

Balmain Football Club Youth Team Selection Policy

Balmain Football Club (BFC) is a community oriented sports club and believes in promoting participation in our game, equal opportunity for all players, development of football and team skills, and above all, enjoyment of the game.

BFC recognises that players and their parents have a variety of motives in playing football and subsequently possess different levels of talent and interest in the game dependent on their background, experiences, skill level, playing ability and age. With these and other factors in mind BFC's Youth Team Selection Policy is an attempt to place players in a division and team that is appropriate to their level of skill development and general interest in the game. It allows players to play at a level appropriate to their ability and aspirations to ensure they gain maximum enjoyment and development as a player and as an individual.

While the club encourages all players to take part in the team selection process, it is not compulsory. As a club, we also need to be aware that grading is "not for everybody" and that we provide opportunities for all players who wish to participate and be involved in the game, be it at a purely social/recreational level or at a more competitive level.

Why select players and when?

The aim of selecting players for various teams is to give them the opportunity to develop at their own level. Players with similar levels of ability and motivation will play alongside and against each other. Below are researched facts from the Dutch Football Association and relevant reasons for our policy:

- A player of a higher football level playing in a lower division will inevitably dominate the game, taking on much of the responsibility themselves, therefore, the other team members do not develop or enjoy the game.
- A player of a lower level football playing in a higher division comes under so much pressure to perform with his/her team or opposition that there is not much chance of development.

In both cases the player doesn't learn anything, and their development may even go backwards.

- Players of similar skills and assigned to their correct age and competitive division will contribute more to their own and their team's development.

This is connected with enjoyment of the game. Players must enjoy football to have the right motivation to learn and remain interested in the game. Each player must therefore be addressed at their own level.

We believe that teams will benefit from a selection process when their team enters a competitive phase (under 10's) of our Association, eg results, standings, final series. The policy can also be implemented to the under 8 & 9's on an "as required" basis if there are stark differences between the abilities of the players within the existing teams and it is not counter productive on a social level – ie kids and parents need to be ok with playing with a group that may not be the child's existing school friends and not be unhappy or de-motivated as a result.

Teams / Divisions policy

The composition of teams based on individual grading is not compulsory, and BFC can accommodate coaches, managers and players to continue to play with their last season's non-graded team. BFC will assist in making division recommendations to those teams comprised of players who were not involved in individual player grading.

The club will however, endeavour to grade suitable players / teams in division 1, 2 etc to represent the club at the highest level of the Canterbury Association. If there is an existing team which has previously played in one of the higher divisions but which has chosen not to partake in the individual player grading process, the relative merits of that team in relation to others (that have gone through the player grading process) will be assessed by BFC grading committee and recommendations will be made on the divisions the respective teams should play.

Implementation / Selection Committee

The club's Coaching Coordinators, Selection Committee, or Independent Selection Panellist will conduct the grading process. Coaching Coordinators will endeavour to have at least one other grading panellist who is independent of the age group. Consultation with coaches will be at the discretion of the clubs Coaching Coordinators. The Age Coordinator will assist in managing the grading process and all parent enquiries will be addressed to the Age Coordinator.

How are Players selected?

There are four criteria that generally form the basis of our evaluation. The evaluation follows the Balmain's Football Development Model that takes into account Core Football Essentials. These essentials are:

- Technical (core)
- Tactical (core)
- Intelligence (support the core)
- Athleticism (support the core)

| SELECTION CRITERIA | | | |
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| INTELLIGENCE (supporting the core) creativity composure communication vision problem-solving | CORE FOOTBALL ESSENTIALS | | ATHLETICISM (supporting the core) speed strength agility balance |
| | TECHNICAL (with the ball) passing receiving dribbling shooting heading | TACTICAL (without the ball) Movement off ball Supporting Defending Transitional (or loose ball) | |

Core Football Essentials: Technical & Tactical

Team selection always begins with an assessment of individual players. The first and most critical quality for all football players is their technique. This includes the player's overall range of techniques with which they secure and make use of the

ball and particularly how the player handles such situations under pressure. This becomes the most obvious starting point in evaluating players.

Tactical insight is the second of the core football essentials and the evaluation of this area looks at how players engage in tactical play (instructions from their coach, specific directions regarding positioning) and how well they apply these directions in a structured game. Evaluation is based on a players' demonstration of their qualities and flexibility to any (or multiple) roles and positions within the team.

Core Football Essentials - Supporting: Intelligence & Athleticism

The third essential is Intelligence, and it is here that players will catch a coach's eye. In evaluating, it is readily apparent that players come with an assortment of qualities. Some have exceptional dribbling skills, some have excellent passing range, while others dominate in the air; some are resolute defenders, while others impress by their ability to read the game and lead others; some players simply score goals, while others create chances for others through their set-up play. Players who possess *Football Intelligence* or good game awareness will perform the above attributes with vision, creativity and composure – basically *pull out something extra that other players cannot see*.

The fourth essential is athleticism. Only after successfully evaluating all players on the above essentials should athleticism be taken into consideration as part of the selection criteria. The grading process is about the skill level of individuals and the team collectively. As a relatively genetic asset, athleticism will always be part of an overall assessment. Assessing athleticism should not just be how fast a player can get from A – B, or raw physical strength - anyone can assess a fast runner and a strong physique. In a football environment, assessment should be made looking at the time players take in assessing match situations (intelligence) and taking appropriate action (tactical) and the speed with which players control and use the ball (technical).

Choosing teams are, in large part, a question of balance and adaptability and it is not based solely on selecting the best attacking players and in any particular division. The Selection Committee must always endeavour to create a balanced team that can defend, possess the ball for extended periods and create scoring chances from anywhere on the field.

Evaluation process

The club's current members will be notified via email of Team Selection dates and times. They will also be announced on our website www.balmainfootball.com.au. New members will be notified during registration.

The Team Selection process must be completed before the club's official registration days which normally falls end of January.

The process will be held by age group, over approximately two hours and up to 30 players per session will be assessed.

Any member of the Selection Committee or coach shall not undertake an active role in the assessment of their own child; rather the coaching co-ordinator will enlist the Independent Selection Panellist to assist in the assessment of their child.

If a current player is unable to attend a Team Selection session, they must alert their appropriate age co-ordinator. New players to the club can be assessed once the formal registration process is completed.

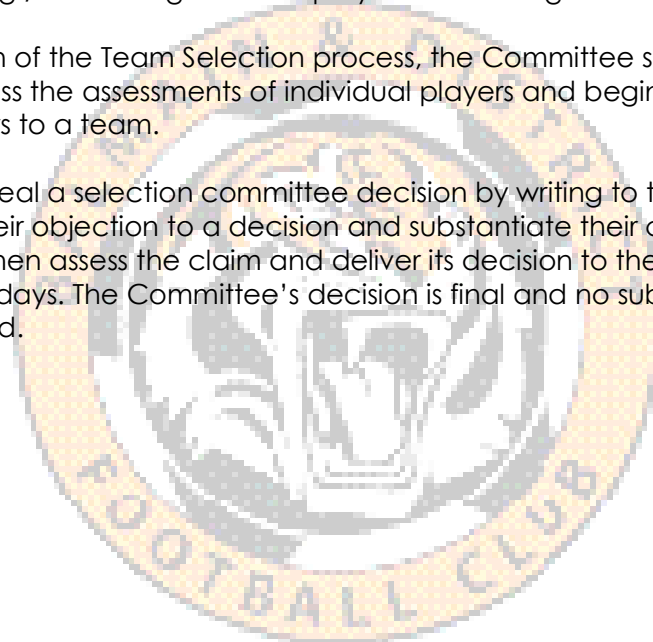
Evaluation is based on a series of small sided games (SSG) designed with specific instructions and objectives relevant to the clubs Selection Criteria. The SSG's will be designed by the coaching co-ordinator.

The Selection Committee are given Evaluation Forms to individually assess in accordance with the Selection Criteria.

Depending on age, the Team Selection Committee will aim at selecting a minimum (per team) of 11 players on SSG field format and 14 player's full field format and a view to having teams balanced by way of the clubs Selection Criteria. Again age dependant, a Selection Committee should set to achieve a roster of: 1 dedicated Goal-Keeper (no need for specialist keepers in younger age groups but good to have a few players willing to share the role), 3 – 5 defence oriented players, 3 – 5 midfield attacking / defending oriented players and 2 – 3 goal oriented forwards.

At the conclusion of the Team Selection process, the Committee shall meet to review and discuss the assessments of individual players and begin the process of allocating players to a team.

Players may appeal a selection committee decision by writing to their age co-ordinator with their objection to a decision and substantiate their claim. The Committee will then assess the claim and deliver its decision to the player and/or parent within 10 days. The Committee's decision is final and no subsequent appeals will be considered.



Appendix to Evaluation documents

Definitions of the Core Football Essentials

Technical ability:

Technical ability incorporates a player's skill level with the ball and the technique applied when in possession of the ball i.e. their competency in controlling and manipulating a football using a variety of methods under pressure.

Passing:

The ability to successfully complete short and long range passes. This incorporates all of your ball skills, including heading, bending, chipping, and the ability to drive the ball to a team-mate.

Receiving (or ball control):

The ability to bring a ball played to you in a variety of conditions (height, angle, speed) under close control, maintaining it securely. This involves using various parts of the body (except arms – outfield players) depending on the height and direction of the incoming ball.

Dribbling:

This is the ability to maintain close possession of the ball whilst: moving quickly; changing speed; turning, and deceiving opponents.

Shooting:

The correct technique of striking the ball in various ways; driving low balls, hitting volleys, half-volleys, on the turn, chipping, bending, etc..

Heading:

The ability to head at goal after crosses, heading high, wide, and deep for defensive clearances or heading balls directed as a one-touch pass (more emphasis on this for older groups – less important in the younger ages).

Left and / or right footedness

The ability to use one or both feet.

Tactical ability

Tactical ability incorporates a player's positional awareness on the field, their anticipation, reading, and execution of the ever-changing game situations that happen during possession (Attacking) and non-possession (Defending) of the ball.

Movement off the ball:

Players that create opportunities and gives extra options to their team mate, eg, running into space (both closer and further away from the player in possession) to make themselves available to receive the ball, or as a decoy to reduce pressure on the player in possession.

Supporting:

Players nearest to the player in possession of the ball support by providing a passing option (particularly if under defensive pressure), present themselves at the correct angle to receive the ball. Good communication

Defending: marking/delaying/tackling/pressing/cover

Defending is the immediate pursuit to dispossess the opponent and to regain possession of the ball:

- Marking: the ability to mark a player tightly and to not be deceived by the player.
- Delaying: the ability to jockey or shadow the ball carrier, delay the attack and force them away from the goal.
- Tackling: the ability to tackle, upright or sliding.
- Pressing: The ability to compact the opposition's flow of play or choking an area where opposition has possession - can be done individually or collectively depending on space.
- Cover: The ability to read the attack and cover as a second defender.

Transitional (or loose ball):

Transition is that time when the ball has transferred from your team to the opposition or vice-versa. Relates to the player's abilities in adapting from attack to defence or vice-versa using the above-listed abilities.

Supporting the Core Football Essentials - Intelligence

Creativity: Combination of individual technical ability and speed of thought. Ability to solve problems presented to them in a game situation in a creative way either individually or in orchestrating their team-mates.

Composure: Ability to think clearly and not panic when under defensive pressure. Is confident in their technical ability and problem-solving skills and tries to play their way out of a situation rather than simply kicking the ball away in panic or hope.

Communication: On the field their intentions are well understood by team-mates. Clearly requests the ball (in good situations – and it doesn't have to be vocal) and gives instructions/advice to the team. Off the field, can express situations clearly to the coaches and discuss game situations with team-mates.

Vision: Ability to see situations and to read the game, both in attack and defence, quickly. For instance may pick out a pass that is not the most obvious option but may be the best, or may run to a space that will give the best option for others. The best can project beyond the current phase of play and see two or three moves in advance.

Problem solving: Clearly linked with creativity and vision, but it is really all of the elements of "intelligence" combined. In an attacking sense, a football game is nothing more than a series of situations (constantly evolving) that need to be solved to score goals. Beating opponents and maintaining possession of the ball is key. Problem solving is both individual and collective but requires creativity, composure, vision and excellent communication to be achieved.

Supporting the Core Football Essentials – Athleticism

Supporting the core, Athleticism is the ability of a player to commit industriously throughout the game. Players will demonstrate their ability in:

Speed:

Pure acceleration and top speed with the ball (in control), and without the ball.

Strength:

The ability to effectively use the body to win the ball in physical confrontations. The ability to protect the ball when in possession using strength and positioning.

Agility:

The ability to change directions quickly. Twisting, turning while dribbling, re-adjusting your body to control an awkwardly bouncing ball, and getting up quickly after a tackle are a few examples.

Balance:

The ability to stay poised and settled when performing the core essentials whilst remaining in balance.

Personality Traits

A player's personality must be taken into account as part of the process to ensure a positive experience for the player and their potential teammates. This maybe hard to assess on the day however, may require a discussion with the players' existing coaches or age-coordinator if there are any concerns.

Ideally BFC's graded players would:

- Have a strong work ethic and be prepared to challenge themselves;
- be creative in how they play their football
- be highly self-motivated and keen to achieve goals;
- have strong focus on the task at hand;
- be able to respond positively to instructions and constructive criticisms;
- show commitment, dedication and determination;
- possess resilience and an ability to stay positive even when not all is going well;
- have good communication skills, and
- demonstrate a sense of responsibility and respect towards their teammates, coaches, parents and the opposition.