**TINGARA NETBALL CLUB**

**POLICY ON GRADING AND POACHING**

**(JANUARY 2020)**

**A. Introduction**

1. Netball at FNA is a graded competitive sport, excluding the junior Set grades, and Tingara is a grading club. Team selection is based on playing ability and team balance rather than friendship groups. The Club has adopted a “grading, training, playing” philosophy.
2. The Club has a public grading policy which can be viewed on the Club website. Tingara’s grading procedure is an extensive process, which is designed to provide all players with the opportunity to demonstrate their netball skills in an unbiased and fair environment.
3. The Grading Committee includes past and current players with extensive knowledge of netball including its rules and regulations.
4. The grading process involves three stages:
   1. **Match play**: Players are observed by graders in game during the last 5 games of the regular season.
   2. **Coach’s feedback**: We ask all coaches at the end of the season to provide individual player feedback, including information regarding attitude and attendance at training, ability, versatility, playing under pressure and sportsmanship.
   3. **Grading sessions**: The final stage of the process is the 2-3 weeks of grading sessions held in February/March. Participation at the Club’s grading trials is compulsory. Absence due to special extenuating circumstances must be communicated in writing to the Club prior to the commencement of the grading trials. The Club may schedule additional grading trials and/or adopt other strategies to maximize the effectiveness of the grading processes. Where preferred playing positions are sought, players will predominantly be trialed in those positions. Versatility of a player may be advantageous.
5. All players are graded on their assessed skill, commitment level, and ability to fit into various team combinations to promote team balance. Ability alone does not necessarily determine where a player is graded.
6. As per Tingara Netball Club’s By-Law 11 - no member of the Grading Committee is directly involved in the grading of any player within their own family.
7. Once team selection has been announced players will not be moved between teams unless exceptional circumstances arise (e.g. where a player is seriously injured and this necessitates another player to be moved). Parental/player request for review of their own grading will not be considered. If, for whatever reason, you have concerns with the grading process in general, then any query must be in writing and be emailed to the Club President. Claims from parents that their child has been graded too low will not be considered.
8. Consistent with the Club’s focus of being competitive on court, the Club has also adopted a special policy for the grading and development of the 17s and 19s players.
9. Junior players are graded by year of birth as per FNA policy. Players are graded into teams of like ability to allow for maximum enjoyment and player development. Exceptions to this may at times arise, e.g. when the Club may have insufficient player registrations to form a full team or when a player is identified to be of exceptional talent.
10. Special guidance is provided for:
    1. Occasions when players are not able to attend the Club pre-season grading sessions.
    2. Team Requests for seniors.

**B. Grading Panel**

1. The grading panel provides oversight of the grading process and policy. It comprises:
   1. The Club President;
   2. 2 other members of the Executive Committee as nominated from year to year by the Executive Committee;
   3. The Grading Co-ordinator(s); and
   4. Other committee members at the discretion of the executive committee.
2. The Grading Panel may seek reviews of grading practices and decisions at any time. These reviews are aimed at improving the overall effectiveness, consistency and integrity of the Club’s grading processes and will be in consultation with the relevant Grading Co-ordinator(s).
3. The Grading Panel reviews the teams as selected by the Grading Committee and approves prior to the team grading announcements.

**C. Grading Policy**

1. Tingara is committed to ensuring fair grading for all players. It is recognised that:
   1. The relative playing ability of individuals may change (i.e. improve or stagnate) from year to year; and
   2. Despite the best of intentions by the Club graders, individual players may be inappropriately graded (i.e. up or down) from year to year.
2. Accordingly, players should be graded with a “fresh set of eyes” from year to year if possible, subject to limitations of the resources available to the Club for grading personnel.
3. The following rules shall apply for grading each season:
   1. Under no circumstances shall a parent or immediate family member grade or assist in grading his or her own child or sibling.
   2. Extended family relatives should preferably not be graders of those players.
   3. Prior year coaches of players should preferably not be graders of those players in the following season.
   4. Similarly, prior year graders of players should preferably not be graders of those players in the following season.
   5. The Grading Co-ordinator(s) shall appoint a Head Grader for each grade and oversee the process, offering assistance and co-ordination as appropriate to the Grading Committee as a whole.
   6. The team lists will be kept confidential until announced either just prior to (by email) or at the 1st training sessions. However, the Coaching Co-ordinators may, in exceptional circumstances, disclose team selections to individual coaches to assist them in their early season team planning.
   7. The team lists will be passed to the Coaching Co-ordinators as soon as possible to assist them in recruiting coaches for the various teams.

**D. Grading of 17s and 19s**

1. Tingara encourages the more talented and committed players in the 17s and 19s age groups to play at a standard that challenges their abilities and promotes their and the Club’s netball development without placing an unreasonable strain on their overall netball and social endeavours.
2. Accordingly, the Grading Co-ordinator will consult with the Grading Committee to:
   1. Identify early in the grading process those players in the 17s grade who may benefit from playing in the 19s or senior/open competition.
   2. Identify early in the grading process those players in the 19s grade who may benefit from playing in the senior/open competition.
3. The Grading Co-ordinator will then consult with and seek approval from the Grading Panel for these identified players to be asked to play in the relevant higher grades.
4. The Grading Co-ordinator will then liaise with the identified players and seek their agreement to play in the higher grades, and if possible integrate their grading trials with the higher grades.
5. Individual players (or their parents) in the 17s and 19s grades may request to ‘play up’ to a senior grade, but this request must be made in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the commencement of the registration period. This requirement will be communicated to any player/parent who makes prior enquiries and also placed in the Club registration pack.

**E. Juniors Playing in Higher and Lower Grades**

1. If a junior player has been identified as having exceptional talent and/or a team of appropriate ability is not available in the relevant age group, then the player may be requested to play in a higher age group. This will only occur if the player and their parents/guardians agree with this. The Grading Co-ordinator(s) must endeavour to identify early in the grading process such players to assist in the grading processes generally.
2. “Players of exceptional talent” is defined as those players who make a difference to their team and without whom the team would not be as strong. State selection does not guarantee playing up or top team selection.
3. As the safety and integrity of each junior player and team must be maintained, decisions for junior players to “play up” are not to be made lightly and will be discussed and approved by both the Grading Committee and the Grading Panel. Player elevation will be kept to a minimum through all junior age groups.
4. Individual players (or their parents) may request to ‘play down’ to a lower grade where a legitimate reason exists such as physical capacity or disability.  This request must be made in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the commencement of the registration period and players will need to provide relevant medical evidence for assessment.  It should be noted that the final assessment will be determined by Fremantle Netball Association, not Tingara. This requirement will be communicated to any player/parent who makes enquiries and also placed in the Club registration pack.

**F. Making Up Team Numbers**

1. In the circumstance of insufficient player registrations for a team in any particular age group, a player may be requested to play in a higher age group to complete a team of similar ability. The Club will discuss any such arrangements with the player (and their parents if that player is 17 years old or younger).

**G. Absences from Grading Trials**

1. Participation at the Club’s grading trials are compulsory, unless there are special extenuating circumstances that are communicated in writing to the Grading Co-ordinator(s). There should be at least 1 weeks’ notice for previously known absence (e.g. school camp) or at the earliest time for unknown absence (e.g. significant injury/illness).
2. For the Club’s JA to Go G grades:
   1. If there are special extenuating circumstances preventing the player participating in the grading trials and these circumstances have been duly communicated to the Club, then (subject to paragraphs 31 and 32) the Grading Co-ordinator and Grading Committee must refer to the player’s records in prior season grading and coach’s prior year comments (if any). However, the player cannot be elevated to a higher graded team relative to the previous year (for example, if a player is graded JD2 in the previous year, that cannot be graded higher than JC2 the next year).
   2. In all other circumstances of non-participation of the grading trials, then the Grading Co-ordinator(s) and Grading Committee may still refer to the player’s records in prior season grading and coach’s prior year comments (if any). However, the player cannot be graded in any of the highest 3 teams for that age group, unless team numbers dictate otherwise.
3. For 17’s and 19s players **who are moving into a new age group** or combined age group:
   1. If there are special extenuating circumstances preventing the player participating in the grading trials and these circumstances have been duly communicated to the Club, then (subject to paragraphs 31 and 32) the Grading Co-ordinator(s) and Grading Committee must refer to the player’s records in prior season grading and coach’s prior year comments (if any). However, the player cannot be selected in the top team for that age group.
   2. In all other circumstances of non-participation of the grading trials, then the Grading Co-ordinator may still refer to the player’s records in prior season grading and coach’s prior year comments. However, the player cannot be graded in the highest 2 teams for that age group, unless team numbers dictate otherwise.
4. For all other players in 17s, 19s and also for all players in seniors:
   1. If there are special extenuating circumstances preventing the player participating in the grading trials and these circumstances have been duly communicated to the Club, then (subject to paragraphs 31 and 32) the Grading Co-ordinator(s) must refer to the player’s records in prior season grading and coach’s prior year comments (if any). However, the player cannot be elevated to the highest graded team, unless team numbers dictate otherwise.
   2. In all other circumstances of non-participation of the grading trials, then the Grading Co-ordinator may still refer to the player’s records in prior season grading and coach’s prior year comments. However, the player cannot be graded in the highest 3 teams for that age group, unless team numbers dictate otherwise.
5. Where Grading Co-ordinator(s) are faced with absences of key or several players at grading sessions (who have communicated their own special extenuating circumstances), then they should, were practicable, endeavour to use other options to facilitate the grading process, such as:
   1. Announcing squads; or
   2. Extending grading periods by a week to grade players.
6. Where this occurs:
   1. Information regarding the amended selection process must be communicated as soon as possible to the relevant players.
   2. Where a squad is announced:
7. Coaches who have been appointed to the teams concerned may provide feedback where the Grading Co-ordinator deems it appropriate.
8. The squad will train together and be assessed and final teams selected as and when appropriate but also as soon as practicable.

**H. Team Requests**

1. The Club has adopted a “grading, training, playing” philosophy, and as such, does not wish to be perceived as a Club that promotes pre-formed teams. However, balanced against this is the desire to accommodate team requests for senior teams to retain its older members as they graduate through the Club’s ranks, and where appropriate safeguards and criteria are in place to ensure the team requests do not disrupt the overall efficiency and integrity of the Club. Players are graded for the following reasons:
   1. To be placed in a team/grade which is appropriate for their skill level.
   2. To be placed in a team which will enable them to attain desired skills.
   3. To be placed in a team which will enhance their enjoyment of the game.
2. Accordingly, the Club adopts the following internal guidelines for team requests:
   1. The Club will not accept team requests for teams graded at Senior A5 or above.
   2. Where deemed appropriate by the Grading Panel, team requests will be allowed subject to the following guidelines:
3. A request to play with certain team members must be made to the Grading Co-ordinator before the commencement of Club pre-season grading.
4. Under no circumstances will the Club allow a playing member (who is not an included member of a team request) to be disadvantaged in their team placement as a result of the admission of a team request
5. Team balance, in regards to on court positions, will always be considered a priority over team requests.
6. Where a full team request is made (must be 9 players) the team will need to bring their own coach and make an additional contribution to the club through coaching, umpiring or as a member of the Management Committee.
7. The players involved in a team request must still attend all grading sessions so as to allow the Grading Co-ordinator to assess the team for FNA grading purposes.
8. The team must commit to playing for the full season.
9. Fees for all players must be paid prior to pre-season grading commencing.

**I. No Poaching Policy**

1. The Club actively pursues a “no poaching from another FNA club” policy. Any concerns or grey areas in this regard shall be referred to the Executive Committee where appropriate.
2. Where a player is placed on the Club’s waiting list after the season’s registration period is closed, and if subsequently the Club considers registering that player to make up team numbers, then:
   1. That player must be asked if they are registered with another FNA affiliated club.
   2. If that player is so registered with another FNA affiliated club, then Tingara will not seek to register that player unless there are clear extenuating circumstances and all appropriate FNA procedures are followed (including receiving the appropriate approval from the other club).