

(TSS – Team Support System (Football))

Roles & Responsibilities of Fair Play & MPO Officers

Guiding Principles for Upholding Club Policies and Fostering a Positive Sporting Environment

Introduction

The roles of Fair Play and MPO (Member Protection Officer) are central to promoting integrity, inclusivity, and a positive sporting experience within our club. By adhering to our established Club Policies and Procedures, Fair Play and MPO Officers serve as custodians of our values, ensuring that every participant—player, coach, manager, and parent—acts in accordance with the spirit of the game and the mission of our club. Their work extends far beyond enforcing rules; it is about building a culture of respect, fair competition, and personal development.

1. Adherence to Club Policies & Procedures

Fair Play and MPO Officers must be thoroughly familiar with, and actively uphold, the club's foundational documents and guidelines. These include:

- Club Policies
- Fair Play Policy
- Codes of Conduct
- Our Mission and Values
- Dispute Process
- Spirit of the Games Policy
- Working with Children Check
- Child Protection Policy

Their daily responsibilities require ongoing engagement with these documents to ensure seamless integration into all club activities. Officers should lead by example, demonstrating a consistent commitment to the policies, and guiding others to do the same.

2. Oversight of Fair Team Selection and Player Inclusion

Fair Play and MPO Officers are responsible for safeguarding fairness in team selection and player rotation:

- **Team Selection Integrity:** Officers must ensure that, if a coach requires a player from another team to help make up numbers due to extenuating circumstances, all players listed in the original squad are played first. Invited players serve as substitutes in case of tiredness or injury and not as tools for gaining a competitive advantage.
- **Promotion and Demotion:** Once a team has been selected at the start of the season, it remains intact for the duration. There is no policy allowing for weekly promotions or demotions between teams. This stability helps nurture team spirit and a sense of belonging.
- **Collaboration on Team Movement:** Any discussions regarding moving players between teams must be collaborative, involving the Coach, Parent, Player, Team Manager, and Head of Junior Football Operations. The Officer plays a mediating role, ensuring all voices are heard and decisions are in the best interest of the players and teams.

3. Promoting Equitable Play and Development

A cornerstone of the club's philosophy is that every player deserves fair opportunities to participate and develop:

- **Balanced Playing Time:** Officers must oversee that talented players are not overplayed at the expense of their teammates. Players of all abilities, including those considered "just average," are entitled to meaningful game time.
- **Mandatory Participation for Invited Players:** All players invited to a game must play; their presence is not merely as backup. Officers should monitor substitutions and rotations to ensure these are conducted as fairly as possible, supporting an inclusive playing environment.
- **Substitution Policies:** The Officer is expected to observe games and provide feedback to coaches regarding equitable substitutions and rotations throughout the season.

4. Finals and Player Eligibility

During finals, team selection takes on added importance:

- **Team Member Priority:** In finals, preference must always be given to existing team members rather than inviting players from other teams to strengthen the lineup. This ensures that those who have contributed throughout the season are justly rewarded with the opportunity to experience finals football.
- **Spirit Over Outcome:** Officers must uphold the principle that finals are for recognizing commitment and effort, not solely for securing victory. The goal is to give players the chance to learn, grow, and enjoy the experience, regardless of competitive pressures.

5. Upholding the Spirit of the Game

Integral to the role is the obligation to nurture the spirit of the game:

- **Role Modeling:** Fair Play and MPO Officers must act as role models, embodying respect, positivity, and good sportsmanship both on and off the field.
- **Conflict Mediation:** Officers should intervene in disputes or unsporting behavior, utilizing the club's Dispute Process to resolve issues fairly and constructively.
- **Community Engagement:** Encouraging a strong sense of community, Officers should foster connections among players, coaches, parents, and club officials, reinforcing the club's values and mission.

6. Child Protection and Welfare

As part of their safeguarding responsibilities, Officers must:

- **Ensure All Adults are Checked:** Verify that all coaches, volunteers, and staff working with children have valid Working with Children Checks in accordance with the law and club policy.
- **Promote Awareness:** Regularly remind the club community of Child Protection Policies and best practices for safeguarding youth participants.
- **Respond to Concerns:** Take prompt action when concerns are raised, ensuring the welfare and safety of all children involved in club activities.

7. Communication and Education

Fair Play and MPO Officers are also responsible for clear communication and ongoing education:

- **Policy Communication:** Officers should regularly communicate club policies and procedures to all stakeholders, ensuring understanding and compliance.
- **Training and Development:** Facilitate training for coaches, officials, and volunteers on topics such as child safety, fair play, and effective conflict resolution.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Encourage feedback from all members to continually improve the club's culture and operations.

8. Continuous Improvement and Accountability

The final facet of the Officer's role is commitment to growth and accountability:

- **Policy Review:** Regularly review and update policies in collaboration with club leadership, incorporating feedback and evolving best practices.
- **Transparent Reporting:** Maintain transparent records of decisions, conflicts, and interventions to ensure accountability.
- **Self-Reflection:** Officers should reflect on their decisions and actions, striving to model the club's mission and values at every opportunity.

Conclusion

In summary, the Fair Play and MPO Officers are the stewards of our club's integrity and ethos. Their responsibilities span the full breadth of club life—from policy enforcement and team selection, to child safety and community building. By embracing these roles with dedication, empathy, and a spirit of fairness, Officers help create an environment where every participant feels valued and empowered to grow—not just as athletes, but as individuals and members of a vibrant sporting community.