



## **GRADING POLICY**

Eltham Panthers Netball Club (EPNC) provides players with the opportunity to learn about netball and participate and play in a competitive team environment. To ensure that all players can achieve their full potential, a grading process for ages 13U and above will be undertaken prior to the commencement of the new netball year when there are two or more teams in one age group.

### **What is Grading?**

Grading at Club level is a process whereby players are placed into teams based on their ability/skill level, attitude and commitment and those teams are then graded further into a Division within the whole competition (ie. Division 1/2/3/4). Grading is a productive way to group players of similar abilities and to help achieve the best outcome for each individual.

The aim of the grading process is to ensure all players are placed in a team that will:

- a) Best represent their level of skill and ability;
- b) Maximise opportunities to develop and improve their skills; and
- c) Maximise their enjoyment and love of the game.

Grading occurs for ages 13U and above when there are two or more teams in one age group.

### **Why Grade?**

Grading assists with team selection for the following reasons:

1. Each year, new players join the Eltham Panthers Netball Club
2. Existing players may move from one age group to another
3. There can be differing rates of development of players from season to season.

Grading allows both new and existing players to be placed in a team that will optimise their playing experience, learning, and development potential.

### **What is the Grading Committee?**

The Grading Committee consists of the EPNC President, Vice President, Coaches Coordinator, and Squad Co-ordinators. The Grading Committee may also choose to consult with other members of the EPNC Committee, as required. The Grading Committee will also engage, where practicable, an independent selector to provide input into grading decisions.

### **Club Grading Day**

At the beginning of a new netball year, before the Autumn season commences, players (13U and above) are invited to attend a 'Grading Day'. Players in the 9U and 11U age groups do not participate in grading. Whilst it is not compulsory for players to attend Grading Day, it is recommended. Players who choose not to or are unable to attend, will be placed in a team based on their past experience and coaches evaluation.



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At the time of registration, players will be able to indicate their two preferred court positions and will be given the opportunity to trial in at least one of those positions during the grading process. Players may also be asked to play in non-preferred positions. If there are not enough players to fill all teams in a particular age group, the Grading Committee can invite top age players from a younger age group to trial.

It is important to understand that the grading process also aims to ensure that a team consists of players that cover the spread of court positions (i.e. mid-court, shooting and defence). A player will be identified as capable of playing in defence, goals or mid-court. The Grading Committee will take into consideration new players that have yet to establish a preferred court position.

It is important for the Grading Committee to see the players in a variety of positions and every effort is made to ensure that players are not overwhelmed by the grading process.

Players will trial within their own age group, however if a top age player from the age group below is deemed capable of playing above their age group, and it is considered by the Grading Committee to be beneficial to the development of the player, that player will also be able to trial for the above aged group. This request needs to be made in writing, sent from the player's parent(s) via email to the EPNC at [info@elthampanthersnetballclub.com.au](mailto:info@elthampanthersnetballclub.com.au)

The eventual team placement will be determined not only by how the player trials, but also with due consideration to team numbers and the number of players registered in the age group they are trialling for. Preference must be given to the players that are first eligible by age. Playing at representative level does not guarantee a player a position in a first/top team.

### Friendship Requests

Friendship groups can be a determining factor for team placement particularly at ages 9U and 11U. From 13U onwards, friendship requests will be considered and every effort will be made to fulfill these requests, however this is not always possible. From 13U onwards, teams are generally formed according to similar skill levels of players, coverage of all of the positions in a team, and creating a competitive team environment.

We wish all of our players to reach their full potential in the sport of netball. Where an 11U or above player requests to be moved to a team in a higher division because of friendships, the highest division player will be offered to move down. The lower grade player cannot move up unless their skills are commensurate with the higher grade.

### Grading Day Process

Grading Day is made up of a number of short games within each age group where the Grading Committee can see each player play in a number of different positions, including those indicated in their registration as their preferred position/s. These trial games are all scheduled pre Grading Day and it is extremely important that the committee is advised of players that are unable to attend. The Squad Coordinators will support



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arrangements for the Club Grading Day including positioning of players for grading games for their age bracket. Squad Coordinators will support the Coaches Coordinator to create a Grading Day Schedule, allocating players to chosen positions across multiple rounds for their respective age group(s).

During the grading session, the following will be taken into account:

- Footwork
- Speed and agility
- Ball handling skills
- Attacking skills
- Defending skills
- Versatility
- Perception and cognition skills
- Sportsmanship and attitude

The overall aim of Grading Day is to match players with similar skill levels so they can maximize their development.

Questions about Grading Day can be directed to the Eltham Panthers Netball Club President or Vice President prior to the commencement of Grading Day. Grading Day is very busy for the Grading Committee and they will be unable to discuss individual players on the day.

### **Coaches Evaluation**

Prior to the Grading Day process, previous season coaches will provide feedback, via end of season Coaches Reports, regarding player skill levels (passing, footwork, etc), and their level of commitment and attitude (both on game day and at training).

### **Final Team Selection**

At the completion of the grading process, the Grading Committee will place players into teams taking into consideration how they trialed, their level of experience, coaches feedback, and any other relevant factors. When forming teams, the aim is to achieve balance within each team. Consideration is also given to the Division the teams are likely to be placed.

The Squad Coordinator is responsible for drafting player placements for one specific age bracket (either 9U & 11U, 13U, 15U, or 17U, 21U & Open). The Squad Co-ordinator will work collaboratively with other members of the Grading Committee to finalise player placements for their age bracket at the beginning of each season, under the oversight of the Club President, Vice President and Coaches' Co-ordinator.

The EPNC does not reconduct grading mid-year, prior to the commencement of the Spring Season. Instead, we try to keep the teams that were formed for the Autumn season together so that players have a



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full year with a team. At the commencement of the Spring registration period, we receive new registrations, some players decide not to re-register, or withdraw. Player evaluation can also affect change. Requests for movement are considered across teams when the move benefits all. Some team movement can occur for these reasons. Squad Coordinators provide support and advice to the President, Vice President and/or Coaches Co-ordinator regarding mid-season player placements, when required.

We encourage parents and players to be reasonable in their expectations and encourage positive feedback so that players will be happy in the teams in which they are ultimately placed.

### **Announcement of Teams**

Team Coaches will be advised of team selections in the first instance by the Coaches Coordinator. If a coach perceives that there are any issues with the team, the Grading Committee will reconvene to discuss and make a final decision. Parents and players will then be advised as to their team selection via email, sent by the President, Vice President or Coaches Coordinator. Once a Team Manager (TM) has volunteered for each team, the full team list, including contact, medical, photo permission details etc, is forwarded to the TM and Coach at the same time.

### **Disputes**

If a parent/player has any specific concerns about their player's team selection, they must submit their concern in writing via email in the first instance to the Eltham Panthers Netball Club. Core members of the Grading Committee will reconvene (i.e., President, Vice President and Coaches Coordinator) to consider the issues raised and liaise with the relevant age group Squad Coordinator, if needed. The President will advise the family of their decision at their earliest convenience.

### **Confidentiality**

All grading assessment sheets, coaches' reports and selectors' discussions are strictly confidential.

### **Manningham Netball Association Grading**

Following on from internal Club grading and team selection, teams are forwarded to Manningham Netball Association with a recommendation as to what division the team should play in, and a Manningham Netball Association Grading Meeting is held.

The attendees at this meeting are usually the President of each Club and the Vice President of Manningham Netball Association. At this meeting all of the teams entered in the association competition are considered and a lengthy process of grading teams into divisions and fitting them into available time slots is completed.

The first 3 games of the season are 'grading rounds'. At the end of these rounds another Manningham Netball Association Grading meeting is held to consider the results of the first three rounds and to



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determine whether any grading changes need to be made.

The Eltham Panthers Netball Club, as do all other clubs, campaign in the interests of their own teams. At times, compromises do need to be made to ensure the overall competition runs as smoothly as possible.

At times there needs to be some player movements made at Club level after the grading rounds due to factors such as late registrations, player withdrawals, team numbers, and/or specific requests. We ask that parents respect that the Grading Committee is endeavouring to provide balance across the whole Club and specific requests cannot always be accommodated.