



# Training Up Policy

Effective Date: November 20, 2024

## Purpose

From time to time, the club receives requests from players wanting to 'train up'. This policy clearly defines the process, roles and responsibilities and decision criteria associated with these applications.

The scope of this policy includes any request to train or compete with any program group or team outside of that which the player would normally be eligible for, by age or gender, in pursuit of an extending, typically older, environment.

## Principles

It is important first and foremost to relate back to the "Whitehorse United FC Player Development Process" before applying this policy. A careful and thorough evaluation of the variables associated with player development will be assessed by the Technical Director and the coaches involved to answer the question:

Will the player be safe, thrive and continue to develop in the new environment?

The reason for the request will be considered, why and how it came to light. Is the request coming from the parent/guardian or the player? Keeping the player 'central' to this process is key. The 'FIT' is very important. A player may meet all the assessment criteria but if they do not want to 'train up' then the process will not be successful for the development of the player and they should remain within their regular program.

Generally, 'training up' will only be approved in exceptional circumstances. Unless the player is performing at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher of the new group, they will spend excessive time training in overload with likely negative social-emotional stress and long-term player development impacts.

In most cases, players will be approved to 'train up' but not 'compete up'. Competition has much higher impacts and pressures with limited coach control. In our small and remote community club, 'competing up' can impact the viability of team rosters and players will ordinarily be required to remain with regular travel teams for competitions.

All requests will be reviewed on merit only by the informed methodology in this policy and include the guidance of a minimum of the two coaches and the Technical Director. The club will avoid nurturing a 'squeaky wheel' environment by which intense advocacy and harassment of coaches and officials is rewarded over meritorious applicants that follow policy and process.

## Approval and Conditions

Coaches shall not independently admit players to 'train up' in their group or team. Players will remain with their eligible program and will not 'train up' prior to approval unless a temporary trial period is authorized.

The Technical Director will approve or deny requests and may approve with conditions such as:

- Temporary, time-limited
- 'Train up' but not 'Compete up'
- Continued training with regular group such that 'training up' is supplementary and not alternative • Any necessary to ensure the player will be safe, thrive and continue to develop in a new environment

The Technical Director will communicate the decision to the parent/guardian by email. There is no requirement to provide the decision rationale, or the player assessment. However, the Technical Director is encouraged to share the assessment with the player and the parent/guardian if requested and to provide such constructive feedback as is appropriate to inform the best long-term development of the player.

The approval can be withdrawn by the Technical Director at any time, at their discretion.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Players, and their parents/guardians are advised to carefully consider their goals and their motivations for 'training up' prior to submitting an application. The assessment process is rigorous and should not be entered into lightly. When a request is denied this can be distressing to a young player. Regular dialogue with current coaches to informally review player progress is recommended prior to application.

The process, the assessment and the decision will be kept confidential and no other player or parent-guardian will be aware of it or its outcomes.

1. All applications to 'train up' will be submitted by the parent/guardian by email to the Club Manager with payment of the required non-refundable fee. Applications can be submitted at any time. 2. The player will independently confirm their interest to 'train up' to their current Travel Team Head Coach 3. The Technical Director has sole authority to approve, or deny, a 'training up' application and to set any conditions to be applied to an approval.

If the Technical Director position is vacant the Club Manager will form a Review Committee of 3 senior club coaches to perform the responsibilities. In this situation the Club Manager retains sole authority to approve or deny an application but will not vary from the Review Committee recommendation without reasonable cause.

4. Coach(es) of both the regular program and the new program will be consulted and included in the required player assessment. The Technical Director may use their discretion to consult further club coaches with knowledge of the player's long-term development as necessary.

The Technical Director will endeavour to provide an initial decision within 6 weeks of the application submission. This decision may be interim and subject to review at a later time.

The Technical Director may delegate any of their responsibilities under this policy at their

discretion. **Criteria**

1. Mandatory Requirements

- There must be a vacant spot available in the new program under the coach ratio and training space standards set by the club
- The new coach must be trained, qualified and comfortable to accept the player into the new program without unreasonable disruption to their delivery of the program curriculum and standards expected.

The coach of the new training environment or team must be confidently capable of managing the 'training up' scenario by keeping the player safe, constantly assessing their progress and making sure both the new player and full group will continue to meet the Whitehorse United FC player development requirements.

- Safe Sport

The environment must be controlled and safe for the player to participate and develop. In a training environment the coach can manage all the players by giving instructions and adding constraints or restrictions to protect the young player. However, in a game or tournament environment the coach cannot control the opposition team actions and can only manage their own players by controlling how much time they play and the way that they play.

## 2. Player Assessment Criteria

The assessment must answer yes to all the following questions:

- Social-Emotional: Does the player have the resilience and understanding to handle a more mature social *and* playing environment and the stresses and pressures associated with it?
- Physical: Is the player physically capable (size, strength and speed) to handle the impacts and demands associated with an older group of players or playing environment on an equal basis? •
- Technical: Are the players technical core competencies advanced enough to meet the expectations and challenges of the older group?
- Tactical: Does the player have the tactical awareness, field vision and decision-making skills to compete and be successful in the new environment?

The social-emotional assessment will rely heavily on the consultation of club coaches with long-term experience working with the player.

For players U14 and older, the technical and tactical criteria will be assessed against an established Player Development Rubric. This rubric will assess proficiency in the club curriculum and training references. Full participation in the club Northern Lights Academies (U9-U12 and U13-U15), Pre-EXCEL Academy U15, EXCEL Academy U16-U18 and Travel Teams will position players with technical and tactical proficiency.

The technical and tactical assessments can be undertaken by video (e.g. Veo) if the Technical Director is unable to complete these in-person in due time. These may also be delegated to qualified senior club coaches specifically trained to complete these.