

**BRISBANE JUNIOR RUGBY UNION
REGION REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS
Job Description**

Position Title:	Selector
Job Purpose:	To select the most competent players for a team.
Key Performance Areas:	<p>Players are assessed for Performance (relative strengths) against selection criteria (match assessment & player assessment)</p> <p>Performance is assessed under a range of conditions, eg: against different opponents, under different game plans and at training.</p> <p>Teams are selected on the basis of competencies that meet the team strategy. (Team & reserves)</p>
Duties:	<p>Agree upon the competencies needed for each position, valid performance criteria and assessment methods with Coach, Assistant coach and Manager.</p> <p>Communicate with clubs when player assessment is to take place and when players have been identified as candidates for the team.</p> <p>Selection of players in specialist positions (Safety Requirements)</p> <p>Meet as a panel with Coaches, Assistant coach and Manager (where selecting) to choose a team based on competence.</p>
Attributes:	<p>A sound technical knowledge of the game is essential.</p> <p>The ability to observe and to be analytical is essential to establish important matters such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether a player has the ability to take the transition from one level to another;• whether a player performs well in a high pressure situation;• recognition of qualities such as determination and mental toughness;• recognition of absolute potential. <p>A selector must be honest in his appraisal of and communication with players, at the same time being tactful. Criticism constructively presented has a positive influence but thoughtless criticism can be destructive to a playing career.</p> <p>It is important that selectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintain confidentiality of discussion.• maintain "cabinet solidarity".• are objective and unbiased.

- are consistent in their views.
- Selectors need to be disciplined in the selection process to ensure that established criteria are met, eg. goal kicker, lineout jumpers, unit balance and overall team balance in relation to the match plan.
- Good selectors need to be both firm and persuasive; otherwise their well-formed views will have no impact.

THE UNDERVALUED INGREDIENT OF SELECTION SKILLS

1. Introduction

An article by Rugby journalist, Greg Campbell recently published in "The Australian" suggested that selectors were an anachronism in the modern game. In the article reference was made to their absence in American football. " If you mentioned a selector to a gridiron coach he would think that you are talking about a part of a gear box".

Although this makes entertaining reading the fact is that someone selects every team that participates in every sport. Sometimes the process is entrusted to an individual and sometimes to a committee but the basic process of performance evaluation and recognition by selection is universal.

During an age when considerable focus is placed upon the improvement of performance by individuals and by teams, very little close scrutiny has been given to this pervasive aspect of sport. This paper attempts to focus attention on the selection function and, after assessing the importance of the selection process. It proposes some personal qualities that selectors should possess and suggests some procedural aspects that selection panels could follow to ensure that the status and dignity of the selectors are maintained.

The comments presented are essentially directed at the selection of representative teams, however, most of the views expressed are applicable to all selection situations.

2. The Importance of Selection

- 2.1 Only players on the field can do things to influence the outcome of a match. Unless the best combination of talent available is selected to play, the team cannot perform to its potential and winning becomes more difficult. Good selection is therefore a vital ingredient for good performance.
- 2.2 The best players have a right to be selected. The goal of *many* players is to reach the highest level that they can. If players realize that selection is based on factors other than excellence of performance, then performance will rapidly deteriorate.
- 2.3 Both the short term and longer-term success of a team are therefore substantially influenced by selection. Selectors should therefore strive to "get it right" and "get it right first time".

3. Sole Selector or Selection Panel?

- 3.1 It is not physically possible for one person to do all that is necessary to select a team. Advice is sought in all "sole selector" situations. Whether advice is obtained informally from trusted advisers or formally from a selection panel is a matter for personal preference.

- 3.2 The preference is for a formal selection panel because:
- a panel can be of great assistance to a coach; and
 - a panel can perform a much broader role than merely pick an occasional team.
- 3.3 It is considered that the ideal size for a panel is 3 members. Larger panels have difficulty reaching consensus.
- 3.4 It is considered that the role of chairman (convenor) is predominantly an administrative one and that the coach is best spared this additional burden.
- 3.5 It would be expected the chairman (convenor) to support the coach when a casting vote is used.

5. Some Procedural Aspects of Selection

- 5.1 The first meeting should be held soon after the coach and selectors are appointed. At this meeting the following aspect should be covered:
- Appointment of a chairman (convenor) (Unless appointed by a Board)
 - The coach explains his philosophy of how the game should be played.
 - Guidelines for selection are decided.
 - Delegation of specialist roles within the panel (if any) are made.
 - A general discussion of positional strengths and weaknesses conducted to enable suitable efforts to be made to cover all positions.
- 5.2 Team selection should be made within a suitable time frame so as to permit the coach an adequate preparation and players to make necessary adjustments and arrangements. Where possible selection should not be made within 24 hours following a match.
- 5.3 Matters to take particular care with are,
- If possible avoid, but certainly minimize, playing people out of position.
 - Blending inexperienced Players with experienced players within each unit.
 - Balancing the skills within each unit and in the team.
 - Selecting reserves.
 - Don't over-react to losses.
 - Include "leaders" and "organisers" in each unit.
- 5.4 Match Plan or Team - Which Comes First?
- They must both develop together.

The first meeting is important because here the coach explains his approach to the game and the panel assesses the player resources available. As the selection date approaches, the coach and selectors "fine tune". The coach refines his plan according to his resources and the selectors must ensure that the coach is provided with the resources to carry out the plan and any modifications that may be necessary to accommodate weather conditions. Communication is obviously of great importance in order that the panel is all working in the same direction.

6. Suggested Selection Guidelines

6.1 Establish guidelines for policy matters, eg.

- teams to contain:
 - a goal kicker
 - 3 lineout jumpers
 - an organizer
 - a complement of skills within each unit
 - a total quantity of skills within the team
- Minimize picking out of position.
- Names put forward for the first time at a selection meeting will not receive serious consideration.
- Who will notify dropped players and what will they be told.
- Replacement policy for withdrawals prior to match day.
- Composition of reserves and policy about them playing for clubs during their "on the bench" period.
- Within the panel the need for
 - confidentiality of discussions,
 - cabinet solidarity ie. decisions are panel decisions.

6.2 Establish guidelines for procedural matters.

- meeting dates and places
- communication channel for team announcement
- procedures to follow when attending matches or talking to players.

7. How Should Selectors Watch a Match?

The techniques employed include:

- 7.1 Concentrating on one player for all or part of a match. A detailed performance sheet is of assistance if this is done.
- 7.2 Watching a unit perform eg. the back row, or the two wingers and fullback and assessing both the performance of the unit and the contribution of the individual members to that unit.

- 7.3 Watching a match and noting exceptional good or bad contributions by individuals.
- 7.4 When a team has been largely settled on, a detailed scrutiny of marginal players is valuable to establish what contribution they could make to the team.
- 7.5 A selector should never attend a match without having previously established some particular purpose and approach.
- 7.6 Valuable insight into a player's performance can be gained by asking his coach prior to the match what instructions he will be issuing to the player.

8. Where Should Selectors Watch a Match?

There is no one correct answer to this question. A different perspective is gained from watching from:

- either sideline;
- an elevated grandstand;
- the end of the field which permits running angles to be noted.

The best policy is to vary the position according to the need. It is important that a selector can view a game without distractions or interruptions to his concentration.

9. Other Matters

9.1 Committee Organisation and the Role of the Chairman (convenor).

The Chairman (convenor) is the secretary to the committee. He organises meetings, match rosters, checks player's availability and liaises with the secretary of the Union.

He ensures that selectors follow protocol.

He must also be accessible to team members or dropped players and prepared to discuss queries that they may have relating to selection.

The chairman (convenor) should provide close but unobtrusive support for the coach and the team.

9.2 The Development Role of Selectors

Selectors should encourage the development of players along desired lines. Talking with players, with their club coaches, and being an obvious presence at matches can do this.

The extent of their contribution to development will depend on their knowledge and personality.

9.3 Appointment of Team Captains

Careful thought should be given to the appointment of the team captain. The questions that need to be addressed are-

- Who will appoint?
- When will the appointment be made?

- For how long will the appointment be?
- What role will the captain play in selections?

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 The role of selection is both vital and complex. It is essential that the correct people be appointed to selection positions.
- 10.2 The committees that appoint selectors do not always appreciate the full role of selectors. It is important that they are acquainted with the qualities required to fill the position adequately.
- 10.3 Technical staff could be used by unions to provide a technical appraisal of the qualities required and an assessment of candidates.
- 10.4 Unions should devote more resources and time to the development of selection skills. We cannot assume that these skills exist naturally and should provide a programme to develop them. A person can be a good coach and a poor selector or vice versa.