

West Pymble Football Club



INSIGHTS INTO THE GRADING PROCESS (TAGS) AT WPFC

This information is to give parents an insight into what happens on the field with the Grading Assessors, and afterwards in arriving at the final teams after TAGS. If you are new to the Club, TAGS means Team Allocation & Grading Sessions.

But to start with, it's important to first appreciate what happens at the end of the season across each of our Junior age groups (U6 excepted).

When the season ends, we ask each Coach to submit a Coach feedback sheet. The key information we ask from the Coach is: **team name, player name**, whether the player was **appropriately graded (Y/N)**, and if not, whether the player was considered **too weak or too strong** for the team. We also ask the Coach to rate each player in the team with a ranking of **A, B, or C**. Importantly, the A, B or C ranking is just a comparative review within the team itself. It does not determine if a player was correctly graded.

Extracted below is the feedback from our Coaches for the 2016 season in the **U8 - U12** Age Groups, so you can get an idea of what our Coaches thought about the grading outcome from their experience during that season:

2016 Season Coach Feedback Summary

Age	Players	Appropriate Grading	Inappropriate Grading	% Appropriate	Too Strong	Too Weak
U8	55	45	10	82%	3	7
U9	49	46	3	94%	2	1
U10	45	44	1	98%	1	0
U11	32	29	3	90%	2	1
U12	26	25	1	96%	0	1
TOTALS	207	189	18		8	10

As you can see, the grading accuracy at U8 for 2016 was circa 82%, while U10 peaked at 98% based on Coach feedback at the end of the season. The lower % accuracy at U8 is not unusual because **U8 is the first season players are graded** and whilst we ask for feedback to assist, no U7 players or teams are themselves graded. The level of grading accuracy achieved in **U9 - U12** in 2016 was **95%** on average.

This is important information because, when considering the grading data in the following season (in this instance 2017), we also have regard to the Coach feedback for the previous season. For example, if we have Coach feedback that a player was **not appropriately graded** last season, we would consider that alongside the latest TAGS

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assessment and if necessary, discuss it with the relevant Coach. Also, where two players have performed to a very similar level at TAGS, we might look to the Coach feedback sheets as a further point of reference and evaluation.

As you can see, the Coach feedback is therefore very important in two respects:

- first, it gives valuable feedback at the end of the season as to whether our Grading Assessors got it right at the start; and
- second, it provides a safety net / improvement mechanism for grading the following season.

What happens on the field at TAGS and afterwards?

It's fairly simple really. We have Grading Assessors who rate each player with a scoring range of **1 – 5** (5 being the high score) across a range of core skills and attributes as they perform various drills on the field. The skills / attributes being assessed are:

- first touch;
- 1 v 1;
- running with the ball;
- striking the ball;
- passing success; and
- decision-making.

The Grading Assessors score the players only by **bib colour and number** (e.g. B5, R9, G3, O12, etc) and not by player name. Typically, players who consistently score **4 – 5** will be in the highest graded team. However, 5's are pretty hard to get with our Grading Assessors! Players who consistently score **3 - 4** could still be in the highest graded team, or may be in the second highest team, etc. It really depends on the overall strength of the age group.

In appointing Grading Assessors, we have a primary rule that no parent is permitted to be a Grading Assessor for an age group in which they have a child. However, in very rare circumstances a parent Coach may be asked to assist as a Grading Assessor (e.g. if the nominated Grading Assessor cannot make it on the day). In that situation, the parent is **instructed not to offer any assessment whatsoever** for their own child.

After TAGS, when we analyse the Grading sheets for the first time, we are still working from **bib numbers, not player names**. In other words, we identify that B5, R9, G3, O12, B7, B13, etc, are consistently rated as strong players (e.g. 4-5) and are therefore likely to be in the highest graded team. The same process continues for the players who consistently score 4, 3, and so on. It is only as the teams begin to emerge that bib numbers are linked back to player names. In most age groups, we aim to have at least two graded teams, or 50% graded and 50% non-graded.

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As the teams are refined, there are usually a few close calls to make regarding placement of players in teams. That's where the Coach feedback sheets and discussions from the prior season are again most useful in resolving final decisions.

We trust the above is of some use in describing the grading process and helping you to understand how it works. It's not meant to be a comprehensive description, but just something to give you a bit more insight. We appreciate it may not be perfect. But a 95% accuracy by our Grading Assessors on players they don't know is an exceptional effort by any measure. Of course, we try to improve upon it each season and the Coach feedback sheets at the end of the season are a very important part of that.