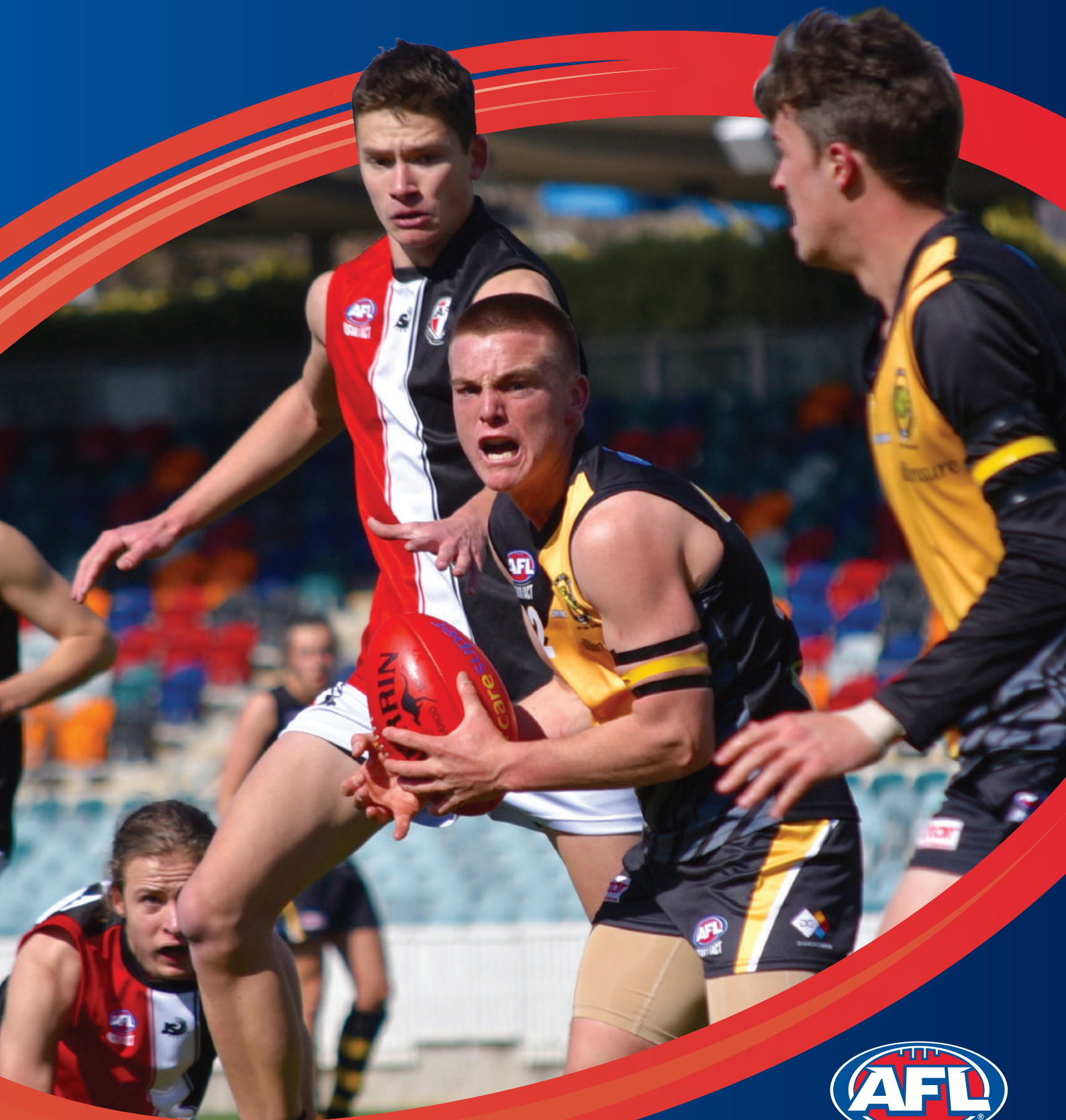


AFL NSW/ACT CLUB GUIDE TO **PLAYER TRANSITION**

Transiting players from Junior to Senior Football



CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 1. WHY YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY SPORT | 4 |
| WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY SPORT? | 4 |
| WHY DO KIDS DROP OUT OF SPORT? | 4 |
| FUTURE THREATS OR BARRIERS | 4 |
| 2. WHAT CAN LEAGUES DO TO ASSIST CLUBS WITH PLAYER TRANSITION? | 5 |
| 3. WHAT CAN JUNIOR CLUBS DO TO ASSIST? | 6 |
| WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST AUSKICK? | 6 |
| WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 9'S TO 12'S? | 6 |
| WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 13'S TO 15'S? | 6 |
| WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 16'S TO 18'S? | 6 |
| WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST SENIOR CLUBS? | 6 |
| 4. WHAT CAN SENIOR CLUBS DO TO ASSIST? | 7 |
| WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST AUSKICK? | 7 |
| WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 9'S TO 12'S? | 7 |
| WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 13'S TO 16'S? | 7 |
| WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 16'S TO 18'S? | 7 |
| WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST JUNIOR CLUBS IN GENERAL? | 7 |
| OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOTBALL CLUBS | 8 |
| APPENDICES | 9 |
| MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) | 9 |
| TRANSITION CHECKLIST | 10 |
| SENIOR CLUB 'JUNIOR LIAISON OFFICER' ANNUAL CALENDAR | 11 |

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of player transition from youth football into senior football cannot be underestimated. As such, AFL NSW/ACT has developed this guide to assist clubs in establishing best practice methods to promote player transition.

AFL NSW/ACT encourages clubs to work with Leagues to enhance the player participation experience to foster better junior, youth and senior pathways.



1. WHY YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY SPORT

It is important to understand the key motivations as to both why kids play sport and why kids stop playing football. The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in partnership La Trobe University, undertook the Youth Participation Research Project (2017) to identify and address the barriers to sports participation amongst Australian youths.

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY SPORT?

- To have fun with their friends and develop new friendships
- For excitement and enjoyment
- Stress relief
- To experience challenge, achievement and personal responsibility
- To use and improve their skills

WHY DO KIDS DROP OUT OF SPORT?

- Cost of participation
- Time pressures i.e. employment, academic, socialising
- Sport is too competitive and is a large commitment
- Lack of support from family
- Not confident in skill level to continue to participate

Kids are more likely to stay in sport if they have positive experiences. Clubs and coaches need to be aware of these themes and take steps to ensure that everything is done to ensure enjoyment.

FUTURE THREATS OR BARRIERS

Key threats or barriers to participation in sport, which as a football community we need to be aware of and subsequently address include:

- Competition from other sports
- Population shifts
- Technology distractions (TV, Internet, video games, etc)
- Lack of volunteers
- Failure to engage in transition programs with relevant junior or senior clubs
- Time and travel restraints
- A greater choice in leisure options
- Lack of facilities to cope with growth



2. WHAT CAN LEAGUES DO TO ASSIST CLUBS WITH PLAYER TRANSITION?

It is essential to ensure that every junior player has a pathway into senior football and is aware of what opportunities are available. Some areas that your League may be able to assist include:

- Networking opportunities for club presidents and committees
- Implementing a Community Club Sustainability Program (i.e. player points systems) which incentivise youth development and player club loyalty
- Introducing a Home Player Quota rule requiring all senior teams to play a minimum number of players from its junior pathway
- Providing player pathway documents for players (NAB AFL Auskick to 16's) for stakeholders to promote at every opportunity
- Promoting the importance of long term involvement in sport
- Completing the Community Club Improvement Program to ensure all clubs create quality environments
- Encourage senior clubs to be proactive at an earlier age when developing transition programs with junior clubs.
- Establishing a “player pathway round” to promote the importance of junior and senior relationships



3. WHAT CAN JUNIOR CLUBS DO TO ASSIST?

Building strong relationships with players, parents and senior clubs is imperative to aid transition. The junior football club must play a part in assisting the progression of players to senior football.

WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST AUSKICK?

- Distribute player pathway documents to Auskick participants
- Invite the top end youth players to be part of your club's program

WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 9'S TO 12'S?

- Discuss with junior players that they may go on to play with their aligned senior club – distribute a basic pathway document
- Invite the senior club to be part of your program including coaching
- Educate parents on how to encourage and support their children to participate long term in football and why this is important

WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 13'S TO 15'S?

- Have a player's night/dinner at a senior club to experience a senior team training night
- Encourage parents to help young people balance the demands on their time to allow time for sport
- Invite the senior club to be part of your program including coaching

WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 16'S TO 18'S?

- Train at local senior club ground several times during the year
- Celebrate local transition successes (i.e. Junior players going on to win individual awards and honours)
- Send a letter to all previous Under 16's in January/February providing the senior club contact details and encouraging them to register

WHAT CAN THE JUNIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST SENIOR CLUBS?

- Support and encourage the efforts of the local senior club
- Provide contact details of Under 18's players to senior clubs (*NB: releasing this information is not in breach of the Privacy Act or AFL Privacy Policy*)
- Invite a senior club representative to sit on the junior club's committee
- Offer a junior representative to sit on the senior club committee
- Hold a joint function/event with the senior club, e.g. quiz night or gala day
- Invite the senior club committee to key junior club events or functions



4. WHAT CAN SENIOR CLUBS DO TO ASSIST?

WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST AUSKICK?

- Arrange for senior players to attend the local Auskick Centre and assist in coaching / umpiring (wearing senior club shirt)
- Arrange for NAB AFL Auskick kids from the local junior club to play at half time of your senior club's league match, with a BBQ / event for players and parents

WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 9'S TO 12'S?

- Assist the junior club at local junior registration days
- Provide players or people to support the efforts of the junior clubs in recruiting junior players
- Senior players to volunteer a few hours during the season e.g. operate the BBQ at key events

WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 13'S TO 16'S?

- Hold BBQ's for the junior players after training
- Provide players to conduct training sessions for junior team
- Invite junior players to senior club matches

WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST UNDER 16'S TO 18'S?

- Actively look to provide a player/ex-player to coach the Under 16's junior team (someone who is positive role model)
- Establish regular communication with Under 16's and 18's players, such as letters at the start of the season (wishing them all the best for the season ahead), middle (touching base and inviting them to a senior club event – with no alcohol) and end of their season (congratulating them on the end of the season and giving them further details about your club and the following season)
- Invite the Under 16's to 18's to train with the senior squad on occasion
- Have the senior club league coach provide support to the Under 16's and 18's coaches and take sessions with the junior players
- Hold a parent information session with the parents of the Under 16's and 18's parents to give them info about the senior club and so they can ask any questions
- Include all Under 16's / 18's players from local junior clubs on a mail out / email database for all club newsletters (seek permission from players and include an unsubscribe option)
- Invite all Under 16's / 18's and their parents to a senior club game and incorporate a club lunch for the attendees
- Establish a pre-season timeline to distribute to all Under 16's/18's players at the end of their season - don't wait until pre-season commences!

WHAT CAN THE SENIOR CLUB DO TO ASSIST JUNIOR CLUBS IN GENERAL?

- Appoint a Junior Club Liaison Officer and offer a senior club representative to sit on the junior club committee
- Invite a junior representative to sit on the senior club committee
- Explore an induction process or youth player camp
- Implement a player welfare program to ensure the players feel welcome at the club once they arrive
- Implement a mentor program (player buddy system) – whereby current senior players 'buddy up' with a youth player. The senior player may train with his buddy a couple of times throughout the year and watch each other play throughout the year



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOTBALL CLUBS

- Investigate and establish various competition offerings to cater for kids of all abilities and / or willingness to play senior competitive football i.e. offer young people social and appropriate competitive opportunities.
- Senior clubs need to present a professional image that junior players and their families want to be a part of include:
 - Appropriate coaching
 - Professional look and standards at training
 - Ensuring that the club rooms and its surroundings are kept presentable and not impacted from anti-social behaviour.
 - Create a positive image and environment at the club that will welcome younger players. This is particularly relevant if you share a ground with a junior club.
- Inclusive club governance and branding across male and female teams.
- Have a clear policy on alcohol and drugs at the club which is discuss this with the junior club and parents
- Ensure all coaches are accredited (encourage Level 2 accreditation)
- Work together to confront and deal with key issues that deter players from remaining in football
- Look at other recruiting strategies – Assist the local high school Year 11 / 12 teams
- Outline the social benefits of being involved in the football club and not just the football benefits
- Run joint “Family Days” promoting the positive relationship between the two clubs
- Share resources – goal pads, handball targets, markers etc
- Clubs need to address key environments within your control, including; administration, volunteers, coaching, club appointed umpires, spectator behaviour, etc. Clubs have a duty of care to confront poor environments that deter players from continuing in football
- Attempt to maintain parental involvement for as long as possible
- Encourage young people likely to drop out to take on roles in administration, coaching, umpiring, etc. When you contact players, who have not returned to play offer them other participation alternatives than just playing
- Provide equal opportunity for all players regardless of their ability
- Keep fees and other costs as low as possible
- Offer playing and training times and durations to suit young people and their parents - consider alternatives to the traditional training and games to attract and retain a greater number of players
- Advertise widely for players or link in with summer sporting clubs to arrange reciprocal membership or playing opportunities
-

APPENDICES

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| LEGAL NAME | ABN | SENIOR CLUB |
| of <input type="text"/> | | |
| ADDRESS | | |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| LEGAL NAME | ABN | JUNIOR CLUB |
| of <input type="text"/> | | |
| ADDRESS | | |

This memorandum of understanding between the Senior Club and the Junior Club and has been developed with the intention and aim to ensure that both clubs to work together effectively and efficiently to achieve common objectives, enhance player transition and benefit both clubs longer term.

OBJECTIVES

The Parties agree:

1. To establish a joint executive committee made up of at least two executive committee members of both clubs to work together to share resources and assist our younger players in their transition from junior to senior football.
2. That the Junior Club will appoint a Senior Club Liaison Officer and the Senior Club will appoint a Junior Club Liaison Officer to act as the primary point of contact between the respective clubs.
3. That both Clubs will work together in good faith to promote both Clubs and to encourage more football players living within to play in rather than travelling outside of the region to play elsewhere.
4. That the Junior Club will encourage their team and other youth ages to become involved and train on occasion with the team and the Senior Club will encourage their senior players to become actively involved and assist younger players with their development i.e. mentor programs.
5. That the Junior Club will provide the Senior Club with the contact details of its players in each year to encourage the players to register with the Senior Club.
6. That the Senior Club will provide a coach for the Junior Club's team and conduct training sessions for the Junior Club's teams.
7. That both Clubs will work together regarding local council relations to eliminate duplication of procedures and time, and will work together to develop a seasonal roster and action plan at the commencement of each season for the use and maintenance of such items as club rooms, oval, canteen, ground marker, volunteer recruitment, goal pads etc.
8. That each club will consider the other club when making important decisions that may affect the other or changes to use of the shared clubrooms and other facilities and will endeavour to advise the other club as soon as possible.

President,

Signature

Date / /

President,

Signature

Date / /



TRANSITION CHECKLIST

THE BASIC STEPS

- | | | | |
|----------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Have you contacted your respective Junior / Senior club? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Do you have a transition agreement with your respective Junior / Senior club | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Are there appointed representatives that attend committee meetings of the respective Junior/Senior club? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Is there a long-term plan to ensuring the successful transition of players from Youth Football into Senior Football? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Does your club have a Junior / Senior liaison officer? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | Do you have joint functions / events with your respective Junior / Senior club? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

* It is important that both senior and junior clubs take a role in ensuring that players make the transition from junior to senior football.



SENIOR CLUB 'JUNIOR LIAISON OFFICER' ANNUAL CALENDAR

JANUARY

- Follow up invite/phone call with any potential Under 16 players.
- Initiate contact and liaise with Junior Club President

FEBRUARY

- Follow up invite/phone call with any potential U17 players.
- Senior players assist with Junior Registration Day

MARCH

- Contact Junior Club to organise a player database for all 15s/16s players
- Attend networking opportunities provided by the League
- Liaise with Junior Club about arranging a joint function/ fundraising activity
- Speak to all new players about how they are settling in to the new club (player welfare).

APRIL

- Senior club to send letter to 15s/16s players wishing them all the best for the season ahead.

MAY

- Invite 16's players to train with the club for one session
- U18's club coach to conduct a coaching session with junior coaches
- Speak to all U18 players about how they are settling in to the new club

JUNE

- Arrange for senior players to assist at local Junior Club for one night instead of training (including Auskick sessions)
- Organise a family day at a home game and invite Junior Club players and parents to attend

JULY

- Invite 16's players to train with the U18s for two sessions
- Send a letter to all 15s/16s players touching base and making sure their season is progressing well.
- Arrange a player BBQ at a Junior Club for all Youth age player (13 - 16 years)

AUGUST

- Invite all 16s players to an official club function (no alcohol).
- Invite 17s players to train with the senior club.
- Arrange a parent information night for 16s/17s parents providing them for info about the club.

SEPTEMBER

- Send a letter to all 17s players congratulating them on the season, inviting them to register to your club next year and outlining the proposed pre-season and upcoming year.

OCTOBER

- Write a letter to the junior club committee thanking them for their assistance throughout the year in planned transition activities.

NOVEMBER

- Send an official written invitation to all 17s players for the upcoming pre-season (Include a pre-season timeline along with a player registration form).

DECEMBER

- Relax – time off.