



Harpenden Colts FC

Approach to Streaming Players

Created January 2023

The following is intended as a guide for new Coaches and Parents & Carers, to help explain Harpenden Colts' approach to streaming.

We are lucky at Harpenden Colts that we have a large intake of players each season (120+ boys and girls). This enables us to be able to run multiple teams in each Year Group. Streaming is the method by which children are divided into teams, based primarily on the FA's four corners model assessing technical/tactical, social, physical and psychological development. It should be noted that most other local football clubs, who can run multiple teams, also choose to stream in one form or another. We prefer to call the method of streaming we utilise at Colts 'Squad Balancing'.

The boys section chose to stream every year group that joined the club in 2019/20 with the girl's section starting from 2020/21. Squad Balancing is an ongoing process, with players constantly assessed and allocated to squads that best support their development and enjoyment. We believe that this is the correct procedure to follow to best support the short, medium, and long-term development of all the players in the club. Year groups who joined prior to 2019/20 season may not follow the same streaming policy.

The decision to move players between squads is made by the year group lead taking into account the views of squad leads, coaches, Parents/Carers & players. Squad moves are not decisions made on a weekly basis. Movement between teams will, perhaps, occur twice in a season (normally around the Winter break at Christmas and at the end of the season). More significant changes occur when year groups are moving between 5, 7, 9 and 11 aside, when bigger squads are required, or squads are merged. Squad moves are communicated to Parents & Carers in a clear and transparent manner.

The reasons Harpenden Colts use a Streaming Policy are as follows:

- We are a sports club, and our club philosophy is centred around helping players maximise their potential.
 - We do not stream to win. For Harpenden Colts, Squad Balancing is about developing players and placing them in teams and leagues with players of a similar ability. This is likely to encourage more even games and will inevitably involve wins and losses. These are all helpful and necessary experiences!
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- Squad balancing creates a player pathway, motivating the players to improve and encouraging more positive behaviour.
 - Players should be given the opportunity to be placed in a squad, and league, that enables them to positively contribute to the team - without dominating or struggling excessively. A player's development is likely to be enhanced by playing in a team, and in a league, with players of a similar ability. In some very rare cases, this may include consideration of children playing up an age group.
 - Squad balancing is an opportunity for players to expand their social group and make new friends.
 - As often as possible coaches should also move between squads; this allows more coaches and players to work with each other.
 - Every player should be treated the same, whatever team they play for. Harpenden Colts implements a coaching curriculum and common coaching language so there is consistency across year groups and squads.
 - Streaming decisions are at the sole discretion of the club.

Every opportunity should be taken, through training sessions, tournaments, and social events, to mix players from different teams in the same age group. This helps to build a sense of belonging, togetherness, new friendships and it eases movement between teams, as and when it occurs.

If you want to discuss the clubs streaming policy please speak to the squad lead, year lead and or the clubs head coach.