



Equal Game & Playing Time Policy

These guidelines are by no means all inclusive. They are a foundation to build on and if they are followed then every player will have a great football experience.

The Heidelberg Junior Football Club is a community based club which promotes participation, development and enjoyment of the game above all other factors.

The Club has a strict policy of "EQUAL GAME TIME" for all registered players from Under 8's, 9's (Tackers) to Under 16's and a modified EQUAL PLAYING TIME Policy for all registered players from Under 17.5's (Colts) & Youth Girls to take into consideration the developmental needs, ability and safety of players as they grow and mature.

This Policy consists of two Parts: PART 1 Equal Game Time Policy for Under 8's, 9's, Under 10's, Under 11's, Under 12's, Under 13's, Under 14's & Under 15's, Under 16's and PART 2 Equal Playing Time Policy Under 17.5's (Colts) & Youth Girls.

PART 1 EQUAL GAME TIME FOR UNDER 8's to Under 16's

All selected players will be given EQUAL GAME TIME each week – NO EXCEPTIONS. This means Coaches MUST provide a minimum of 3 quarters per game for all players.

THIS POLICY ALSO APPLIES TO ALL FINALS MATCHES. (refer Note below)

NOTE : Final Matches League Rules restrict the number of interchange players to 6 during the home and away season, however where a team has more than 24 players available, the league will allow a greater number of interchange players. Where this occurs, the minimum 3 quarters cannot be guaranteed, however in finals matches, coaches are expected to ensure all players are provided with approximately equal game time.

PART 2 EQUAL PLAYING TIME FOR UNDER 17.5's (COLTS) & YOUTH GIRLS

It is the Club's desire to provide an environment for players to be able to remain at the Club beyond Under 16's so that a player is able to develop their football talent and become the best player they can be.

At Under 17.5's (Colts) & Youth Girls level, the Club provides Coaches with a degree of discretion in applying the EQUAL PLAYING TIME Policy. The Policy states that all players will play an equal amount of time over the course of a season.

This does not require equal playing time in each game; and the Coach is granted discretion as to how he/she administers the EQUAL PLAYING TIME Policy based on:

- the calibre of the opposition;
- the safety of the player concerned;
- the status of the game; and
- the preparation of the player.

However, the overriding principle is for the Coach to provide each registered player with EQUAL PLAYING TIME over the course of the home and away season.

The Club's Policy in Under 17.5's (Colts) & Youth Girls therefore means that equal playing time does not necessarily mean equal playing time in each specific game.

This means the Club imposes a requirement on players that when they know they are going to have to play their fair share of a game, there is little excuse for arriving at a game mentally or physically unprepared. A commitment by the Coach to play players equally requires a commitment by players to try their hardest.

When players do not fulfil their commitment, the Policy provides that the Coach (under these circumstances) is no longer obligated to fulfil his commitment to provide the player with Equal Playing Time. For players, an equal playing time system is better defined as an 'equal opportunity system'. Players can take advantage of these opportunities, and thereby increasing the likelihood of getting Equal Playing Time, by helping their team and their teammates by:

- playing to the best of their ability;
- preparing themselves (physically and mentally) to play to the best of their ability at all times;
- demonstrating commitment to the team by maximising attendance at training; and
- behaving appropriately and with respect.

Rotation Policy 's (under 12 onwards) coaches will give greater consideration to the players size, strength, skill level and game sense when rotating players positions. This may result in players playing in fewer positions. In turn, however, this will enhance the opportunity for the coach to help the player develop their knowledge of positional play.

The Coach's discretion will be applied in the case of injury, fatigue or poor attitude.

A Note to Coaches regarding the above Policies:

As Coach, the most important rule to bear in mind is that every member of your team wants to play in the game. That's why the players joined in the first place. You must never ever lose sight of this reality. You might notice that the parents come to many of the games. Don't fool yourself — the reason why parents come to watch the games is to see their son or daughter

play. As a secondary consideration, parents will tell you it's nice the team wins, but their number one priority is to see their child participate. If you keep this simple principle of equal participation in your mind when the game begins, you'll be on your way to a very successful season — regardless of whether the team wins or loses. That means not letting the less talented players play in the last quarter when the score is lopsided and the game already decided. Sprinkle in all of your players throughout the game. That way, every player will come out of the game knowing — win or lose — they helped contribute to the team's effort.

Now, that's coaching!