



Prestbury Phantom AFC – Team Structures Policy

This policy sets out the framework for how age groups should structure where multiple teams exist.

Depending on the number of players, there are a few options available to age groups on how to split their teams, whether by ability or with mixed ability teams. This document sets out the expectations of the club with regard to the organisation of team structures within age groups.

Academy Age Groups

At Phantoms we consider Academy age groups to be U5 to U8s. No child under 6 years of age may play in any competitive match or an organized friendly against another club, and they should not be put in to specific teams. All academy age groups should train as an academy (whole age group) whenever possible. U7s and U8s may participate in friendlies, tournaments and Round Robins. Teams must not be fixed beyond the duration of a specific event, tournament or group of Round Robins. The teams must be mixed ability.

U9s Age Group

At U9s the increased number of games and the degree of travel means that we allow teams to form for the season. All U9 teams will be mixed ability. U9 teams will form as per the '*Mixed Ability Age Group*' section of this policy.

Ability Based Age Groups

All younger age groups up to and including U9's operate a 'Mixed Ability' structure as players develop at different rates. As they gain experience and grow older then moving to a structure that places players in teams based on ability may, be more appropriate.

In this scenario players are placed into teams with players of similar abilities and in the instance of multiple teams at an age group will form an 'A' and 'B' type structure. Entry in to the league's division structure ideally will be appropriate to the team's ability as defined by match history and through discussions with the League Committee.

Before the start of the season **all** coaches led by the age groups Head Coach will decide on which players are most appropriate for each team team. The principal selection criteria is ability but friendship groups should be considered and care should be taken to ensure that all teams are able to compete at the league level to which they will be entered. Care should also be taken to ensure positions are covered across all teams.

Ideally players should remain in their selected team for the entirety of the season – however should the need arise to rebalance the teams this can be done only with the agreement of each team manager and the Chairman and Secretary of the club.



Any disputes on team selection that cannot be resolved by team coaches on any of the above shall be referred to the Executive Committee for final decision making.

Mixed Ability Age Groups

This is where players are placed into teams of mixed abilities with the aim of having teams that are balanced in terms of players and where each team should be equally competitive. Entry in to the league's division structure ideally will be appropriate to the team's ability as defined by match history and through discussions with the League Committee.

Before the start of the season **all** coaches led by the age groups Head Coach will decide on which players should be allocated to which team. The principal selection criteria will be based on creating balanced teams, covering all key positions and where possible maintain friendship groups.

Ideally players should remain in their selected team for the entirety of the season – however should the need arise to rebalance the teams this can be done only with the agreement of each Team Manager and the Chairman and Secretary of the club.

Any disputes on team selection that cannot be resolved by team coaches on any of the above shall be referred to the Executive Committee for final decision.

Combination of Ability and Mixed Ability Teams

There are occasions where the number of players registered at an age group allows the running of 3 or more teams. In this instance teams can be set up in either of the above 2 scenarios or can be a mix of the 2 where the third team can be deemed as a 'Developmental' team. This allows players in this team to develop their skills with players of similar abilities and play matches against similar teams.

Development Teams will be entered into an appropriate division in the league. Where it is felt that this isn't in the best interests of the players and with agreement with the coaches and the committee then Development Teams may just play friendly matches until league entry is felt appropriate.

Ideally players should remain in their selected team for the entirety of the season – however should the need arise to rebalance the teams this can be done only with the agreement of each team manager and the Chairman and Secretary of the club.

Any disputes on team selection that cannot be resolved by team coaches on any of the above shall be referred to the Executive Committee for final decision.

It is the Club's Philosophy is that The Phantoms is open to players from all abilities and backgrounds and everyone has the right to play and train regularly in a fun and safe environment. Ultimately it is the decision of all of the coaches led by the Head Coach to decide which structure is most appropriate for age groups from U10's and above.



Before the start of each season the age group must decide which structure they are planning to follow and agree this with The Chairman and Club Secretary. This must be done in plenty of time to ensure each team is registered for an appropriate division in the league. Age groups are free to change the structure they follow each year as they deem appropriate.

Before the start of the Season Head coaches must inform all parents of the structure they are planning to follow and which players are selected for each team.

Below are some additional guidelines that all must follow irrespective of which structure they follow.

Team Selection

When players have been placed in to their respective teams, they must have equal opportunity to represent the club in League Matches, Friendlies and Tournaments. Squad sizes may be large and so Coaches can decide to take a smaller squad to said matches however selection of a match day squad should be in line with club selection policy and the selection criteria explained to parents/ carers. Selected players must be rotated in line the club policy with the goal of giving players equal time.

All players that attend a match must play at least half of the match time – unless they are injured or subject to disciplinary issues such as Referee's intervention or poor general behaviour. This is an FA guideline, which the Club fully supports.

Player Request to Change Teams

The Coaches will endeavour to place players in the right teams, this is often a difficult process to manage in keeping to the agreed structure and ensuring teams have the appropriate balance whilst maintaining friendship groups. In all of the Structures the policy states that Coaches will aim to keep the players in the same team for the entirety of the season however there maybe instances where rebalancing may be required.

We ask all players, parents and carers to respect this process. However should a player wish to change teams they must in the first instance contact in writing, copying the Chairman and Club Secretary, the relevant coaches of BOTH teams to explain their reasons for the change. The relevant coaches must come to an agreement as to whether they can accommodate this change and in what time frame. In no instance shall a coach approach a player to switch teams without first speaking to the other teams coaches.

Any disputes on team player changes that cannot be resolved by the coaches shall be referred to the Executive Committee for final decision.



New Players

When new players join the club and at the beginning of each season, coaches must explain to the player and parents/carers the team structure used by that age group. A collective decision between the coaches must be made on which team that player is most appropriate for and whether this requires other player changes to accommodate this individual. In the event of any dispute then final decision will be made by the Executive Committee prior to confirming to the player.

Training

It is important that all teams of an age group have the ability to mix together and so where fixtures allow all age groups are asked to train together once a month.