**NURIOOTPA HOCKEY CLUB**

**JUNIOR POLICY**

**Objectives**

* To develop and field strong junior teams that provide players with valuable development opportunities.
* To successfully transition as many junior players as possible into senior hockey.
* To ensure a structured and transparent process for selecting junior players for senior teams.
* To manage the expectations of junior players participating in senior competitions.

**1. Junior Playing Priority**

* All players that are eligible to play juniors as of the first of January of the current year, must prioritise playing and training for Nuriootpa Hockey Club in a junior competition over any senior commitments.
* Junior players may not prioritise senior commitments over their junior obligations.
* Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in removal from senior selection consideration.
* Any request for exemption due to extenuating circumstances please approach the Junior Coordinator or Club President no later than the day before the game is played. Eg work commitments

**2. Junior Participation in Senior Teams**

* Junior players are encouraged to train with a senior team.
* This provides an opportunity for junior players to experience a faster-paced, higher-skill environment to aid in their development.
* If a junior player is looking to be selected for a senior’s team and does not attend training or provide a reasonable excuse to the coach of that team, then they cannot be considered to play in that senior team in that week.
* If the senior team is short on players, then an exemption from the coach or team manager needs to be submitted to the junior coordinator or club president, for approval for the junior

At Nuriootpa Hockey Club, junior hockey remains the priority for all junior-aged players. If a scheduling conflict arises between a junior and senior match, the junior match will take precedence.

* Juniors are expected to attend junior training sessions in preference to senior training.
* Junior players interested in further developing their skills are encouraged to participate in senior matches under the following conditions:
	+ Their workload permits it.
	+ There is availability within a senior team.
	+ They have been invited to play by a senior coach.

**3. Junior Age Group Requirements**

* Junior players must compete in their designated age group.
* A second match in a higher junior grade may only be offered if there are insufficient numbers in that higher junior grade, with the oldest junior player being offered first.
* Any conflict regarding age group placement should be directed to the Junior Coordinator.

**4. Junior Team Playing Time and Team Contribution**

* As far as possible, players in full-field teams should receive equal playing time throughout the season, taking into account attendance, reliability, and attitude at training.
* During finals, all players should be given a “fair go” and receive reasonable time on the field.
* The Club recognises that children participate in sport for various reasons and that inadequate playing time is a key factor in player attrition.
* All team members are considered equally important, regardless of gender, age, ability, or position on the field.

**5. Game Day Expectations**

* Players playing a second match on the same day must start on the bench if there are more than eleven team members present.

**6. Training Requirements for Junior Players in Multiple Teams**

* Junior players regularly playing a second match should attend training for that second team whenever possible.

**7. Exemption for Premier League Players**

* A junior player who has played at least 3 games in the Hockey SA Metro Premier League or an equivalent interstate competition in the current or previous season may apply for an exemption from junior competition requirements.
* Exemption requests must be submitted in writing to the Club President for approval.

8. **Communication**

* Any communication to a junior player playing/or not playing must be in the presence of the junior players parent/guardian
* The president or junior coordinator will contact either the senior team coach or team manager if a player selected in their side has not played their grade first.

For any disputes, concerns, or exemption requests, players and parents should consult the Junior Coordinator or Club President.

Authorised and Endorsed by the Nuriootpa Hockey Club Committee 2025