

Bellbowrie Hockey Club

Junior Teams Handbook

A guide for Coaches, Managers
and
Parents, Guardians, Carers

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Purpose of the Handbook:

The Handbook has been developed as a guide for club officials and members to outline the philosophy and goals of the BHC, whilst providing some practical methodology to address real case scenarios which occur at the coal face in the Junior Teams.

This document will be updated and expanded on a regular basis to maintain currency and best sport practices.

Goal of the Club:

To build participation in hockey with an emphasis on development of skills, good sporting behaviour and enjoyment of team sport:

The Club aims to provide opportunities to young members and makes an effort to accept all interested players no matter what the current player registrations and team numbers are.

The Club aims to build a strong Club membership which recognises the importance of participation, development and social interaction amongst juniors and promotes improvement in hockey skills, good sportsmanship and provides an enjoyable hockey experience at a level appropriate to each players' age and skills.

BHC supports the "sport for all" philosophy in junior sport, encouraging enjoyment and actively catering for varying levels of ability so all juniors have a fair go.

BHC is also committed to actively catering for the special needs of young athletes (including talented players, people with disabilities, indigenous people and the socially disadvantaged) and special measures will continue to be taken to ensure development opportunities for all.

Continued opportunities for development of talented players are provided (regardless of whether there are one or two teams in the same grade) by allowing players to train and play in higher grades, at levels challenging to their stage of hockey development.

BHC recognises that coaches are important role models for good sporting behaviour and are critical to the quality of sport education and experiences of juniors. BHC is committed to ongoing support and assistance to our coaches in fostering and promoting the "sport for all" philosophy.

This approach should always be at the forefront of any decisions that are made regarding junior teams.

Some such decision scenarios could include:

- 1/ Coaches own preferences for limiting player numbers in a team.
- 2/ Structuring teams where one team is dominant at the expense of the other team in the same grade.
- 3/ Placing players in teams where they are uncomfortable.

Should Coaches, Managers, Parents, Guardians or Carers have concerns relating to this philosophy or wish to provide additional information to the Handbooks content, they are encouraged to provide written feedback to our Club Secretary (PO Box 160 Bellbowrie QLD 4070, or email bellbowrie@ipswichhockey.com)

Player Numbers for Junior Teams:

Aim: The Bellbowrie Hockey Club supports the principles of social justice in junior hockey, where equal opportunity for involvement and maximum participation are assured, regardless of skill level or age.

- 1) Limit of 16 players per team (as per bylaws)
- 2) If BHC receives more than 16 registrations for a team but not sufficient numbers for a second team the Club will endeavour to place players in other grades within the Club or it will go to the extra effort of advertising and recruiting within schools well in advance of sign-on day (BHC has been proactive with this in 09/10). There may be other options available involving combined teams with other Clubs (BHC has done this successfully in 08-09 and previous years).
- 3) Existing members have the opportunity to register prior to sign-on day, and then players will be accepted on the basis of team positions available at the time of their registration.
- 4) If a team has 16 players, the Coach and Manager may wish to organise a roster to play the Coach's optimal number of players each game throughout the season or simply play the all players available at each fixture game. Under such a roster system all players may be asked to contribute to the team by helping out in the dugout for one or two games a season - taking action photos, cooling players down with a spray bottle, warming up the Goalie, chasing & recovering balls in warm up, relaying messages to players on the other side of the field, running a water bottle around to a player on the other side of the field or helping with other support activities.
- 5) All Junior Team Coaches and Managers will make a concerted effort to ensure even playing times for all players. A realistic expectation and common sense approach needs to be taken if a player is, in poor health, is unfit, is injured, or does not communicate about their availability or unavailability for training and games. These players may not be given as much time on the field as those players who do communicate and are healthy and suitably fit.
Simply ensuring that each field player is subbed once a half would be a step in the right direction towards achieving a realistic even playing time.
In the case of a mid-season and end of season Finals Matches (possibly 3 finals games) players' selection and game time is at the discretion of the Coaches and Managers in line with the BHC Aims.
- 6) If a parent of a junior player wishes their child to be registered in a grade higher than their correct age group, BHC request that an application be made to the BHC Executive Committee, preferably in writing. The application must be supported by appropriate reasoning and supporting information so that the BHC Executive can make an informed recommendation in response. BHC's decision to support the application (or otherwise) will be based on maintaining the safety and wellbeing of the player and will consider the players physical abilities, their hockey skills and past achievements in addition to their commitments to other sporting, school or social activities. This may seem onerous, however, BHC has adopted this approach in order to avoid the physical and mental exhaustion and injury which can result from excessive demands being placed on our juniors during their years of physical development and growth.
If an application for a child to play in a higher grade is supported, the player will not generally be asked to sub-up into any subsequent higher grades.

Team Selection for Multiple Teams in One Grade:

Aim: BHC's primary approach is that all Junior Teams formed will be based on an even distribution of player skills and numbers across the grade. This philosophy that clubs which register two teams in the same grade should ensure that both teams have equal ability is also supported by the current Ipswich Regional Coaching Director.

- 1) The Club may have to take a different approach from year to year, depending on the Players concerned, number of actual registered players and available Coaches.
- 2) BHC will attempt to take into consideration:
 - a) Different spread of ages within the grade (more dominant in E Grade)
 - b) Friends introducing friends to playing hockey and naturally wanting to play together.
 - c) Transport issues of families helping to transport other players to training and to games.
 - d) Convenience for family members playing, training, or filling positions such as team coach or manager.
 - e) Continuity of previous year's teams and structures but not to the point that it would unbalance the even distribution between the teams.
 - f) Personality clashes or placing players in teams where they are not uncomfortable.
 - g) Player attitudes (i.e. promptness and eagerness for training and game attendance).
- 4) All players in the one grade will train together for the first few weeks and the team selections will be announced a week before the first fixture game. As the Club has 3 weeks of fixture games to finalise the teams, changes can be made during that period prior to the fourth game when registrations of teams and Players are required by the IHA.
- 5) Final selection of teams within the same grade would optimally be decided by the Coaches involved in these grades. If at the training session prior to the first fixture game the Coaches can't decide or disagree on the Team selections the two Junior Coordinators will step in and finalise two interim team player line-ups. These interim line-ups can then be refined over the next few weeks by Coaches and Coordinators if required. Coaches and Coordinators can seek input assistance from other independent Club members if they wish. Junior Coordinators will be available to provide advice to the Coaches so that they are aware of BHC's philosophy of inclusion and equal opportunity for participation in junior sport and to ensure that they have had the opportunity to read this Policy.
- 6) If a player registers mid-season, the decision of which team they should be placed in would be based on circumstances at the time including the points in dot point 2.

Processes to equally divide the grade into 2 teams:

Aim: The three options below are far from the definitive options but are put forward to stir discussion to assist with a process to come close to two evenly skilled teams, before other external considerations need to be addressed (point 2 a-g page-3). It is recommended that Coaches implement these three options and form up three team squads on paper at least as a starting point for further discussion and appraisal of the players.

Option 1/

One method would be to split the Representative players, Club players and New-to-Hockey players.

For example divide an u15 squad into 2 teams

Take the current u15's remaining rep players and split them.

Take last years u13 rep players who are moving up into the u15's and split them.

Take the current u15's remaining non rep club players and split them. This may need some input from the previous years coach and Coordinator if the coach is new to the Club.

Take last years u13's remaining non rep Club players who are moving up into the u15's and split them. This may need some input from the previous years coach or the Coordinator if the coach is new to the Club.

Take the new players to hockey and split them up.

Note: when splitting up the rep players, we need to take into account if they were no.1 or no.2 team rep players and divide them accordingly. (This assumes that the IHA representative selections were a true indication of players' abilities.)

While this approach would have as many issues for and against as the next possible method, it is one way to objectively form up team player lists for two teams.

Then step back and look at the teams. See if it looks like an even distribution on paper. See if there are too many forwards or not enough backs in one team or if anything stands out as a possible problem. Use these selections as a basis to fine tune and adjust the two teams into teams of relatively equal ability.

Option 2/

Assign players the position that they regularly play and offer a second position choice. Then divide the players up into two teams and divide the new players between the two teams. Then review the teams and adjust if necessary to form up even teams.

One would imagine this option would require a lot of adjustment between teams.

Option 3/

Divide the Representative players up by age i.e. 14, 15 evenly and divide the Club players up by age evenly to for 2 teams. Then review the teams and adjust if necessary to form up even teams.

Responsible Player Substitutes for Higher Grade Games:

Aim: To provide to Junior grade players safe and challenging “subbing” opportunities in a responsible and controlled manner, so junior players can be exposed to and readied for higher levels of competition.

Coaches and Managers of higher grade teams requesting player substitutes need to be extremely considerate of the younger player’s abilities when playing in a higher grade game. When the player has actually played their own game prior to taking the field for the higher grade game, Coaches and Managers should take into account the recovering time required by that player.

All requests for junior substitute players must to be sanctioned through the Girls or Boys Junior Coordinator so that the Coordinator can record that the player did sub up and can check that they are not breaching any IHA bylaws.

The Coordinators would also be able to recommend and deny players requested based on their knowledge of the junior player and or game that they are required to play in.

Only u15 C Grade Junior players should be considered as substitutes into Senior grade games. Ideally C Grade Junior players should only be playing up into Senior grades if they have the hockey skills and are physically & mentally capable of contributing to the team play.

- a) Substitutes should consider that being asked to play in a higher grade is a privilege and not a right to play.
- b) Substitutes should only expect a minimum of game time as they are often there to rest the senior grade players and hence should not expect even game time or more than the Coach requires from them.
- c) If a junior is requested to fill in for a senior team the Coach or Manager should make it clear at the time of the request whether the player is required to play a full game or is only needed as a substitute to rest senior players. This may have an impact on the decision of a parent to make a special trip to the IHA grounds in the middle of a busy day.
- d) If a junior sub request is approved by the Junior Coordinator as a sub for that game – the junior will definitely take priority over a non-communicative senior latecomer player, so junior parents won’t have wasted their time in attending the game in the event of that unexpected senior player arriving.

Each player’s first responsibility is to the team in which they are registered and that team’s games & training sessions must take priority over substitute games, particularly for junior players i.e. If a junior player is requested to play a senior game on Saturday night and their junior grade game is Sunday morning, the Junior Coordinators may refuse the request as the expectation of the Junior Grades Coach & Manager is that all of their players will be fresh and ready to go, not possibly stiff and sore or worse injured from the senior game.

The BHC would consider it unlikely that permission would be granted to a junior to play in a senior game prior to their junior game, but in extenuating circumstances consideration to the request would be given. This will be the unusual exception, rather than the norm.

Abbreviations / Definitions:

BHC – Bellbowrie Hockey Club.

Club - refers to the Bellbowrie Hockey Club

Committee – refers to the Bellbowrie Hockey Club Executive Committee.

IHA – Ipswich Hockey Association

rep – representative