



Junior Team Selection Policy

Mentone Hockey Club believes that junior sport should be safe, enjoyable, inclusive and maximise individual participation.

We acknowledge that positive experiences in junior competition will contribute to children developing a lifelong love of sport. We equally acknowledge that junior players are the lifeblood of our Club, and we commit to offering a range of age-appropriate development opportunities.

Some junior players may be offered the opportunity to play with senior teams, at the discretion of senior coaches and section co-ordinators. The Club is mindful, that there are potential benefits (e.g. improved playing ability) but potential drawbacks (e.g. impact on education) and will first discuss any proposal with the player's parents.

Key principles :

- Mentone Hockey Club is a family based Club which values and supports long term membership and how family units work to support the Club.
- Individual and team excellence and winning are important factors; however these need to be balanced with values such as participation, teamwork, fairness and enjoyment.
- It is important that the Club is able to offer a range of competitive grades so that players of differing abilities can be catered for.
- Our policy is for players to play in their own age group and same sex teams where they are offered in that age group, rather than mixed teams. Occasionally circumstances may lead to a player to play out of their age group or as part of a mixed competition. Such a decision would be

made after discussion with the player and parents

What we will do

- Emphasise to coaches and parents that junior sport is about participation, not competition.
- Try to match children with others of their own ability (e.g. if there are enough players, have multiple teams in an age division).
- Provide children with a broad range of experiences (e.g. the opportunity to play different positions).
- Provide all players with the opportunity to contribute to the team during the home-and-away seasons, regardless of their ability.
- Where circumstances may make it more appropriate for a player to play out of their age group. Such a decision would be made after discussion with the player and parents.

Where we have a number of teams at different grades within an age group, a selection process will be carried out. The coaches of that age group, or appointed selectors, in conjunction with the Junior Co-ordinator (if needed) will be responsible for selection. Selection will be based on attributes such as speed, strength, agility, endurance, power and flexibility; and skill attributes such as technique, tactical awareness, potential, "coachability", positional qualities and specialist skills.

The Panel will take into consideration:

- Attendance and Attitude at training
- Performance at training and practice matches and Games

- Team Balance
- Match game availability

If players want to play with friends rather than in their own age group or ability, this will generally be accommodated in the lower grades of an age group rather than the higher grade and will be dependent on the number of players within the age groups for that season.

Selection is a continuing process and therefore players may be promoted or demoted during the season depending upon how their performances are rated against the above criteria. If players or parents are not happy with the methods of the selection process, then please feel free to discuss with the Junior Co-ordinator. If the matter is still unsatisfactorily addressed, it should be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee (preferably by email).

It is important for players and parents to remember that the selection process is sometimes confronting for both players and officials. Please also remember that all coaches and officials are volunteers putting in a considerable amount of time and effort to enable all the children to play hockey. Without them we have no club. Some players set themselves unrealistic goals. Frequently an athlete's own assessment, or more commonly, their parent's assessment is very subjective. Our aim with this policy is to be as objective as possible.

What we ask of coaches

- Provide all players with the opportunity to develop a range of skills by playing and rotating through positions, particularly in the younger age groups. Ensure that players are provided with significant amounts of game time through the home-and-away season irrespective of ability or experience.

- Focus on the participation, not winning and losing.
- If selection decisions are made which results in players being selected in a lower team that previously played it is the responsibility of the coach of the higher team to explain the decision to the player
- Where possible the Club will look to appoint coaches that do not have family members in the team; however if this is not possible Coaches with family members are reminded to treat them like everyone else in the team (e.g. fair rotations, playing time and/or participation).

What we ask of parents

- Ensure that your child's fees are paid on time or that a payment plan is agreed with our Club Treasurer before the start of any competition (winter, summer or indoor).
- Help the coach where possible at training and games.
- Encourage your child and their team.
- Respect the coach's selection decisions.
- Get Involved.

Issued by the Mentone Hockey Club Executive Committee

