

PLAYER ADVANCEMENT POLICY

Applies from February 1st, 2018



FOOTBALL FEDERATION
TASMANIA



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1. RATIONALE

Football Federation Tasmania is committed to the safe development of players, particularly in the youth and junior age groups. The Federation is also strongly supportive of FFA's vision for the game in Australia and is obligated to the adoption of the principles, structures and recommendations contained in the National Football Curriculum (v2), the National Building Blocks and the National Competition Review.

In line with the three documents listed above and specifically related to the adoption of the 5 Core Outcomes of the National Competition Review and the Building Blocks designated in the National Football Curriculum, Football Federation Tasmania will require, as from February 1st 2018, that all players registered with any FFT affiliated club, association or organisation, who participate in football competitions conducted in the State of Tasmania, meet strict guidelines related to age groups and the associated levels of competition.

The development of players in a structured and logical manner is a high priority for Football Federation Australia and its affiliated Federations. The current inconsistencies in quality and approach to Youth Development in Australia are due to factors such as the diversity and self interest of clubs and the limited knowledge, experience and skills of coaches. At present, many players are missing essential years in the youth development areas because clubs and coaches believe that the best way to develop players is to push them into the senior levels of the game. This is not only developmentally dangerous – the correct environment for establishing appropriate perception, decision and execution is lost – but also physically and socially challenging for youth players in an adult environment.

Football Federation Tasmania is also acutely aware of the population base, player-pool size and the regional diversity of the State. Whilst acknowledging that there are some specific challenges faced by clubs across the State in regard to fielding teams, the promotion of youth players to senior teams to fill numbers, under the guise of 'player development', is not considered acceptable.

2. SCOPE

This Policy shall apply to all Associations, Clubs and Schools that are affiliated to Football Federation Australia through Football Federation Tasmania.

3. PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT – COMPETITION LEVEL

3.1. DISCOVERY PHASE

The U6 & U7 age groups form a part of the Discovery Phase of Development are. Coaching and training at this age is firmly based on players discovering the game through play and game-based activities.

Competition formats are 4-aside. The Mini-Roos National Playing Formats and Rules provide more details.

3.2. SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE – JUNIOR FOOTBALL

The age groups that form a part of the Junior Football fall into three categories.

- i. The Under 12 age group (players who have turned 11 years of age at the start of the calendar year). Competition for players in this category shall be conducted under 9-a-side football regulations. The offside law is applicable, however, in some regions the infringement is not immediately penalized and other conditions to allow play to continue are in place.
- ii. The Under 11 & Under 10 age groups also play 9-a-side football but the offside law does not apply.
- iii. The Under 8 & Under 9 age groups play 7-a-side matches. The offside law does not apply.

Competition formats for the U6 to U11 age categories are set out under the MiniRoos National Playing Formats and Rules. The U12 competition is governed by local association rules.

Associations, schools and other bodies affiliated with Football Federation Tasmania **must** conduct matches for the development of players under the specific conditions set down for the defined age groups. The elements of competitive sport (including winning and losing matches, respect for opponents and respect for match officials) are viewed as important and players should be educated to understand them as they relate to their individual performance and not the match result. Adult team staff and supporters are viewed as being role models for this developing these behaviours.

Training for players in the Discovery Phase and the Skill Acquisition Phase should be game-related and focus on developing enjoyment and individual skill development through activities that are movement based and provide repetition. Opportunities for success and failure are supported with positive coach feedback.

3.3. GAME TRAINING PHASE - YOUTH FOOTBALL

Football Federation Tasmania consider the Game Training Phase as the most appropriate for the development of youth players older than 13 years but who are yet to reach their 16th birthday.

The focus is on preparing the players for senior football (Performance Phase) by teaching them to apply the functional game skills in a team setting by developing tactical awareness, perception and decision-making through a game related approach to training.

The Company shall provide opportunities for organised competition for players of both genders in this Phase, either independently or in conjunction with regional bodies.

Developing behaviours, attitudes and strong relationships by individuals and groups both on and off the field of play is essential at this level. Involvement with club-based programs as well as Federation-run high performance programs for identified, potentially talented players is important. Clubs hold a high level of responsibility for the correct development and advancement of players based on the player's individual development needs.

3.4. PERFORMANCE PHASE - SENIOR FOOTBALL

The Phase of player involvement, nominally 16 years of age and above, where the focus is on preparing teams for a competition environment where winning becomes the main objective. Training is based on solving football problems that coach has identified from match analysis. Football Conditioning becomes a key element of the program.

The Company shall, at its discretion, provide a variety of competition levels for both genders in each of the geographical areas of the State where football is played and controlled by FFT as required to service the requirements of the stakeholders in those regions. Competition Rules will set the cut-off date for eligibility for these senior level competitions.

4. ADVANCEMENT OF PLAYERS

It is the desire of the National Technical Department of Football Federation Australia that football is developed, learned and played in the most appropriate environment. The environment includes factors related, but not limited, to social development, physicality of competition, off field care and management and particularly level of coach expertise. Players will gain the most appropriate level of development when all factors that are a part of the footballer's growth are catered for and monitored appropriately.

Players sometimes experience inappropriate 'pushing' from parents, coaches and clubs, telling the player they are 'talented'. As these judgments of talent are being made at such an early age, often by people without sufficient knowledge, experience or understanding of the developmental stages of player development, the Federation has adopted a strong position on the need to ensure all youth players receive the most appropriate development in the game by remaining in the specific developmental phase for the most appropriate period of time.

The early advancement of a player from any Phase of their football development should only be considered when it can be clearly demonstrated that the player's football development is substantially hindered by remaining at the current level and that enhancement at another level is under the supervision of an appropriately qualified and experienced coach.

Any advancement shall be for the purpose of providing for the player a training and competition level that appropriately considers the player's technical, tactical, physical and social developmental needs.

Training should remain developmentally focused. There should not be a focus on conditioning (a major consideration with senior football), other than core and joint stabilization and there should be an adjustment to the amount of playing time for the youth player to prevent overuse injuries. In previous years many youth players have been moved to senior teams where the focus is firmly set on winning matches and where high emphasis is placed on physical conditioning.

5. CONDITIONS FOR PLAYER ADVANCEMENT

All Youth players are considered to be in either the Skill Acquisition or Game Training Phase of their football development. This determination is made on the player's competencies, not on their biological age. E.g. A player, new to the game, although that player may be 14 or 15 years of age, their development may be at the skill acquisition level.

5.1. FFA/FFT Identified Player Programs

All players accepted into approved development programs, particularly those administered by Football Federation Tasmania on behalf of Football Federation Australia, specifically the Talent Support Programs, shall be approved to play at competition levels that meet the developmental requirements of the individuals in these Programs as decided upon by the Technical Department of Football Federation Tasmania in agreement with the player's club's technical director. This may include players receiving exemptions to 5.3.3 below.

5.2. Advancement within Youth Football competitions

Clubs wishing to advance an individual player from one team within a Youth Football competition to a team at a higher level within a Youth Football competition may do so without a request for approval provided that such movement meets the Competition Rules and is within the spirit of the competition.

5.3. Advancement beyond Youth Football to Senior Football competitions

5.3.1. Players who have turned 16 years of age

Where the player has already reached the age of 16 years, or the player's 16th birthday falls prior to **August 31st** of that playing season for male players and prior to *December 31st in that year for female players, the player may play in Senior Football competitions without restriction.

*This variation is in place because of the difference in competition levels available between male and female players at this age.

5.3.2. Players who have turned 15 years of age

A player who has turned 15 years of age may progress as high as the U18 level of competition.

5.3.3. Players less than 15 years of age

No player 14 years of age or younger may play above an Under 16 level competition unless approved under 5.1.

5.4. No team at the club

Where a club is unable to provide a competition environment within Youth Football for a player under the age of 15 years at their club, the player, with the assistance of the club, should be referred to other local clubs for that playing season. Communication between clubs to assist players in finding appropriate playing environments is advised. Assistance from the State Technical Director should also be sought in these circumstances.

5.5. Players in Junior Football competitions

Player at the Under 12 age group in Junior Football may progress to Youth Football in circumstances where individual development will benefit from participating in 11 v 11 football. Such advancement shall only be appropriate where the coach of the team to which advancement is being made holds, as a minimum, a Skill Training certificate, however the Advanced C Youth Licence is preferred as the level of accreditation.

Such movement shall only be to the first age group level of competition available in the player's club's geographical region.

5.6. Players in MiniRoos Football Competition

No player, who is a registered player at the MiniRoos competition of U5 to U11 shall be permitted to play in any officially conducted, regular season competition that is 11-a-side football based.

All MiniRoos players should remain in their designated competition age group.

6. MONITORING AND PENALTIES

6.1. Competition team sheets will be monitored by Football Federation Tasmania.

Where an organisation (club, school or Association) is found to have breached the Player Advancement Policy, the Competition Manger of Football Federation Tasmania shall inform State's Technical Director who shall contact the organisation's nominated person (Club TD, Head Teacher) to advise of the breach. It shall be the responsibility of this person to follow up the matter internally and ensure that no subsequent breach occurs.

6.2. Where the same player is found to be in breach of this Policy on subsequent occasions, the notification of the breach shall again be communicated along with a notice of points deduction. 3 points shall be deducted from the team for which the ineligible player competed regardless of the match result.

6.3. Where an organisation is found to have breached the Player Advancement Policy on multiple occasions, the State Technical Director shall require a meeting with the designated organisation representative to be held and an explanation of the breaches be presented. Furthermore, the organisation shall be required to provide suitable evidence that further breaches shall not occur. Based upon the information provided the State Technical Director may recommend that the Federation impose further sanctions which may include, but are not limited to:

- the deduction of points from the team for which the player competes;
- the deduction of points from the organisation's senior team in the gender in which the player participates;
- the suspension of the player from competition for a period of time (but not exceeding 2 matches);
- the imposition of a monetary fine to a maximum of \$500 for each offence.

APPENDIX 1 Definitions

FFA

Football Federation Australia (FFA) is the governing body of football in Australia and is a member of Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the international governing body for football. Information regarding FIFA is available at www.fifa.com

FFT

Football Federation Tasmania (FFT) is the governing body of football in the State of Tasmania and is a member of Football Federation Australia.

The National Football Curriculum

FFA's documented plan for player and coach development

Building Blocks

FFA's guide to the stages of player development

National Competitions Review (NCR)

FFA's review of all aspects of competitions conducted by FFA, the Member Federations and State League clubs around Australia at Youth League, State League and Hyundai A-League level.

Discovery Phase

The Phase of player development, nominally 4 years of age to 7 years of age, where the focus is on players discovering their (im)possibilities and building a love for the game. There is no formal coaching rather organised, fun football activities.

Skill Acquisition Phase

The Phase of player development, nominally between the ages of 9 years and 13 years of age, where the focus is on the development of the 4 Core Skills of Striking the Ball, First Touch, Running with the Ball & 1 v 1.

Game Training Phase

The Phase of player development, nominally between the ages of 13 years and 16 years of age, where the focus is on preparing the players for senior football by teaching them to apply the functional game skills in a team setting using the 1-4-3-3 as the preferred formation as well as developing tactical awareness, perception and decision-making through a game related approach to training.

Performance Phase

The Phase of player involvement, nominally 16 years of age and above, where the focus is on preparing teams for a competition environment where winning becomes the main objective. Training is based on solving football problems, based on match analysis. Football Conditioning becomes a key element of the program.

State Technical Director

The person employed by Football Federation Tasmania to oversee the technical development of the game within Tasmania in line with the policies, procedures and philosophy of Football Federation Australia.

Club Technical Director

The person appointed by a club, affiliated with FFT, to oversee the implementation of the technical aspects of a club's football program in line with the policies, procedures and directives set by FFA and FFT.

Association Technical Director

The person appointed by a Regional Association, affiliated with FFT, to oversee the implementation of the technical aspects of the Association's football program in line with the policies, procedures and directives set by FFA and FFT.

Coach

The person appointed (employed) by a Federation, club, team or Association to undertake educational, player development and team preparation duties appropriate to the developmental phase of the player or teams for which responsibility is assigned and to manage the training and competition environment for players to ensure that the age and development stage appropriate outcomes are realized.

Player

A person participating in the game of football with any club, Association or Federation.

Parent/Guardian

The person who is legally responsible for another person.