

Behind the scenes in our recent Committee & Coaching meetings we have been having some discussions on the ethos and future of our Club. It is important that we are as transparent as possible regarding our ethos which is to provide the best possible footballing experience for as many girls as possible, for as long as possible. Ultimately our aim is for the Amazons to be playing football together as women.

Amazons Streaming Policy:

At U11 we will start the process of streaming players ready for the competitive U12 season. OGFL Leagues are competitive from U12, and we want to ensure the girls are playing in an environment that allows them to develop as players, have the most personal success and where they will be happiest for the greatest length of their time at our club. We will use player profiling to help us do this and incorporate feedback from as many of our club coaches as possible to minimise subjectivity. Player profiling absolutely takes the wishes of the players into consideration. Player profiling involves significant feedback to and from all the girls at every age group. Profiling facilitates the development of well-rounded players who are used to giving and receiving feedback as an integral part of their journey in sport.

One squad policy:

Across the Club all girls within the same age group will train together so they are all familiar with one-another and all the age group coaches. It means they are exposed to several coaching styles and personalities and can receive feedback from several engaged adults.

Multiple teams per age group: Our ethos is that footballers will develop faster and better through playing the game as much as possible. We started the Amazons to provide maximum football for the maximum number of girls whilst stretching them all. We therefore try to field more than one team in each age group as soon as numbers are sufficient to enable the second team. Your daughter may, therefore, experience a team division and then streaming if they play with us for several years. The one-squad philosophy minimises the impact of any division as the girls will continue to train together. Until U11 we will absolutely take existing friendships and logistics into consideration when creating two teams from one. The last thing we want is to affect your daughter's enjoyment of their chosen sport, but parent support and "buy-in" is required to assist us to deal with the inevitable transitions that will happen from year to year, especially once issues of ability and commitment interfere with friendship bonds. If you feel that you can support this ethos further by becoming a team Manager, Coach or even an occasional match-day Manager, please let us know.

Moving players across teams or up/down age groups:

It is for the Club Committee, in consultation with the relevant age-group Coaches, to agree on any moves across teams or age groups. The Committee may also have to seek guidance from the League/s and/or County FA for age-group moves. Movements are usually prompted by the need to balance player numbers or significant ability differentials within teams at the same age group (we do not stream until the U11 season). Individual players and their parents will be consulted and the most appropriate situation for the player and the relevant team/s will be found. We understand that girls will not perform at their best in a team they are not happy in. Sometimes players will need to move up or down an age group. The same consultation process will apply. Moving up an

age group (individually or as a team) will only be considered if it doesn't impact the current squads (individual cases) and is the right thing for the girls' development. On rare occasions, a move may be prompted by significant child welfare, logistical or friendship issues. The Committee and coaches will be as open about the process as possible, but will not be able to provide detail that would contravene the safeguarding or confidentiality of individual children or families. League rules will determine the windows where players can be moved between teams - there are several windows across a season. Players may find themselves "Cup tied" if they have moved teams but Coaches will be aware of this and manage this restriction accordingly to maximise playing opportunities.

Equal game time:

We maintain a policy of "equal game time" until the U11 season and the introduction of streaming. During the U11 season we will introduce the concept of "appropriate game time" - if a child consistently misses training for example, they cannot expect to be included in a team's starting line-up. Playing time from U11 upwards will be at the coach's discretion but will be easily justified and based on factors such as ability, commitment, attitude, fitness and the requirements of the team.

Why do we do it this way, other clubs don't?:

We don't want to be like other clubs! We like to win games but it's not our focus. We are here to provide football for any girl who wants to play and we will therefore have teams of different ability/commitment levels. It's miserable to see kids left on a subs bench for almost an entire game; it's also waste of your time and money. It's even more miserable to be the girl left on the subs bench and we don't want to see this happen in our club. Plenty of clubs/teams/parents are happy do this - substitutes still win trophies. But it's rare that those subs get significant game-time and as a consequence they learn very little and their development is restricted. Players also learn very little from winning all the time. Until U11 having multiple (balanced) teams per age group requires more work (cooperation, communication, coaches, admin, pitch allocations etc) and it's why other clubs don't bother - they will instead select early by ability and deselect players as soon as their performance drops. It's often not about the kids, but the adults in these scenarios. If you or your child are not prepared to ride the ups and downs of the rollercoaster that is playing any sport, children's non-linear development and respect the time and thought that our volunteers put into developing their coaching practice and their teams, then we're probably not the club for you. Our club exists because of and for our girls. We are here to facilitate, as far as possible, what they themselves want from football. Ultimately, in several years time, we hope our club will be run by young women who started their footballing journey as Amazons.