



Thornleigh Thunder Football Club

Policy on Player Registrations and Team Grading 2023

Key Principles & Objectives

Thornleigh Thunder Football Club places an emphasis on participation and enjoyment, which it considers more important than winning. The club will attempt to accommodate as many players as possible wishing to play soccer with the club. It is a fundamental principle of the Thornleigh Thunder FC that individual players will be brought together into teams that are appropriate for each player's age and skill level.

The average playing ability in a team will determine the grade that team is placed within the North West Sydney Football Association (NWSFA) competition.

Team Sizes

The minimum team size will be that number defined by the rules of the NWSFA as the minimum necessary to field a team in an age group or division. The following number of players is deemed appropriate for each age group and defines the ideal preferred minimum and maximum number of players that will be put into any team.

Where there is more than one team in any particular age group, each team will be made up of the same number of players, where possible. If the total number of players in a particular age group makes it necessary to have one more player in one or more teams, the extra player(s) will be placed in the lower grade team(s). This provides more flexibility if players are required to play in a higher grade during the season (as higher grade players cannot play in a lower grade).

The Club Committee can however exercise discretion to vary the maximum number where appropriate reasons exist for a higher number to be accepted into a team.

Team Placement and Grading

Players in all age groups are required to attend the nominated placement and grading day(s). On the placement and grading day(s) players will be split up into teams on the following basis:

Under 6, Under 7 and Under 8 Placement Day

Players will be placed in teams with their friends within their age group. However new players will not automatically be placed into a friend's team if the size of the existing team is sufficient and an existing player needs to be moved as a result.

If there are too many players wishing to play in the same team preference will be given to those players who played together in the same team in the previous year.

Consideration will only be given to a team's skill level where it is deemed by the grading committee and coaches, that a particularly skilled team may be considered to play in the graded league at U8 (blue team).

Players who do not attend Placement Day will be put into whichever team has room to accommodate them. The following defines the preferable minimum and maximum number of players that will be placed in one team. Discretion of team numbers can be revised by the club executive committee.

Age Group	NWSF Minimum	Ideally	Format
Under 6	4 players	6 to 7 players	4v4
Under 7	4 players	6 to 7 players	4v4
Under 8	4 players	9 to 10 players	7v7

Under 9 to Under 21 Grading

Players will be graded on their individual abilities. A grading committee made up of at least two people will grade players in each age group. The grading committee may be different for each age group. All people on the grading committee will be independent of the particular age group being graded. The grading committee will grade players on their performance at grading day(s) and they also seek advice from people who have recently coached the players being graded. Where the grading committee deems two or more players to be of equal ability and it is necessary to split these players between teams, preference to the higher team will be given on the following basis:

1. Players who played in the higher grade in the previous year and who have advised prior in writing to the committee of their inability to attend grading day(s)
2. Players attending grading day(s)

The following defines the preferable number of players that will be placed in one team. Discretion of team numbers can be revised by the executive committee.

Age Group	NWSF Minimum	Ideally	Format
Under 9	5 players	9 to 10 players	7v7
Under 10	5 players	11 to 12 players	9v9
Under 11	5 players	11 to 12 players	9v9
Under 12	5 players	11 to 12 players	9v9
Under 13 – Under 16	7 players	13 to 14 players	11v11
Under 17 – Under 21	7 players	13 to 16 players	11v11

Premier League and Super league Squads

Players will be graded on their individual abilities. Selection of players will be entirely at the discretion of the Premier and Super League coach(es).

Age Group	NSWF Minimum	Ideally	Format
Super League	14 players	26 to 30 players	11v11
Premier League	14 players	26 to 30 players	11v11

All Age and Seniors

As a general rule, players that played in the previous year with a Thornleigh All Age, Over 35 or Over 45 team will be placed in the same team. However, the final team selection and team grading will be determined by the Thornleigh Thunder Club committee. The Seniors Coordinator will coordinate this process and all enquiries from players seeking to join Thornleigh Thunder Club must be referred to him/her. This is to ensure that all registered players are placed into a team. Players or teams in these age groups may approach the Seniors Coordinator to change teams/players from the previous year. The Seniors Coordinator will then seek guidance from the committee on whether the requested changes will be sanctioned.

The following defines the preferable number of players that will be placed in one team. Discretion of team numbers can be revised by the executive committee.

Age Group	Minimum	Ideally	Format
All Age	7 players	12 to 14 players	11v11
Over 35	7 players	14 to 18 players	11v11
Over 45	7 players	14 to 18 players	11v11

Players wishing to play in a lower grade

Players may request to play in a grade lower than the grade determined by the grading committee. This request should be made to the grading committee prior to the first grading session. If too many players seek to play in a lower graded team and there is a disproportionate number of players in the lower graded team, the grading committee will promote the next strongest player(s) to the higher graded team. At this stage the Thornleigh Thunder committee (after consultation with the coaches and managers of the teams involved) will have to determine if such a move is serious enough to downgrade the

nominated grading with the NWSFA or if having a disproportionate number of players would be more beneficial to the players in all teams within the grade. Players will only be placed into higher graded teams on ability.

Players wishing to play out of age groups

Players wishing to play in an age group that is outside their proper age group will only be permitted to do so if:

1. They notify the club on their registration form that they wish to play in a different age group,
2. They have the necessary skills and physical attributes,
3. It assists the club in forming teams with an appropriate number of players in each age group
4. It is within a 2-year range above (U6-U21) or younger age group (Seniors).

If the club requires players to play in a higher age group, volunteers will be sought. If there are too many volunteers, preference will be given firstly, to players who have previously played in the higher age group, secondly, based on an individual player's skill level, physical appropriateness and year at school.

Registrations

Players are to be registered prior to participation in Grading/Placement or will not be graded nor included in team allocations.

Registrations submitted after Grading day will be accepted if it does not cause the number of players registered in that age group to exceed the targeted number of players (as set out above).

If an age group is determined to be full, registrations for that age group will be closed and no further registrations accepted in that group.

The hard close of ALL registrations by NWSFA is 30 June.

Too many players in one age group

If the number of players that are registered in any particular age group causes a team size to exceed the targeted number of players for that age group, all efforts will be made to move players up to the age group above or up from the age group below so that all team sizes fall within the targeted team sizes. Where it is still not possible to create teams for that age group within the targeted team size, registrations will be declined in the following order:

1. Registrations received after the last advertised registration date, then
2. Players with registration fees that have not been paid by final grading day (and at the discretion of the Committee in the event of financial hardship), then
3. Based on the number of successive years that each player has played with the Thornleigh Thunder Club. Players who have played with the club for the shortest time will have their registration declined first, then
4. Based on previous attendance at training sessions and grading days and participation in the club's activities (such as training teams, skills clinics etc), then
5. Based on the family's involvement in activities such as coaching, managing and committee positions. Players from families who have had no previous involvement in such activities may be the first to have their registrations declined.

Insufficient players in one age group

Where there are insufficient player numbers within an age group to make up a team or teams with the appropriate number of players, the club will make every effort to attract surplus players from neighbouring clubs so team numbers will be sufficient for players to play within their age group. It is also recommended that players and parents assist with player recruitment. Failing this, players will be offered the opportunity to play in a team in the age group above which they should play, so long as the numbers do not go over the team number policy. However, if this is not possible all fees paid will be refunded prior to the first game of the season.

Registered Players unable to attend Grading

Grading is a vital tool used to create our teams, getting players into a team of appropriate skill level, and to get the team into the appropriate Competition Divisions. There are a number of valid reasons a player may not be able to attend the grading day, in that event:

- Any returning player unable to attend Grading should advise their appropriate Age Coordinator. The Grading panel will consider the players previous grading, liaise with the Coach and attempt to place the player into the appropriate team – NO guarantee of team allocation will be given if unable to attend.
- Any new player, to TTFC, unable to attend Grading will by default be allocated into the lowest division team of that age group.

Grading Format

The TTFC committee appoints a Grading Team of ideally 3, comprised individuals of previous coaches, age coordinators, Grading committee members and coaching coordinators. They are completely independent of the teams they are to grade.

The Grading Team's role is to observe the players at the grading session, as the coaches from the previous year run a number of drills. Where the coach is not available, other coaches or experienced players may be called into assist running the activities.

- Start on time on the hour
- 5 minutes welcome (TTFC Committee Representative)
- 25 minutes of varied drills (focus on 2 players 1 ball drills) and then (groups of 4) scenarios. (run by coaches observed by graders)
- 20 minutes game (run by coaches observed by graders)
- 5-10 minutes debrief

The graders will be focused and seen to be only grading and watching players. Their role is to be unbiased and not distracted by the running of the drills. Before the session starts, the Grading Team will address all parents and players. Graders are both experienced in dealing with parent and player preferences.

After grouping the graded players into teams, the Grading Team will then consider the appropriate competition division is appropriate for the entire team's capability along with total registered players (not just the ability of a few individual players).

Factors around previous season's results and coach and manager advice is a major factor to final grading.

Once finalised, teams will be submitted to NWSFA via upload into Dribl system. This is usually required just over a month before the first round of the season begins. Once lodged in Dribl, NWSFA reviews all teams for final grading allocation.

Announcements of Team Placements

Mini's teams (U6 -U8) placements are formed, but not finalised on the grading day. As occasionally minor changes are required. Once completed the appointed team manager will notify their team.

Youth teams U9-U21, where players are actually graded, takes much more consideration. Once a Team is formed, a coach and manager appointed, at that point the team is usually announced, via

communication from the allocated team manager. This will usually be at least 2 weeks after the grading day, and sometimes longer.

Senior teams (AA, O35/45 & SL) will be notified via the senior's coordinator.

Grievances

Just like all our club officials, the grading team are volunteers. They are attempting to form teams to suit the best interests of both the players and the club. This is not an easy task and any decisions are not taken lightly.

Any strong objections to grading results are to be submitted in writing to the TTFC committee.

Any abusive engagements will be subject to the same disciplinary actions outlined in the Parent/Player Code of Conduct policy and will not be tolerated.