

# SMJFL Grading Guidelines & Processes

## Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clubs with information regarding the SMJFL grading procedures and help clubs determine the best way to select teams at each of the relevant age groups.

## Objectives

1. Teams are fielded in competitions that are as evenly matches as possible
2. Players are provided with the best opportunity to develop and display their skills

## General Principles

Preferably, all competitions will have no less than six and no more than 10 teams. Ideally, each competition will have eight teams.

Byes will be avoided whenever possible. However, in U11+ competitions, priority will be given to having teams in the most competitive competitions.

Note, late team withdrawals/entries can have a significant impact on the size of competitions.

Ideally, clubs will not have more than one team in a grade.

The SMJFL will endeavour to meet all club grading requests and nominations but will take into consideration the impact on all teams/clubs. A club's previous grading and result history also will be taken into account.

Unless it is extenuating circumstances, the SMJFL will not re-grade teams after round 4.

## Club Team Selection Guidelines

The following is relevant where a club has multiple teams in an age group.

### U8-U10

It is suggested that clubs select teams to allow players to play with friendship/school groups for these age groups. Clubs may choose to mix the groups while moving through these age groups to ensure players/parents are prepared for older age groups where they will be placed in teams based on ability.

### U11

Clubs may want to start 'soft grading' teams at this age group. Soft grading may involve keeping the majority of a team together from the U10s but moving a couple of higher/lower skills players up/down to allow the club to enter teams into the A, B and/or C categories as per the SMJFL grading process.

### U12+

Given the SMJFL will be grading the U13 age group directly based on the results from U12s, it is suggested the club moves to a hard grade from U12s. This means teams are picked purely based on playing ability.

## Pre-Season Grading

### U8-U10 Mixed & Girls

Clubs will be asked to nominate teams into Beginner and Experienced grades. The SMJFL will then place teams in competitions based on geographical area.

Suggested consideration points for clubs (based on the majority of players in the team):

#### U8

**Beginner:** First year playing club football, second year of club football but struggled to be competitive in previous season.

**Experienced:** Second year playing club football and/or above average ability.

#### U9 & U10

**Beginner:** New players to the game or struggled to be competitive in previous season/s.

**Experienced:** Have played one or more seasons of club football.

After four rounds, the SMJFL may move teams into different competitions based on results\*.

\*Whilst scores are not officially kept, clubs are still required to submit results on line to ensure teams are in competitive grades.

### U11 & U12 Mixed and U12 – U18 Girls

Clubs will be asked to nominate teams into 'A', 'B' and 'C' grades. The SMJFL will then place teams into competitions based on geographical area and may also refer to previous season's results.

To assist with the grading process, clubs will be asked to advise the SMJFL of the club's team selection process.

Suggested consideration points for clubs (based on the majority of players in the team):

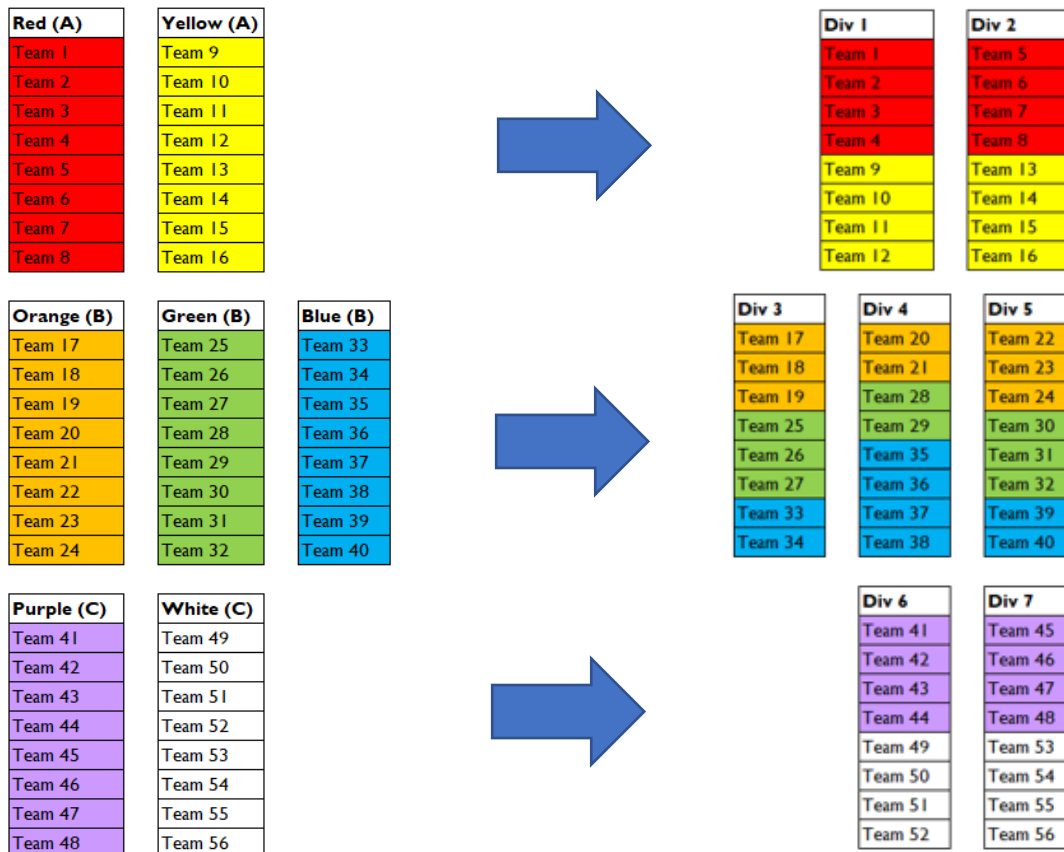
**A:** Club is expecting team to be highly competitive in the age group.

**B:** Club believes this is a mid-range team that may have a small to medium number of high quality players.

**C:** Team is mostly filled with new players or those that are less skilful.

**Note:** in the case of girls age groups, clubs may wish to put bottom age players in the same team and request to be put into either a C or B division.

### Example structure rounds 1-4:



After four rounds, teams will be graded into divisions 1, 2, 3 etc. based on results. The following is an example of the structure assuming team ladder positions are as per above:

Note, this is an example only, teams may be moved into higher/lower divisions depending on results.

### U13+ Mixed/Boys

The league will determine Initial Gradings based on results from the previous season. Generally speaking (assuming eight teams in a division), the grand final winner and the team that finishes on top of the ladder (at the end of the home and away season) will be promoted and the two teams that finish on the bottom of the ladder will be relegated. However, in the case of the top team and the grand final winner being the same team, the second placed team (at the end of the home and away season) shall be promoted.

Final Gradings will be published once team numbers have been confirmed and clubs have been given the opportunity to provide feedback on the Initial Gradings.

Teams may be re-graded based on the results of the first four rounds.

### **Regrading Process**

Clubs will be asked to provide re-grading requests prior to round 4 via an online form. Clubs may request teams are moved up, moved down or are kept in the same grade. The SMJFL will establish a Grading Committee to review all requests at the conclusion of round 4. The Grading Committee shall provide recommendations to the SMJFL who will then seek club feedback prior to making final decisions regarding any changes.

The SMJFL may manipulate fixtures for round 3 and 4 to assist in the regrading process e.g. ensure two teams play each other before the movement of teams.

Any re-grading requests made after this time will only be considered in extenuating circumstances.

### Timeline

Note: the below is taken from the Sunday of round 4.

Re-grading requests due	12pm Sunday
Grading Committee reviews submissions	Sunday Afternoon/Evening
SMJFL provides planned changes to clubs	Sunday Evening
Any club feedback due	5pm Monday
Grading Committee & SMJFL review feedback	Monday Evening
Updated gradings released to clubs	Tuesday Morning
Round 5 fixtures released	Wednesday

### **Regrading Considerations**

The SMJFL will take the following into account when determining any changes to grading after round 4:

- Results of matches from the first four rounds
- Club grading request history
- Win/loss % from the previous two seasons
- Balance of all competitions
- Impact on other teams
- Byes that will be created (particularly in lower age groups)
- Any other items the SMJFL deems relevant