Netball Club Executive Committee.

### Our Aim

The North Lakes Blues Netball Club Inc. is committed to ensuring team grading is conducted fairly and effectively. The aim of this policy is to ensure grading of teams is undertaken in this manner and in the best interest of the Club and players.

### What is Grading?

Grading is a process of establishing the composition of our teams to compete in the Pine Rivers Netball Association (PRNA) competition.

The aim of grading is to form teams that have a balanced group of players of similar ability levels across all playing positions. Grading will also be influenced by the number and ages of players registered with the Club each year. e.g. 16 registered players in a particular age group will form 2 teams of 8 players each, whereas 18 registered players would be 2 teams of 9 players. Grading begins when players reach the Under 10 age group.

Playing netball is a team sport that allows players to solidify current friendships but also gives them the chance to expand their friendship base with other players within the club. At different times in their netball career, they will encounter a wide variety of players. We aim to balance friendships and fun with skill and ability to ensure that all players have the best experience possible with our club. Our position on team allocations is an important part of the players development and transition to competitive netball.

### Why do we Grade our Teams?

Netball is a graded, competitive sport from the Under 10 age group with representative opportunities for players turning 12 years and older in the playing year. To ensure the best chance of success for all our teams and the greatest level of enjoyment and development for our players, it is necessary to grade players into teams with players of similar ability.

Players and parents should be aware that success for a team one year does not always ensure they will remain together the following year. Due to the nature of change, new registrations, and differing development rates of all players from season to season, player movement in or out of such teams may still occur. Players and parents are urged to be objective and reasonable in their expectations, and to encourage their children to be happy in their chosen sport no matter what team they are ultimately placed in.

### Formation of Teams

In order to form teams, the Grading Panel will conduct a 'Practical Grading'. However, grading will happen only in the event of the likelihood of more than one (1) team in an age group registered. If a Practical Grading is conducted, the Grading Panel will take into consideration the number of players registered with the Club within the age groups prior to determining the final placement of each player. Where necessary, the Coaches Evaluation and any Independent Player Assessments will also be considered. **All decisions of the Club are final.**

### **Announcement of Teams**

Once the grading process has concluded and the Grading Panel has formed teams, these teams will be announced via email. Ideally this will occur within one (1) week of the final Practical Grading session taking place.

### **Nomination of Teams to PRNA**

Following the formation of teams, the Grading Convenor will determine the appropriate grade under which to submit the team for registration with PRNA (e.g. Age Division - A or B or C grade). Whilst the Grading Convenor determines these grades based on their assessment of the team during the grading process and with the team's best interests and abilities in mind, these are only recommended grades for PRNA purposes.

Ultimately, PRNA will determine the final grading of a team and will make this decision by assessing the merits and ability of teams from our Club versus those submitted by all other clubs where necessary.

On occasions, the Grading Convenor may also recommend that an entire team be nominated for a competition of a higher or lower age group to ensure they are provided with an appropriate level of competition (e.g. a 13 year old team being nominated for a 14 year old grade)

### **Coaching Appointments**

All teams will have coaches appointed by the Club. Each coach (or their manager) will contact players/parents to organise training sessions. All coaches and managers are volunteers.

Coaching appointments will be determined by the recommendation of the Coaches Convenor to the Club's Executive Management Committee and these recommendations are based on suitability, availability and commitment to continue with Coaching Education and development. All Coaches will be encouraged to complete at least the "Foundation Coaching Course" on-line course prior to taking up a position (if they haven't already done so). Coaches are also strongly encouraged to sit the "Rules Test" on-line course in order to have an up-to-date knowledge of the rules of netball.

If a coach is unable to attend either training or Saturday games, they must notify the Club's Coaching Convenor.

### **Player Divisions**

Player divisions are based on the current PRNA Policy and may be subject to change at their discretion, and at any time.

### **Playing with Friends (Graded Teams Only)**

Requests from players need to be put in writing at the time of registration stating the reasons.

Should it not be possible to grade friends in the same team we encourage those players to accept their new team and make new friends. Once the season starts children usually settle in quickly and enjoy their netball and the support of parents is greatly encouraged to ensure this occurs smoothly. Parents and players alike are encouraged to enjoy the experience of meeting new friends where team changes occur.

### **Players Playing out of their Age Group**

During grading should the Grading Panel identify a player of exceptional talent for whom a team or similar ability does not exist within her own age group, then that player may be offered the opportunity to play in a higher age group.

In addition, should the Club have insufficient player registrations in adjacent age groups to form full teams, players may be requested to play up or down an age group in order to form a team of composite age. In such instances, the players

asked to play up or down an age group will be selected based on them being of similar ability to the other players in the team in which they will be placed.

### Grading of Each Age Group

#### 3) Under 7, 8, and 9's '(Modified)

Teams in these age groups will not be graded as they will be playing in modified, non-competitive competition. Requests to play with friends will be accommodated where possible, depending on the overall number of registrations in each age group. Requests relating to team placement of players must be made on the registration form in the space provided or via email sent to the club, prior to team assignment. The Club, however, encourages players to join as individuals so players and parents get to meet new friends – this process also makes it more comfortable when they enter a graded playing age group.

#### b) Under 10 – 17 years old (J1, Inters & Cadets)

All players must attend any 'Practical Grading' as advised by the club. The number of practical grading sessions required for each age group will be determined on an annual basis.

#### c) Seniors

Grading will be conducted if required.

### The Grading Panel

All gradings are undertaken on behalf of the Club by our Grading Panel. The Grading Panel will consist of a minimum of 3 Graders. This will ensure that the process is fair and effective. The members of this Grading Panel will be appointed by the Grading Convenor, in consultation with the Club's Executive Committee Members at a time closer to when grading will take place.

### Grading Criteria

In assessing the overall skills of a player within an age group, the Grading Panel will take into account but not limited to the following –

1. Footwork	5. Defending Skills
2. Speed and Agility	6. Perception/Cognition Skills
3. Ball Handling Skills	7. Sportsmanship and Attitude
4. Attacking Skills	

### The Grading Process

#### ✓ Practical Grading

Practical Grading sessions shall be watched by at least three (3) members of the Grading Panel. Practical Grading may include a number of activities including various netball training drills but will always include a session of actual on-court play.

Players presenting for Practical Grading shall be formed into teams for the purposes of these on-court games. Players shall trial in positions (generally 2) that they have nominated, but may be asked to trial in other positions, either to make up a team or because the Grading Panel would like to see how they perform in those positions. Where players are asked to fill other positions during grading, they will still have an opportunity to play in each of their nominated position/s during the selection process.

For a number of reasons, it may not be necessary for all players to play an identical numbers of quarters during the game session. It is important that players taking part in the Practical Grading be fully aware that they should bring their best game to the grading, as this practical grading will determine their team placement.

NOTE: The following will only be considered where necessary

✓ Coach's Evaluation

At the end of the season, each coach of an under 10 or Junior team will be asked to provide a written evaluation of each player in their team. This evaluation will cover areas such as skills, attendance at training and games, teamwork and attitude. All such reports will remain confidential and will be viewed only by the Coaching Convener, Clubs' President and Grading Convenor

✓ Independent Player Assessments

During the season, Grading Panel members can attend various games and report their observations of players skill levels back to the Coaching Convener and Grading Convenor.

**Failure to Attend Practical Grading**

If a player is unable to attend practical grading, the player or parent/guardian must notify the Club Secretary in writing (via email) prior to grading day. Placement into a team for this player will be based upon Paper Grading and where applicable, Coach's evaluations and Independent Player Assessments.

All players are strongly encouraged to attend Practical Grading as Paper Grading may result in disappointment.

**This Policy has been reviewed and approved by the North Lakes Blues Netball Club Management Committee: 09 February 2024.**

**Any changes to this guide must be made in writing to North Lakes Blues Netball Club at [secretary@northlakesbluesnetball.com.au](mailto:secretary@northlakesbluesnetball.com.au) and will be discussed by the North Lakes Blues Netball Committee and approval gained before implementation.**