

Welcome to the 2023 season and thank you for choosing to play with Queenscliff Netball Club (**QNC**).

We would like to provide all members with information about QNC's grading policy and process.

Why does QNC require players to be graded from 10 years?

QNC teams play in the Manly Warringah Netball Association (**MWNA**) competition. MWNA operates ungraded sections for 8 and 9 year old players under modified rules (Net Set Go) and graded sections for all players from 10 years through to senior level based on playing standard. This results in a fair and even competition, which ultimately leads to greater enjoyment of the sport.

In order for QNC teams to be placed in appropriate sections where they will be competitive with their opponents, they are also selected on the basis of playing standard. Grading allows players of all skill levels to shine in a team suited to their ability, building their self-esteem and confidence, maximising opportunities for development, creating stronger team bonding and – overall – a better netball experience.

Due to this format, QNC is unable to allow pre-formed “social teams” in junior age groups. This is typical for most (if not all) clubs participating in MWNA competitions. While it is understood that children often wish to stay with existing friends, sport provides a valuable opportunity for the formation of new friendships which can last a lifetime. QNC asks that families embrace this opportunity and support their children in moving outside their comfort zones to become part of new teams through the grading process.

How does grading work?

Players in the 10, 11, 12 and 13 year age groups are physically graded by QNC. This means that it is compulsory for them to attend grading days and participate in match play, where they will be viewed by specialist graders and placed in a team appropriate to their skill and ability. Players in older age groups are paper graded, meaning that they will be placed in an appropriate team based on their playing history as known to QNC, or as notified to QNC.

Depending on the total number of players registered in each age group, teams will generally consist of a minimum of eight players, up to a maximum of ten players.

Nominating playing positions for grading

All players registering with QNC will be asked to nominate two preferred playing positions, on the basis of which they will be considered for inclusion in an appropriate team. Where physical grading occurs, players will be given an opportunity to play in both of their preferred playing positions across the sessions held for that age group.

Netball is a team sport where every player has a distinct role depending on their playing position. A balanced team will have sufficient players to cover each of the three specialist court areas (shooting, midcourt and defence). In placing players in teams, graders will rate players and select them to play in one or both of the positions that they have nominated as their preference in a given team.

In nominating their positions, players should consider:

- The positions where they have had the most playing experience. Grading is generally not the time for a player to “try” a new position, and it is more likely that a player will be able to demonstrate their abilities in a position they are familiar with, and feel comfortable in.
- The positions where they consider they play best. If it is a priority for a player to be selected in the highest team possible, they should nominate the position where they have been most successful in previous teams. This might be something to discuss with a player’s previous coach.
- The positions that they like playing most and enjoy. As a player will be chosen to play in a particular court area, it is likely that they will spend most of the season in their nominated position and it is important to ensure that it is a place where they will enjoy their netball. There is little point in nominating a position that a parent or coach considers a player to be best at, or nominating a position with a view to being selected in a “higher team” if the player will spend an unhappy season there.

Preparation for grading days begins weeks in advance and team lists are pre-prepared for court sessions to ensure all participants get a fair opportunity to play across their two nominated positions. QNC cannot accommodate requests for players to change their playing positions or to play in additional positions on grading days. It is therefore important that nominated playing positions are correct and that parents registering on their child’s behalf discuss their preferred playing positions before making a nomination.

Players may also be “moved around” during grading matches or placed in positions that are not preferred positions at grading for a variety of reasons, including:

- The need to fill vacancies (“no shows” or where there is a shortage of players in a particular position)
- To restore the balance of a trial game where one team is stronger than another (meaning that players are not getting an opportunity with the ball)
- To make player comparisons
- To view player combinations

Etiquette for physical grading

Players should not attend grading if they are ill or injured. Parents are asked to inform the QNC Grading Convenor of any inability to attend for these reasons, as far in advance as reasonably possible.

Players are asked to arrive at least 10 minutes in advance of the scheduled time for the commencement of their physical grading session for registration. Players should be appropriately dressed for netball with suitable sports shoes and clothing, and hair tied back. No jewellery is to be worn (including watches and fitness trackers) and nails should be cut short. Please bring a drink bottle and sunscreen if required (caps with hard peaks may not be worn during matchplay).

Parents may remain at grading to watch but are requested to remain in their designated area, away from the grading panel. Parents are asked not to cheer, barrack or instruct players on court during grading, and should refrain from making any negative comments about players, umpires or any aspect of the process while present. Parents may not approach the grading panel at any time and should address all queries to QNC committee members managing the process.

Players should not stay with their parents when they are not on court, and should instead remain in their designated area so that they are ready to go on court when called. Should they need to use bathroom facilities, they should inform a QNC committee member for safety purposes and to ensure appropriate supervision.

What is considered at grading?

Graders are aiming to select the best players and combination of players to form teams for each competition grade. In order to achieve this, the following criteria will be considered as appropriate to the age group concerned:

- Individual movement skills (including fitness, speed, agility)
- Ball skills, attacking and defending skills
- Shooting skills (where relevant)
- Court craft, strategic knowledge and positional play
- Teamwork and ability to form combination with other players
- Involvement in the game
- Concentration and consistency of performance
- Positive attitude and sporting behaviour
- Coachability and potential for future development and improvement

Final selection of teams will also include reference to team reports and recommendations provided by a player's coach/es from the previous season. As well as feedback on playing performance and positions, these reports include information on commitment, attendance at training and matches and coachability.

Grading outcomes

QNC conducts a comprehensive grading process to ensure equal opportunity and fairness for all. Parents and players are asked to be objective and reasonable in their expectations, to accept the outcome of the process, and to give their commitment and best effort to the team in which they are ultimately selected.

For information and development purposes, any player is welcome to request feedback from the QNC Grading Convenor following grading, which will be provided in writing based on the notes maintained by the grading panel for the relevant age group.