



WELCOME TO 9TH GRADE AT THE BAYS

Moving from our Mini Bays Programme (6th-8th grades) to 9th grade can be quite a change for players and parents so we have provided a summary of how the 9th grade works at East Coast Bays.

The purpose of our in-house Mini Bays programme is to give young players an introduction to football ensuring they have a lot of fun, have a lot of touches on the ball and always feel involved no matter their skill or abilities. 9th grade is the next step up in learning how to play the game of football with more structure and compete against other clubs on the North Shore. Here are some of the key changes and how the season works.



Before Season Kickoff

Firstly, for all the info you need about the junior grades, team selection, key dates and training options head to our [Junior Grade Webpage](#). We aim to keep our [website](#) up to date with all the latest info, dates, session times etc so always head to our website first for any info about our teams and programmes.

Once registrations close and teams have been finalised, your team manager will be in contact and set up a team comms channel (e.g. whatsapp, teamreach) to use for team communications and fixtures throughout the season.

You will be given a ECB shirt for the season that **must be returned at the end of the season**. Parents will need to supply a pair of ECB blue shorts, ECB blue socks, shin pads/guards (these must be worn during a game otherwise the player will not be allowed to play) and correctly fitting football boots (if boots are too small the player could end up getting blisters).

Club shorts and socks can be purchased through our [website](#) or now available at Long Bay The Uniform Shoppe. Boots and shin pads are available from retail stores such as Rebel Sport or Stirling Sports in Albany

Training

All 9th grade teams are expected to attend the **Junior Team Hubs** which are run once a week for an hour. Players train in their teams with their volunteer coach. The purpose of having teams training together at the same time and the same location so that teams and coaches can work together and the ECB coaching staff can help out when needed. This is particularly useful when some teams have low attendance, they can pair up with another team to make it a meaningful training session. It also creates a stronger connection and community feel across the club.

A common frustration from parents and coaches is not knowing which day or time trainings are held until the last minute. Unfortunately this is out of our control as we wait for the council to assign field allocations which often come through very late. We understand this can be frustrating but unfortunately it is out of our control.

The club also have **Junior Skill Hubs** which are an additional training option to develop your skills with our ECB coaching team. More info can be found [here](#)





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The Season

The season aligns with school terms 2 & 3. The season **calendar** for all grades can be found on our [website](#). No games are scheduled the middle week of the school holidays.

Fixtures are found on the NRF website www.northernregionfootball.org.nz or NRF phone App (recommended). We also have links for each grade on our ECB [website](#)

Your team manager will communicate when and where you will be playing each week and also any cancellations or last minute changes to fixtures which sometimes happens. Usually venues are confirmed by Tuesdays of each week but are still subject to change. The team manager should always check up until Friday 5pm or even Saturday morning for any final changes.

In terms of **cancellations**, games will always go ahead unless you hear otherwise from your team manager or coach. Football is a winter sport that is played in wet and cold weather and the only time council will cancel games is if it is unsafe or if the fields will be damaged by games being played. If games are cancelled, NRF will post it on their website by 8am on gameday and the club will communicate through social media and grade convenors will inform team managers and coaches ASAP who will pass it onto the team.

Game **times** can vary but usually played on saturday mornings usually from 9-10am or 10-11am. A summary of regular times by grade is shown on our [website](#)

Competition

The NRF 9th grade competition is made up of clubs from all over the Northshore. Along with ECB, clubs include Birkenhead, Northshore, Albany, Puhoi, Northern Rovers, Warkworth, Takapuna and Hibiscus Coast.

Teams are graded throughout the season to ensure games are played with teams of similar strength. This does mean that at the start of the season, there can be some unbalanced games with large scores. NRF will move teams up and down to try and minimise this.

In terms of game **locations**, games are played home or away against other North Shore clubs. It can be mixed in terms of the order of home and away but by the end of the season, you will have played approx 50% home and 50% away.

Our home games are played at our ECB venues which are Bay City Park, Ashley Reserve, Deep Creek Reserve, Mairangi Bay and sometimes the outer turf at QBE Stadium.





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Games

9th grade football is a far more structured game on the field and is a steep learning curve for the players and parents.

The 9th grade game is a 7 vs 7, played on a 1/4 pitch with 3/4 size goals. Pitch size can vary from club to club. The 7 players consist of 1 goalie and 6 outfield players. Those 6 outfield players can play either as defenders, midfielders or strikers in a certain formation/positions. Players will learn to play in each of those positions including goalie.

A full team will usually consist of 9-11 players. The extra players (rolling substitutes) will be switched with the on field players during the game. All players will get equal time on the field.

Each game is played as 2 separate games of 25mins with a 5 mins break. The same teams play each other but the score goes back to 0-0 at the beginning of the 2st 25min game. The scores are recorded and sent into NRF for grading purposes only but scores and league standings are not shown as junior football is not meant to be competitive. This is a NZ Football directive.

Game **rules** can be found in the NRF handbooks which you can download from our website. For NRF Junior Handbook head to the bottom of our [Junior Webpage](#)

On the right is a summary of the main rules for junior (U9-U12) teams. The key difference for Junior grades is the introduction of the **retreating line** and that **offside** is played from the retreating line for U9-U10 and halfway for U11-U12.

The **retreating line** is a line of discs placed 30% from the goal line. When a team's goalkeeper catches/picks up the ball or is taking a goal kick, the opposition **MUST** drop back behind the retreating line. Only after the goalkeeper plays the ball out and one of the goalkeeper's teammates touches the ball, can the opposition player advance over the retreating line. This is to give teams space to encourage and teach players how to play from the back and work the ball up the field. Coaches are asked to encourage all players to play the ball as quickly as possible from the goalkeeper and not allow them to continue to roll or come to a stop.

Goal Keepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each team has a Goalkeeper (GK)• To restart play after a save or gathering the ball with their hands, the ball must be thrown or rolled from the hands or played from the ground with their feet. The goalkeeper is not allowed to kick or drop kick the ball directly from their hands.• When the GK has the ball in their hands or taking a goal kick: the opposition team must drop behind the retreating line until an attacking player has received the ball or the ball is played over the <u>retreating line</u>.
Start and restart of play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Game starts with a kick to a teammate from the middle of the halfway line.• Opposition must be 5m away from the ball at this time.• In order to score a goal from kick-off it must touch someone else on the field before entering the goal.• When a goal is scored, play is restarted at the halfway line by the team who conceded the goal.
Ball crossing side-line (out of play)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thrown in to play from behind the side-line.• Player should face the field of play with both feet behind or on the side-line and should use both hands to deliver the ball from over their head.• The thrower cannot touch the ball until it has touched another player.• A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.
Ball crossing goal-line (out of play)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corner kick awarded if last touched by defending team.• A goal kick is awarded if last touched by attacking team.• Defending players must drop back behind the retreating line when the GK has the ball.• The opposition may advance over the retreating line once another player (other than the GK) has touched the ball; or the ball is advanced over the retreating line by the GK.
Scoring Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goal is scored when the whole ball crosses the line.• Where cones/poles are used, the height of the goal should be of the tallest player.
Offside	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• U9 & U10: Yes - Retreating Line.• U11 & U12: Yes - Halfway.
Fouls & Free Kicks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indirect free kick awarded if any deliberate handball or excessive physicality or other misconduct occurs.• Deliberate handball or serious misconduct in the penalty area results in penalty kick 8m from goal, with GK in position.• When any player is taking a Free Kick inside their retreating line: the opposition team must drop behind the retreating line until an attacking player has received the ball or the ball is played over the <u>retreating line</u>.



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Game Day

We ask that teams arrive early so they can find parking and have ample time for warmup. Some clubs have minimal parking so please leave early. It's unfair on the player, coach and the team if you arrive late and they aren't getting the appropriate warmup and instructions from the coach.

The home team (the team named first on the draw) need to set the field up (goals, nets, cones, retreating line discs). Parents are expected to do this so that the coach is able to focus on warming the team up. **It is not the coaches job to set the field up.** Parents are also expected to pack up (cones, retreating line discs) and nets if they are the last game of the day. The team manager is sent a weekly roster and will let parents know if they need to put nets up/ away. The team manager will also have a nets and lights instructions which has instruction and codes for the net bins and lights at our venues.

Parents/ volunteers are also required to **referee** with each team doing a half each – unless both teams agree on a volunteer for the whole game. Coaches need to coach from the side line so are not expected to referee. If your team struggles to find a parent confident enough other options are to ask an older sibling or get a gold coin donation from parents to get a sibling/ volunteer to referee has worked well in the past. The club run regular community referee courses throughout the year designed to give parents the basics and confidence to referee games.

Expected Behaviour

Children and parents need to understand that the coach is there to coach the team, not to spend time disciplining children. If your child is disruptive, the coach or team manager may ask you to deal with your child's behaviour as it will be impacting the coach and rest of the team's ability to learn. If a player's poor behaviour continues and is not dealt with, this will be escalated to the club.

Our club has worked hard to build & maintain a positive and encouraging culture throughout all our grades and we want to make sure our members are portraying that to our teams and also opposition clubs. We ask parents to maintain a behaviour that is positive, encouraging and not over competitive. Any unacceptable behaviour such as being abusive on the sideline and over competitive behaviour is unacceptable at East Coast Bays and will be dealt with by the club. Also please respect the opposition players, opposition supporters and referees.

We also ask parents not to 'coach' your child from the sidelines. The coach is there to provide guidance and your comments may contradict what the coach is asking the players to do and often confuses them. Evidence also shows that the time a football is at your child's feet, is the worst time to be yelling instructions at them as their brain is trying to decide their next action.

By all means, support and encourage your children but please do it in a positive manner and not telling them what to do. Kids this age are going to make lots of mistakes and it is how they learn.

That's about it!

If you have any questions, contact your team manager, coach, grade convenor or the club directly at admin@ecbafc.co.nz

Have a great season, have some fun &

Go the Mighty Bays!