

## Policy: Training Group Plan

### Background

Being part of a peer training group with similar interests and abilities is a significant factor for younger members in particular, both in joining and remaining at our club. Talented junior members have moved to other local clubs when there has not been such a cohesive group for them.

This loss of members is a particularly for our loosely age-based junior training groups, as members move away to university or work at similar times, potentially reducing the core of these groups. To avoid this, it is important to maintain a regular influx of younger members to those groups.

### Basis of Training Group Plan

The Training Group Plan shows defined age ranges for each group, or other criteria where age is not appropriate. **Potential and current members must firstly be directed towards the group that fits their age or those other specific criteria.** Any request to train in a group other than the appropriate one in the training plan must come from those members themselves, not coaches, and must have the prior agreement of the relevant coaches and the Coaching Co-ordinator.

### Purpose of Training Group Plan

To be centred on the best interests of club members who take part in club training sessions.

To provide a clear understanding for all coaches and current and prospective members of the most suitable training group for our members.

To limit potential disagreements, in providing an objective and agreed basis on which to direct new members to the most suitable training group.

To allow members to move through groups on the basis of event, age and, where appropriate, performance.

To maintain a steady influx of new members into these groups, particularly as older members change groups or leave the club, and thus to ensure that each group retains a core of members of similar age and/ or ability who train together regularly. Improved performance should follow from that, but is not a pre-requisite for entry to a group, unless expressly stated in the Training Group Plan.

To limit the potential of safeguarding issues arising from mixed-age groups. Adults training with children are not legally required to be DBS-approved, unlike adults coaching children. The Training Group Plan attempts to address this by adopting an age-based though flexible group structure where it is practical to do so.

Broadly, to provide junior members in particular with a supportive peer-group environment and thus a positive experience in what is usually a relatively short part of their lives in competitive athletics, while not stifling the abilities that some may develop and continue to use as adults.

### Detail

The Training Group Plan must be implemented sensitively. More accomplished members may move “up” to a group that isn’t the one fitting their age, with prior agreement between all parties involved. This might be done on a phased basis, eg by the member taking part in one session per week in their original group, and one in the group that they may wish to move into.

Those who do not wish to move “up” when they pass the upper age for their training group should be allowed to stay in that group, although they MUST be offered the opportunity to move “up”.

There is some overlap in the Training Group Plan between groups, particularly in middle distance. This is to offer some flexibility and phased transition between groups, and partly to take in to account members returning to the club during university holidays, when the short periods involved suggest that moving to another group may be inappropriate.

Members change groups at the end of the season during which they reach the age to join a different group, rather than on their birthday.

Where a group is training away from EPSV, any prospective new member who fits the criteria for that group must firstly be directed to that group, with the relevant coach informed.

Members who are not in the group that fits their age/ other criteria defined in the Training Group Plan at the time that this policy is implemented will not be forced to change groups. They will, however, be formally made aware of the potentially more suitable group that they could join. Given the sensitivity of this issue, this should be done by the Coaching Co-ordinator rather than individual coaches.

Younger members in particular should be actively encouraged to try other disciplines even when remaining in their original training group, and must not be actively discouraged from taking part in other sports and hobbies.

All members are welcome to discuss their own case confidentially with the Coaching co-ordinator.

Disputes arising from implementation of this policy must be formally raised with the club committee, via the Coaching Co-ordinator.

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