

LRFC Fair Play Time Policy 2026/27

Following the example of some other clubs in the area, notably FC Lakeside who kindly provided the basis for the policy below, Leckhampton Rovers are introducing a Fair Game Time Policy for the 2026/27 season and beyond.

We know how much children love to play and practice but most often the highlight of the football week (for those U8+) is matchday! Giving children opportunities to play in these games and to enjoy them and develop their skills and love for the game, where they are challenged but also fully supported and included, is therefore so important.

This is why we have developed club-wide standards around match day game time. Our standards are formed from our years of experience in youth football as well as from guidance and best practice from coaches across The FA and other organisations. We are aware that some see this as 'uncompetitive' but it's quite the opposite. Players and teams will only get stronger, more creative and skilled as the whole group develops, loves the game and plays free from judgement and the threat of having minutes on the pitch taken away from them.

Please see below on how these work for the various match-playing age groups:

U7 - U11 - Equal Game Time

- Every child to play equal minutes over the season.
- If there are weeks (or games in tournaments) where a coach feels like individual players will benefit from getting more minutes against a team more matched to a player's current ability, that is absolutely fine but this will not be something to implement every week and not relevant to the very youngest age groups (U7 & U8).
- Players/parents/guardians must also understand that on some match days it will be very difficult to completely match minutes but coaches will look to even-out over the season if there are differences.
- We would expect most players to have around 66%-75%+ of minutes available on single-game match days (if appropriate squad sizes are used) and not any lower than 50% in any one game.
- Shared minutes will be applied across whole tournaments rather than individual tournament games.
- Coaches will avoid publishing starting lineups and the idea that children earn their starting place in teams at these ages.
- Coaches should rotate the starters and subs each week.

U12 & U13 - Minimum 50% Of Minutes Per Game

- Every player on a match day must get a minimum of 50% of the total game minutes over the duration of the game.
- We know there are 'train only' players who also help on match days, in some squads. If all pre-agree upon joining, there is no expectation to give these players weekly minutes but if selected, these standards should apply.
- Coaches should rotate the starters and subs each week.

U14+

- No current minimums but we will review this. We would hope that coaches still understand the importance of game time for players' enjoyment and development at these ages, despite games becoming more competitive.

Players joining LRFC should not be 'released' or excluded by Team Managers due to ability or performance. If support is required by individual players, we invite both coaches and parents to contact a Club Trustee if needed. The club will always do its best to find the best solution for the player's welfare and enjoyment of the game, if they are having difficulties within their team, which we know can happen at times.

We understand that there are rare occasions where teams play additional games, outside of training or standard Saturday/Sunday games for the benefit of different groups of players, to give them appropriate challenges.

Player And Parent/Guardian Expectations

- Both players and parents/guardians will be expected to support coaches and the game time standards set by the club. Coaches are not here to win 3 points for LRFC. They are here to create a great environment for children.
- Parents/guardians should feel free to contact the team coach or club committee if they have issues but also be aware that there are likely to be times where there may be small discrepancies in planned and actual minutes, with the nature of the game.
- Poor behaviour on a match day or consistently poor behaviour will mean that players may not play the minimum minutes, specified in the club game time standards. Coaches are asked to use this guidance appropriately within their teams.

Whilst we have a great group of coaches within the club, many of which have upheld these standards for many years, we feel it is in the interests of Leckhampton Rovers players within our growing club that we set these standards nationwide.

If you are having any issues or have any questions regarding the above, please speak to Club Chairman Andy Pitchford.

Thanks,

LRFC Trustees