



Reeves Rangers Football Club

Ability Grouping Policy

Introduction

Reeves Rangers FC is a family focused club providing football to the local community where all are welcome. The club is proud of its values; it is a core part of the Reeves philosophy to cater for the players of all levels of ability. The club will ensure that the safety of all the players is paramount and are fully committed to the safeguarding and welfare of all of its members. Reeves Rangers Football Club encourages equal opportunities and diversity amongst all players, coaches and volunteers.

The club provides football for players from the age of 4 up to 18. Our aim is to enable our players to have fun, make new friends and learn the game. The development of our players in the different age groups is crucial to ensuring that they enjoy their football, develop their skills and maintain their passion for the game, all in an environment that is safe, challenging, exciting and fun. It is about the children enjoying football, developing skills, building confidence and teamwork in preparation for fully competitive football at the Under 12 year group and above.

Reeves Rangers Football Club aims to produce teams and players who are capable and comfortable in whatever leagues or division the club is playing in.



Ability Grouping of Players & Teams

An important part of player development is ability grouping. This is the process that allows the movement of players between the teams within their age group, in line with their ability level and speed of development.

Our primary aim is for all of our players to have fun whilst developing at their own pace and playing in a team which is consistent with their individual capability. Fundamental to this development between Under 7 and Under 12 is to ensure players have as many touches of the football as possible which is why they are introduced to small sided games - 5v5 between U7 & U8, 7v7 between U9 & U10 and 9v9 between U11 & U12.

More touches = Greater fun = Improved development

Reeves Rangers Football Club has formalised ability grouping from 2018 as part of the club's philosophy to ensure that all players within the club are playing at the appropriate level to allow them to develop. As a club we recognise that this can be a contentious issue. Having taken on board feedback from many of those involved within the club the club feels that ability grouping is necessary - because it provides the best chance that to allow each player to develop at a level and pace that is appropriate with their own playing ability and those that they play with and against.

In order to do this, each player will be evaluated by their team manager(s) throughout the season, both in training sessions and matches in accordance with the FA Four Corners of assessment - Technical, Physical, Social and Psychological. Each of the four corners carries an equal weighting. It is therefore not just the player's technical and physical abilities that are being assessed but also their maturity, emotional and social skills.

Ability grouping for the Under 7s 2018/19 season & thereafter will be compulsory. For all other year groups this will be voluntary. If the Team Managers & parents of the year group voluntarily agree to ability grouping then the club policy & process must be adopted.

Ability grouping decisions are made at each age group providing that there is a minimum of two squads. It is the role of the Director of Coaching, along with the Club Welfare Officer to ensure that all of the Team Managers carry out this policy fairly and openly. All communications regarding player ability grouping, evaluation & player movement shall come from the respective Team Managers. Prior to the beginning of the relevant season the Executive Committee will introduce the club ability grouping policy & process to the parents.

The interest of each player's footballing development is paramount and will certainly be the basis of all our decisions. When a year group is ability grouped this will mean a greater focus on player development. To support this, Team Managers will follow the session plans designed for them & provided by the Club, with the support of the Director of Coaching.



Key Principles

1. **Process:** Follow a clear process that has been pre-agreed.
2. **Transition:** Ensure the transition is handled sensitively for players moving to a lower team. Players are usually happier a few weeks after ability grouping has taken place, when they are playing with players of similar ability and have made new friends.
3. **Oversight & Moderation:** There will be a level of oversight and moderation by the Director of Coaching and Club Welfare Officer.
4. **Clear window for ability grouping to take place:** Streaming will take place in the close season based on the Four Corner marking of the previous season. Player movement will only take place prior to the beginning of the next season. Requests for player movement during the season will only take place if it is considered as a potential welfare issue by the Club Welfare Officer.

Frequently Asked Questions

1.0 Player Evaluation

Q: What is the evaluation criteria?

A: The evaluation of the players is based on the FA Four Corners approach; Technical, Physical, Social & Psychological, all of which each have an equal weighting.

Q: How do you score?

A: Each of the FA Four Corners of development have 5 criteria which players are assessed on. Players are marked on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1= Would benefit from one to one coaching, 2= Further development required, 3= On target and performing at the required level, 4= Regularly performs above the required level, 5= Outstanding at required level. The diagram below details the 5 criteria within each of the Four Corners.



Q: Why does Reeves Rangers evaluate players?

A: Players are evaluated to identify their development strengths & requirements.

Q: Why does Reeves Rangers ability group players & teams?

A: Based on the players strengths & weaknesses a Team Manager can determine the correct level for each player to support their ongoing development. It is about finding the right level for each player to play football, have fun and develop. It is important to remember, this is for the benefit of the players.

Q: How often are players evaluated?

A: At least four times a season, twice in both a training session and match day environment. Once at the beginning of the season and again towards the end in order to measure development.

2.0 Player Development

Q: Why is development important?

A: It installs the values & work ethic that supports player confidence, respect, team play and hard work. Skills that underpin football but extend beyond the football pitch.

Q: Where does player development fail?

A: There can be several reasons including:

- Failing to vary coaching styles and methods.
- Creating a negative environment for the players to play in.
- Focusing on the wrong things, such as winning at the cost of development
- Parent wishes being put before a players.
- Manager overly focusing on results, instead of focusing on each player.

Q: How do we help players realise their potential?

A: By profiling regularly, you get to know your players strengths & weaknesses. You support their development by making sure they are playing at the right level that ensures they are challenged & motivated to enjoy their football.

Q: What happens when you ignore player needs?

A: Players, like adults become disenfranchised when they are not enjoying an activity - this could mean that a player is not getting many touches of the ball or not being able to express themselves on the pitch or it could be that players require a greater challenge and are keen and able to play at a higher level. In these instances, it is likely that a player will leave the club if we cannot support their individual requirements.



Q: How do coaching styles impact development?

A: Failure to get to know your players prevents you from structuring your sessions so that players have fun and are challenged, which in turn will impact on development & performance on the pitch.

3.0 Player Movement

Q: What process triggers a player movement?

A: Four times a season an evaluation of all players in both training and matchday settings by the Team Managers. These evaluations will be moderated by the Director of Coaching. Only after this has been carried out and the season has finished can a player movement take place.

Q: Is there a player movement process?

A: Yes there is and it involves all team managers in the squad. The Director of Coaching & Club Welfare Officer will have final sign off.

Q: Can moving players upset the team/parents?

A: Player movement can be an emotive and unsettling period for all concerned. Hence proper justification based on up to date player evaluation is necessary together with the Director of Coaching and Club Welfare Officer approval. This is required to support the understanding & transparency of the process. Players are usually happier a few weeks after streaming when they are with players of similar ability and have made new friends.

Q: Does a player have to move if given the option?

A: No player will be forced to move from his current team if given the option to move up or down, but it will be noted to the parent & player that their development may be impacted as a result. It is important to remember that suggested changes are for the benefit of the player.

Q: How do you manage player movement down?

A: Always difficult, but like a player moving up, it has to be supported/justified by the Four Corner marking process. In each instance the Team Managers, should arrange to speak to the parent in the first instance. To note, a slower pace and less physicality will support the players development. Playing at a more appropriate level will support the players development & make their football more enjoyable.

Q: What happens when you lose players?

A: First point of call is to look within the squad. However, players will not be moved up internally if their ability does not match the new level they will play at. This will unfairly impact their development & enjoyment of the game. The loss of a player is not the catalyst for an inter-season move.

Q: What happens with new players joining the club?

A: All the Team Managers in the year group will score the player during training. An average score will be determined and the player will be allocated to the appropriate team.



4.0 Further Questions

Q. What if my concerns are not addressed in the ability grouping policy?

A: Any concerns not covered should be taken up with the Managers. If they are not able to resolve the issue then the ultimate decision will rest with the Executive Committee through the Director of Coaching or the Club Welfare Officer. Please note that the Director of Coaching and Club Welfare Officer are there to help and offer guidance to parents, managers and of course to the players.

Key Contacts:

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As always we thank you for your continued support.

David Warwick

Club Chairman and Club Welfare Officer

