



## Broadbeach Cats Junior Australian Football Club

Subaru Oval  
Dunlop Crt  
Mermaid Waters

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# Playing outside of age policy

This policy determines the approach taken by Broadbeach Cats JAFc regarding players playing above their age group.

## AFLQ Regulations

This policy extends the league rules and regulations surrounding players playing in a competition based on their age group.

## Playing above age policy

The view of Broadbeach JAFc is that players must be registered in, and play in, the age group determined by the player's date of birth.

While we recognise that some players may wish to play in a higher or lower age group for various reasons, the club firmly believes that the benefits of playing within the correct age bracket significantly outweigh this consideration. Playing in the appropriate age group allows players to:

- Expand their friendship groups and foster social development.
- Enhance their football skills in a suitable developmental environment
- Improve their overall intellectual and emotional growth.

This policy exists to ensure:

- **Health and Safety:** Ensuring the wellbeing of all players is our top priority.
- **Non-Discrimination:** the policy is applied uniformly to all players, with exceptions made only in exceptional circumstances (as stated below).
- **Clarity and Certainty:** This policy provides clear guidelines for players, coaches, and parents, facilitating better understanding and communication.
- **Administrative Efficiency:** Streamlining age group placements eliminates the need for out-of-age requests, simplifying administration.

Broadbeach Cats JAFc will only consider allowing players to play above their age group in the following circumstances:

- To further development of exceptionally talented junior footballers (where the player would play the entire year above their age group – subject to approval as per below)
- Player numbers are short for a given week



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### Junior Football - U8 through to U11

#### For the entire season

Unless otherwise approved by the club committee, no player will be eligible to play solely above their age group for an entire season. Players will be required to play in the age group determined by their date of birth, and only play higher to “fill-in” where a team is short of players.

In exceptional circumstances, a player *may* be permitted to play above their age group, with committee approval. Should a player be identified as someone who should be playing above their age group (for example – an Under 10 age player playing in Under 11s), then the following process must take place:

- The head coach of the age group the player wishes to play must discuss with, and seek agreement from the head coach of the player’s registered age group.
- The proposal for the player to play above their age must be approved by the committee. The committee reserves the right to decline the playing up request.

If the player is accepted into the age group above, then the player becomes a full-time member of that age group. This decision is made one year at a time. At no point should a player be guaranteed of playing above their age group year after year.

#### Playing up an age group week by week

Coaches will be permitted to select players from the age group below to fill in for the week if they see fit. This should only happen if the team is short of players.

If the team has equal to or more than the required on-field player numbers, coaches are able to select one or more substitutes from a lower age group, however if either of those substitutes have (or will have by the end of the weekend) played a game other than this one - every effort should be made to give more playing time to the players who are usually in that team’s age group.

### Youth Football - U13 to U17

#### Playing up an age group for the entire year

Unless otherwise approved by the club committee, no player will be eligible to play solely above their age group for an entire season. Players will be required to play in their base age group, and only play in a higher age group to “fill-in” where the lowest division team in the higher age group is short of players.

There is scope for the management committee to approve a player playing above their age group. This is reserved for the most talented players, who have a realistic chance of being an AFL-listed player in the future. For this to occur, the coach of the higher age group must seek approval from both the lower-age group head coach, and the club committee.



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The procedure for a coach requesting a player to play above their age is:

- 1) The coach of the age group identifies or is made aware of a player in the below age group who is talented and can play at the top level in that age group. This should be done at the start of the season.
- 2) The coach is to then submit a request to the committee to review the possibility of this player playing above their age group for the entire season. This review is to include the following points:
  - a) Player's details
  - b) Characteristics of that player and why they fit in a team above their age group
  - c) Which division in the age group above (if any) they expect to play in
  - d) Previous history which suggests they will perform
- 3) The committee will then review and come to a decision to either allow or deny the request.
- 4) The coach will then discuss with the parent about playing in the higher age group throughout the year.
- 5) The decision to play above their age group in a given season does not warrant automatic movement in the next age level. Each decision is made per individual, reviewed on a yearly basis.
- 6) If throughout the year, the player is not performing to standard and should be dropped back, the coach will advise the parent and the committee of this decision and they will slot back into the age group below, and will fall into the week-by-week decisions.

### **Playing up an age group on an as-required basis**

The procedure to be followed is the following:

- 1) This procedure is valid when the team in the lowest division is short for a week (or a period of weeks). If there are no divisions, or all teams are in the same division, then this process should be followed if there is no other way of sharing players within the same age group.
- 2) In this case, the coach(es) of the age group below will be contacted about players who can fill in for this week. The coaches of the lower age group will contact parents, and then advise which players are available to play in that particular week.
- 3) A pool of players should be available to be used for this scenario, and should be rotated to allow fair exposure to the age group above.



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- 4) Players filling in week to week from the lower age group (not playing solely in the higher age group) must not be playing if it means a true-age player in that registered age group who is available to play misses out on that given week. Players from the lower division players will only be eligible to play for the lowest division, allowing true-age players to fill higher division positions.

### Playing below age policy

The only time a player can play below their age group is through AFLQ approval.

There is no capability in our club or the AFLQ rules and regulations for a player to play under their registered age group for a week at a time.

The procedure to obtain permission to play below their age group is:

- 1) The parent will need to direct their request to play under their registered age group to the committee.
- 2) The committee will need to review the merits of this request, and ensure it fits in with the guidelines provided by AFLQ (see 4.6 above)
- 3) Should this request fit the required guidelines for playing underneath an age group, then a representative from the committee will work with the parent to complete the necessary paperwork and submit to AFLQ for approval.