

Northallerton Town Juniors FC (NTJFC)

Our approach to Equal and Minimum Game Time



This document is to affirm NTJFC's approach to game time across all age groups within the Juniors Club and the rationale behind this. It is our expectation as a Club that all coaches within our volunteer group embrace this way of working to ensure delivery of our Values and consistency for all members.

Equal Game Time applies to all age groups up to and including Under 11s.

This is a non-competitive stage of grassroots football and the focus should always be on player development and enjoyment. Adopting this approach serves two important purposes...

Firstly, it helps us to engage all of the team and for each individual feel valued. If players spend less time on the grass than others – or don't get on at all – they may become disinterested and not invested in the sport or team.

Secondly, equal playing time helps to develop the team. This is especially true for younger age groups (where it's harder to spot potential talent). By giving everyone the same opportunity to test their skills, we can help prevent players from being left behind.

Obviously, adopting equal playing time can have an impact on a team's performance. For example, it may mean that the 'better performing' players see less of the action than they might like. However, thinking long-term, it is possible that some of these players may move on to pursue their own football journey anyway, and a team can be left underdeveloped and lacking in confidence and engagement if they have not all had the same opportunity of game time. It is important that we all remember that winning isn't everything. As coaches our role is to help the whole team improve their skills and fall in love with football. That's why it's essential to get everyone involved.

We want to see every player on a team playing for at least 50% of the total minutes of a league / cup game. How this may be structured in a match remains at the discretion of the coach, and may need to consider individual needs of players. Eg. this doesn't have to be the whole of a half, but maybe in two quarters.

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Minimum game time applies to all age groups U12 to U18

Whilst we recognise that what feels important to a team may change as we start to approach the competitive age groups, and results may take a higher priority for some squads, NTJFC's approach is that it is a fair expectation of any player in attendance to get at least 50% of the planned league / cup match minutes. Again, this can be however a coach chooses to implement that.

Exceptions to the above should only be at player request or due to concerns over health / fitness. In which case this should be discussed with the player and / or parent / guardian as most appropriate.

"Every child deserves their chance"

I'm old enough to know I'm not good enough to play, maybe it's time for me to walk away....

I sit on the sidelines waiting my turn.

I can't wait to get on and have energy to burn.

I tried my best in training.

I tried my best at school.

I've behaved well for Mum and Dad and always for coach.

I ask coach if I can play and he says the game is really tight.

If you let me on I will play with all my might.

It's not so fun stuck on the side alone.

While my friends are playing and I'm cold to the bone.

I know others are better but I always try my best.

How will I get better if I don't play with the rest.

My coach wants to win, I just want to play.

This is my childhood at the end of the day.

I thought this was fun but it's not anymore.

Coach isn't interested in me only the score.

I'm old enough to know I'm not good enough to play, maybe it's time for me to walk away....