

Ware Youth Football Club - Approach to Streaming

The following is intended as a guide for new Coaches and Parents, to help explain the reason behind the Club's approach to streaming.

Streaming is the method by which children are divided into teams, based primarily upon their ability as a player. Some of our age groups only have one team, and as a result it's not a necessary consideration. At Ware Youth FC, we have chosen to stream the teams when we have too many kids for one team in an age group, as do the majority of other football clubs. This will never be an exact science, nor a weekly decision, but the Coaches will aim to follow these principles over the course of a season and discuss with parents of any changes that affect their child.

Reasons are as follows; - We are a Grassroots Football Club. Our aim is to encourage players development and players football confidence, and not simply provide an opportunity for them to play with established friends.

- A player's development is likely to be enhanced by playing with players that are of a similar ability, in a league of similar ability. If they are playing at a higher level than is appropriate for them, they are unlikely to get as involved in the game and will have more limited time on the ball, which will restrict their development as a player. If they are playing at a lower level than is appropriate for them, they may not be sufficiently challenged to improve.

- We do not stream to win. It's about developing players and playing with and against those of a similar ability. This is likely to encourage even games, and will inevitably involve wins and losses, all helpful experiences.

- An individual's development should come before a team's development. A good player that is dominating a team and is clearly too good at that level, should be given the opportunity to move to a stronger team, if there is one, despite the impact this may have on the original team's ability to win. This may include consideration of playing children up an age group – if supported by the child and parents involved.

- Every player should be treated the same, whatever team they play for. Opportunities should be taken as appropriate, through training sessions, tournaments, and social events, to mix players from different teams in the same age group. This will then ease movement between teams as and when it occurs.

- When moving players between teams, coaches need to be sure they have assessed players correctly and movement is communicated appropriately. It is only natural that parents and the child may feel a degree of nervousness if moving to a different team, and there may be disappointment if the movement is to a lower-level team. Explanation of decisions need to be clear and considerate.

- Teams should not be divided based upon how well parents get on together.

- It is good for kids to mix with other kids and make new friends, outside those that they may know from School or other groups.

The aim is not to rotate players on a week-by-week basis; however, it is expected that the division of teams will be reviewed at a minimum by the Coaches when new players join or leave an age group and at the Christmas and summer breaks.

Finally, if despite the above, an individual year group and associated coaches feel strongly that they wish to follow a different approach to dividing the children into teams, we would be happy to discuss the issue further with them. Individual parents' concerns should be raised confidentially with the coaches in the first instance, with any concerns about the application of this policy passed directly to the Club Chairman, or the independent stream lead if the Chairman is involved with the age group streaming.