



"THIS IS OUR GAME"

FOR THE CONDUCT OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL FOR JUNIOR PLAYERS

AGED 9/10 Years

(These rule changes are moving towards coming in line with AFL Policy)

PHILOSOPY AND MATCH PROGRAM

2015

PLAYING GROUND, ZONES, TIME AND EQUIPMENT

Kids can't kick as far, run as fast or process the same level of match information as adults – so why make them play on the same size field?

The 'This is Our Game' philosophy is committed to a reduced playing area, playing time and suitably modified equipment to take the emphasis away from endurance and allow for greater skill development.

With smaller grounds the players are encouraged to concentrate because the ball is never far away.

TEAM COMPOSITION

Reduced numbers allow individual players to have more frequent and longer contact with the ball whilst play is more open, even when played on a reduced size oval.

ROTATION OF PLAYERS

Children should experience playing in a variety of positions. The practice of rotating players through different positions and the interchange enables the development of a solid foundation and adds variety and interest to the matches.

CONTACT

Deferring the introduction of full tackling is based upon the need to provide players with the best possible conditions to learn develop and improve their disposal skills by reducing congestion and pressure on the player in possession. All skills are eventually taught and learned, but there is an appropriate sequence for doing so.

The physiological and emotional readiness of children's bodies to resist the pressures of tackling also needs to be recognised in assessing when to introduce tackling. The "age of readiness" will vary from child to child, but generally is recognised as being around the 11-12 years age group.

MARKING

Awarding marks over any distance in the development phase recognises that many youngsters cannot consistently kick the ball beyond 10 metres.

BOUNCING

Restricting the number of bounces prevents players running excessive distances with the ball, encourages disposal skills and enhances team play.

KICKING OFF THE GROUND

In a players development years, the ability to enhance the skill of picking the ball up takes precedence over the need to kick it off the ground.

THE COACH ON THE GROUND

The absence of stringent competition conditions should enable the coach to provide praise, teaching and feedback when warranted or as errors immediately they occur.

PREMIERSHIP POINTS COMPETITIONS

The match environment in junior football must be one of encouragement, learning and development over a focus of "winning".

Where winning overrides such aims, and encouragement is replaced by a fear of failure, the program for children is inappropriate.

AWARDS

Any awards should not replace or detract from the fun and enjoyment gained by participation in the program and the learning that is an integral part of it.

Under 9's

PURPOSE

To provide children with a fun, safe and positive experience through a well structured match program that considers the level of maturation in motor, cognitive, psychosocial and emotional skill² of children in this age group.

The emphasis at this age level is the further development basic game specific skills (kicking, handballing, marking, gathering, evasion and checking) and learning technical and tactical concept. The match program for this age group provides further opportunities to develop game specific skills and the tactical principles of gaining possession, pressure, utilising space and positional play.

SPIRIT OF THE GAME

Prior to the commencement of play:

- all players, coaches and umpires should gather together on the ground and shake hands
- the umpire and coaches should ensure that players are aware of the rules and procedures to be followed in the conduct of the game

The spirit of the game is **to give all available players a game** of football. Therefore:

- where difficulty occurs fielding full numbers, both coaches must agree to even up player numbers.
- excess players should be given to the opposition team if they are unable to field the required numbers.
- coaches should consider modifying the numbers per side to ensure all players participate (for instance, if planning 15-a-side but only 24 players in total are available: play 12-a-side)

The umpire should at all times:

- endeavour to apply the rules of the games whilst preferring to award kicks to players in preference to calling for "ball-ups"
- understand that the spirit of AFL junior match rules for this age group is to enable all players to gather possession and that **"The player in possession of the ball should be given every opportunity to kick or handball"**.
- attempt to involve all players as the opportunities arise, particularly when indicating which players are to receive a "free kick" upon the ball being kicked out of bounds and ensuring the effective rotation of players

In relation to all **ball-ups**,

- A player contesting a ball-up may not grab the ball and play on

MATCH PROGRAM

- also see NEMJFA LAWS Matrix Chart

THE BALL

A synthetic size 2 or leather football should be used.

PLAYING TIME

The playing time should be reduced to what is appropriate for the age of the players.

AFL Junior Fixture – Maximum of 4 x 12 minute quarters with no time on.

THE TEAM

U9 - Fifteen-a-side means: 5 forwards, 5 midfielders, 5 backs + reserves

U10's - Eighteen a-side

Interchange may take place at any time, but all players must play at least half of the match.

Rotate players every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions.

Equalise the teams and opponents as much as possible (match sizes, abilities)

PLAYING GROUND and OFFICIALS

U9 - The size of the playing field should be no bigger than half the normal oval size

U10- The size of the playing field should be no bigger than $\frac{3}{4}$ the normal oval size

This field is a maximum size with flexibility needed depending on the players per team, age and ability level. Playing on a larger field will compromise the intent of the laws and in turn have an adverse effect on the development of players.

A field umpire is needed, there are no boundary throw-ins (no boundary umpires) but two goal umpires are required

START OF PLAY and RESTARTING AFTER A GOAL

When all players are in position, a ball-up is conducted between two centre players of similar height as nominated by the umpire, alternate players for subsequent bounces.

OUT OF BOUNDS

From a kick - free kick is awarded against the player who last kicked the ball.

If there is doubt, or if the ball came off hands or body, the umpire shall call a ball-up 5 metres in from the boundary. Full possession at the ball-up is not permitted.

U9's CONTACT / TACKLING

Players can perform a modified tackle.

A player in possession of the ball may be tackled by an opponent wrapping both arms around the area below the top of the shoulders and on/above the knees. The tackle may be from either side or from behind providing the tackle from behind does not thrust forward the player with the ball (That is push back the player in the back).

- If the player in possession of the ball is taken to the ground in the act of tackling, they will receive a free kick. If the umpire feels the player drops to the ground deliberately in order to receive a free kick, they will be penalized for holding the ball

- A player in possession of the ball, when held by an opponent applying the wrap around tackle, should be given a reasonable chance to dispose of the ball by kick or by handball, or by attempting to kick or handball, otherwise a free kick shall be awarded to the tackler for holding the ball.
- The Field Umpire shall conduct a ball-up when the player with the ball has the ball held to the body by an opponent, unless the player has had a reasonable time to dispose of the ball **prior to** being tackled, in which case a free kick shall be awarded to the tackler for holding the ball.
- The Field Umpire shall allow play to continue if the ball is accidentally knocked out of a player's hands by an opponent.
- A player not in possession of the ball, when held by an opponent, shall be awarded a Free Kick.
- There is strictly no bumping, slinging or deliberately bringing the opposition player in possession of the ball to the ground.

Players can:

- steal the ball from another player
- smother an opponent's kick
- shepherd an opponent

Players cannot:

- Deliberately or intentionally knock the ball out of an opponent's hands
- push the player in the side

BOUNCING

Players can run 10 metres and allowed one bounce within their zone.

COACHES

The Coach is allowed on the ground during play for the sole purpose of providing immediate feedback to players; they must not pressure, instruct or make comment to or about officiating umpires or decisions that they make. The coach must not pressure, instruct or make comment to the opposition team.

At the end of the game all players and coaches should gather on the ground and shake hands. The umpire should also take this opportunity to address the players.

ORDER OFF RULE

To be applied at the umpire's discretion (or the Controlling Body where applicable). Bad language, poor sportsmanship and disputing umpiring decisions should be actively discouraged.

THE GAME - PREMIERSHIP POINTS COMPETITIONS

The football match program to be offered to players 9-10 years of age must comply with the modified match program presented in this document with no premiership points, no finals, no ladders, no match results (no score) and no names of players published. Skill clinics and participation carnival days maybe held. No representative teams should be selected.