



GRADING POLICY

Updated December 2025

Aim

Grading is the process of establishing the number and composition of teams to compete in the Association competition. The aim of this policy is to ensure grading of players and teams is conducted fairly and effectively, and in the best interests of Willoughby United Netball Club (United) and its players. Every player is treated as an individual club member, irrespective of previous team or grade and every player has an equal opportunity.

Grading is influenced by the number and ages of players registered with United. Grading will aim to achieve teams that are competitive for their grade and have a balanced group of players in playing positions and ability levels.

General Procedures

At the commencement of the season, United will schedule up to four grading sessions per age group for NetSetGo (7-9yrs) and Juniors (10-15yrs) and up to three grading sessions for Seniors (16yrs+). Additional grading sessions may be scheduled in the event of wet weather or if more court time is required for decision making.

At the time of registration, players will be asked to advise of recent playing history and to nominate their preferred playing positions. Throughout the grading sessions, all players will have the opportunity to play in their preferred positions but may be asked to trial in other positions, either to make up a team, or because the Grading Committee would like to see how they perform in those positions.

Registration with the club and attendance at grading is seen as acceptance of this policy. Attendance at grading is compulsory for all players. In the event of non-attendance (e.g. injury or illness), the player or parent/guardian must advise this in writing to the relevant Coordinator prior to grading. Placement into a team for this player will be based on paper grading however, for non attendance at grading without reason placement in a team is not guaranteed.

Grading Committee

The grading committee will be made up of a selection of United Executive Committee and club assistants. No parent will grade their own child or their own child's age group. The grading committee members, where possible, will rotate each session so that a variety of members can view each age group.

Team Composition

The minimum number of players to form a team is eight (8) players and the maximum number of twelve (12) players.

Players will be graded into teams based on:

- Their ability/skill level, attitude and commitment demonstrated on court – this includes ball control, passing/catching technique, footwork, shooting accuracy, attacking skills, defensive skills, athletic ability, teamwork, positional play and potential to improve
- Recent playing history and previous season's coaching reports
- Ensuring teams have a balanced group of players in playing positions and ability levels
- Age and number of players for an age group

Teams that are successful one year will not necessarily remain together the following year – this should be understood clearly at Junior levels due to the nature of change and development of all players from season to season plus new registrations.

Requests to play with friends

Netball is a graded, competitive sport from the age of 10yrs onwards with representative opportunities. United understands that players (and their parents) may wish to play sport with friends and in friendship groups. However, it is the club's duty to place players in teams based on their ability and skill level, taking into account the positions that they have nominated to play. Often stronger players enjoy the challenge of a harder, faster competition and previous experience has shown that teams benefit more when comprised of a balance of abilities and positions.

We strongly encourage players to embrace the opportunity of playing with the team that they have been placed in, and in making new friends. We greatly appreciate the support of parents in ensuring that the team settles into an enjoyable netball season.

Players playing out of their age group (Junior age group specific)

The general policy of the club is that all players play within teams of their own age group. However, on occasion, there may be exceptions. During grading, should the Grading Committee identify a player of whom a team of similar ability does not exist within their 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 an age group in order to form a team of composite age. In such instances, the players asked to play up 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.

Decision Making

Decisions that are made by the Grading Committee will be final. No further correspondence will be entered into unless there is evidence to support a breach of the Grading Policy. Special requests will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, provided in writing, to the relevant Coordinator with the support of the Executive Committee within seven days of Team Announcements.

Team Announcements

Once grading is complete, the relevant Coordinator will be in contact via email to advise players of their teams