



Play your best.. On and Off

Make sure you and everyone around you has a good time, on and off the pitch.

Play Your Part Streaming Policy

Policy 1/2

Introduction

Guildford Saints Football Club made the decision to introduce streaming into the Club several years ago to ensure that all players within the Club are playing at the appropriate level to allow them to develop. GSFC are aware that streaming can be a contentious issue in any form of education or recreational sports activity. However, it is necessary for streaming to be introduced because GSFC feel it is important that all players develop at a rate comfortable to them.

Players grow at different rates and so develop at different rates also. We feel that to support their long term involvement and enjoyment of football they need to play at a level that is appropriate to their playing ability at that moment in time and that they play with and against similar ability players.

It is the age group Managers role, along with the professional Coaches, to ensure this policy is carried out fairly and openly. The interest of each player's footballing development is paramount and will certainly be the basis of all our decisions. The decision needs to be discussed and agreed by the age group Manager and the Professional Coaches.

The process needs to be transparent so that parents and children are provided with 2 or 3 areas for improvement that they can focus on in training and in their own time, that will enable them to fulfil their potential in the future.

Streaming Stages

At the end of each season the squads will be evaluated and any decision to move player's up or down for the following season will be made. At the same time if a child is doing exceptionally well or is struggling with confidence they can be moved up or down a squad during the season to ensure that they are playing at the appropriate ability to develop their self-confidence, be appropriately challenged and improve their technical and tactical skills.

During all stages of the streaming process, players should be comfortable playing in most positions on the pitch to support their all-round development.



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Benefits of streaming the individual child:

What do we mean by early or late developing children?

This is influenced by several factors those children born early in the school year often benefit from being more physical advanced for example quicker or stronger. Being slightly older they may understand and be able to take on more information and have a higher level of game understanding.

Football age is based on how many hours a week a child spends playing football. You may have a 6-year-old who has played since the age of 4 and an 8 year old who has just started their football journey and so the football age between the 2 is completely different.

- Mixed ability teams often lead to children who are early developers dominating the ball with late developer's receiving the ball far less and are unable to influence the game.
- Playing within your own ability group results in increased touches, improves self-confidence, composure and calmness on the ball. It allows children to take ownership / charge within a game setting as opposed to simply 'passing' to a seemingly more able player.
- Early developers often become frustrated, potentially resulting in avoiding passing to teammates who they feel will lose the ball, potentially resulting in them leaving to join a team that they feel is stronger.

- Less experienced children may feel that they are not good enough, get frustrated at not seeing the ball and eventually drop out altogether.
- Mixed ability teams will play stronger opposition who have been streamed and are able to apply pressure on the ball faster providing children with less time and space to deal with the ball. Playing team's and players of a similar athletic and technical ability will result in increased time to control the ball and make more effective decisions.
- Leagues being unable to place your team in the appropriate division, at the correct competitive level.
- It is important to remember every child develops at different rates especially physically which tends to even out around 14 or 15 and then technical ability and tactical understanding start to separate players.
- Children can move during the course of the season if we feel they need to be more challenged or need to boost their self-belief, we can move them up or down a squad. Teams that struggle in their first season do learn resilience, determination and togetherness often leading to a far better 2nd season.

Kevin Wilson
Director of Coaching



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Play Your Part Protocol for children moving between team's.

Policy 1/2

Streaming decisions made at "Age Group Level" by all team managers.

- We recognise it is important to ensure the Streaming Process is carried out fairly and communicated carefully to minimise conflict.
- Streaming at a Grassroots level should be for the benefit of all teams and players, with each team given equal consideration.
- Individual managers and parents/carers can have conflicting priorities, so the collective approach aims to mitigate that.
- The welfare and development of every child always remains the priority.
- Our club streaming process follows best practices.
- Professional Coach should be involved to identify children that have the potential to be moved up or who are struggling and perhaps would benefit from moving down a level. This is based on the specific needs of each child e.g., requires increased challenge or provide them with more touches and time on the ball.
- Discussion takes place between Dawn and/or Kevin plus the coach.
- Managers involved meet with Kevin to discuss about who is potentially moving and the reasons why.
- Parents of the child in question are offered the opportunity to move but do not have to accept the offer if they are happy where they are.
- Timing - this should be done toward the end of the season in April or May so that the teams and child are settled in advance of the new season. We want to avoid constant disruption throughout the season, allowing the team to build a 'togetherness and camaraderie'.
- If a team is struggling for numbers, to keep going, all managers and Kevin/Dawn should try to find a solution to keep all the teams playing in that age group and then make the necessary changes at the end of the season.
- We should be working together as an age group/Club with the best interests of the child at the centre of any decision. There needs to be transparency and a group discussion before children or parents are approached. When moving format e.g., 5 to 7 aside we should be meeting in advance of the season ending to discuss changes to squads.



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Helping Players and Parents to Understand the Benefits

- The right level of challenge - playing with and against players of a similar ability level to you, allows improvement in a way that won't if you're way out of your depth or finding it too easy.
- Equal game time – As leagues and games become more competitive the reality is that "late developers" within your squad may receive less game time in order to obtain a positive result. It is far easier for a manager to be able to facilitate equal game time if the players are of a similar level and the team is playing at the correct competitive level.
- Confidence - playing with and against similar ability players means the child who struggled to get in the game as a late developer within their previous team will find themselves contributing far more. Suddenly becoming the top scorer, player of the match, best defender on the pitch will build self-confidence.
- Making new friends - for long-term social development, being able to make new friends rather than staying in their "safe" group of friends can be a great skill to acquire. When the children move to secondary school, having a wider group of friends through having played football with lots of different people is a huge advantage in terms of fitting in.