



# Team Formation & Grading

## OBJECTIVE

To provide clarity on how TCAFC Junior & Youth teams are formed and graded. This policy has been in place since 2018 and is supported by New Zealand Football (NZF) Team Formation & Grading guidance released in 2021. A full copy of this can be found here: [tcafc.co.nz/resources](http://tcafc.co.nz/resources).

This guidance applies to all TCAFC teams entered into the U4 - U19 Grades. Junior and Youth teams, operated from TCAFC's Skills Centre (SKC) and Talent Development Programme (TDP), entered into the WaiBOP Federation Junior and Youth and the NRFL Youth Leagues, are excluded from this policy.

## BACKGROUND

In 2018 TCAFC made the decision to stop conducting trials to select teams based on ability. The decision was based on feedback from members and advice from the club's head coaching group.

The focus was shifted from judgement calls on ability to fun and enjoyment. So teams are formed with age and friendships as the key criteria.

Results released from a NZF survey conducted in 2018 provided feedback on why junior players play football. The responses backed the TCAFC change and showed that:

- 69% play for fun.
- 10% play to be with friends.
- 7% play to learn new skills.

At TCAFC players are placed in grades based on their birth year. For example, players turning 10 years old in the current calendar year will be placed in the U10 grade.

## OUR PROCESS

- During Registration, members will be asked for any team or teammate preferences.
- After registrations are closed, teams will be formed. This will be based on the team played for the previous season and where possible player preferences will be taken into account.
- Teams communicated.

## EXCEPTIONS

There may be times when exceptions to this policy are considered. Applications for age-based dispensations must be submitted to the Director of Football. These will be considered in the context of NZF's Four Corner model for player development. This considers the Technical, Tactical, Physical and Mental attributes, which are key for junior and youth football development.

In addressing dispensation requests the Director of Football may require players to attend SKC or TDP sessions for assessment purposes.

Dispensations will only be granted in exceptional circumstances when player numbers allow.