



QUAKERS HILL PIRATES JUNIOR GRADING POLICY

Purpose

To describe the approach which the Quakers Hill Pirates Junior Baseball Club (“The Club”) takes to the initial skills assessment and grading of junior players, assignment to teams and nomination of teams to conferences.

Policy Statement

The Club adopts a two tiered approach to skills assessment and grading for junior players which is undertaken immediately prior to the start of each summer season.

The first tier is an initial skills assessment which applies to the U10 age group (ie all children who will be aged 8 or 9 as at 31st December in the year of assessment).

All children in this category are required to participate in the initial skills assessment process unless granted a leave of absence. Those who do not participate without a leave of absence will be assessed on the basis of relevant information available to the initial skills assessment panel at the time of assessment.

The principal objective of the initial skills assessment process is to determine whether children in the U10 age group should play in T-Ball or Parent Toss format competitions. In the case of some children who will be aged 9 as at the 31st December and have sufficiently well-developed baseball skills, consideration may be given by the Club to them participating in the live-ball grading process for the U11’s age group.

The second tier is the grading process that automatically applies to all children who will be aged 10 or older as at as at 31st December in the year of grading. All children in this category are required to participate in the grading process unless granted a leave of absence. Those who do not participate without a leave of absence will be graded on the basis of relevant information available to the grading panel at the time of grading.

The principal objectives of the grading process are to:-

1. Comply with all competition rules
2. Form the most competitive combination of teams possible from available children within the same age groups and nominate them to appropriate conferences that will challenge and develop the players and enable them to enjoy playing baseball.

The initial skills assessment or grading panels for various age groups shall be appointed by the Club Executive and shall be responsible for organising and administering the grading process for the relevant age group. Upon completion of its process each panel shall make its confidential recommendations back to the Executive which makes the final decision on initial skills assessment or grading. The deliberations and recommendations of each panel shall remain confidential and only the final decision of the Executive shall be communicated to players or parents via the Club website. This will be coordinated with the Executive nominating specific teams and conferences to the Hills Competition Secretary. It is the Hills Junior Competition Secretary who deals with the nominations of the Club Executive and makes the final decision on the composition of conferences from available nominations received from all members of the Hills Junior Competition.

Where as a result of failure to participate fully in the initial skills assessment or grading process, doubt exists on the part of the panel as to a child’s current capability or potential, this may result in the child being placed in a different team than that which would have resulted from their full participation in the grading process. Panels will generally take a conservative approach to such matters.

The panel’s focus is on the allocation of children to appropriate teams and the nomination of teams to appropriate conferences. In making recommendations about these matters the following factors shall be considered by each panel:-

1. The safety and welfare of the child (this consideration is to be given primacy over all other considerations);
2. The present capability and development potential of the child (including their ability to receive and act on instructions);
3. Where applicable, the previous playing experience and performance of the child. This may include, at the panel’s discretion, consultation with previous coaches or other persons who may have relevant information regarding the children being graded.
4. The availability of other children in the same age group and items 1-3 (above) in relation to those other children
5. The need to appropriately balance teams, particularly insofar as the distribution of players with pitching or catching capability or potential is concerned. In some cases this may mean distribution of equivalently capable players to two or more teams graded at the same level, in other cases it may mean distributing players of different capabilities to differently graded teams.
6. Age constraints to which the Club must adhere and compliance with the Club’s dispensation policy. In some cases these can limit the flexibility The Club has for placing some players in some graded teams. For example some players capable of playing live-ball may only be eligible to play in an U11 live-ball team whereas others may be eligible to play in either U11’s or U12’s teams.
7. Requests to play with a particular friend, family member or coach. Only where these can accommodated, without compromising the intent of the initial skills assessment or grading processes including factors 1-6 (as described above), efforts will be made to do so. Obviously there is much more flexibility to meet these requests in ungraded age groups. Whilst the Club does appreciate that, over time, bonds are formed within ungraded teams and with particular coaches, the reality is that as children proceed through different age groups and are subject to initial skills assessment and then grading, changes in these arrangements are inevitable. The common experience is that children generally adapt well to these changes and make new associations if encouraged to do so.

The Club asks all members to bear in mind that whatever team or conference we are nominated to, first and foremost, we are all part of the same Club and “Proud to be Pirates!”

