

AFL Riverina

Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan



December 2021



Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan

All Premier & Community Division 1 clubs will be required to have a clear and active Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan in place.

An active Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan is also a requirement for senior clubs to participate in both the AFL Riverina Premier and AFL Community Division 1 Competitions.

This requirement is to commence in season 2022 and be in place in season 2023.

Most senior clubs will currently have a plan of sorts as they have a need to field an underage team. They often work towards filling this team through a minimum pathway approach or manufacturing a team by other means. These efforts are often driven by individual relationships, and although at times successful, they are not sustainable.



Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan

What are the numbers we are dealing with today?

Without a formal plan in place, in season 2021 we had approximately:

- 260 players exit under 15s across all clubs. That is equivalent to 13 new complete teams.
- Under 17.5s competitions had 13 teams.
- 2 Competitions had a combined 36 byes.
- 5 Clubs did not have a 17.5s team feeding into their senior teams.

A clear, active, and documented Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan will deliver a consistent junior pathway into senior clubs, providing participants a structured and trusted approach. This maximises our senior club's ability to develop and retain 'home grown players' within their clubs.

This plan should be developed and agreed with your junior club.



Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan

The senior club's requirements to develop a Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan are:

Mandatory Requirements (1 of 2):

1. Senior Club to allocate a position on their clubs General Committee dedicated to the establishment and operation of the Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan. This could be a parent of a junior player that will move into senior club in coming seasons.
2. Senior club will establish 2 Junior Club Ambassador roles filled from within their senior club playing list.

Typically, Junior Club Ambassador roles will work to develop a relationship with the Junior Clubs Under 13s and Under 15s coaches, players, and player parents. Ideally senior players that have progressed through your junior club could be identified to fill these roles.

This role may include:

- Work with the junior team coach to foster consistent club game plan.
- Provide brief update to senior club on the outcome (including best player mentions) of the junior & youth team's previous game.
- When available, visit teams' huddles during breaks.
- Attending junior and youth team jumper presentation and end of season presentation events.
- Identify suitable youth players to participate in occasional senior training nights.



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The senior club's requirements to develop a Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan are:

Mandatory Requirements (2 of 2):

3. Senior club coach to deliver 2 dedicated junior coach development sessions, to communicate skills development, training exercises and senior club game plan - 1 session before season commencement and 1 session in the 1st half of the season.
4. Senior club to offer Junior Club Under 15s Information Evening, prior to the end of their season. The session should be promoted throughout the junior players final season, to build the momentum and expectation of the meeting.

This session would enable the senior club to promote their:

- Preseason timing, communication, and approach.
- Communicate the senior clubs' values and policies including alcohol, drugs, and behaviours.
- Commence the connection with prospective players and their families.

This session could be held in the form of a family BBQ.



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The senior club's requirements to develop a Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan are:

Optional Requirements

There are several additional areas where the senior club may support their junior club.

Your clubs Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan should include (but not be limited to) 3 of the optional requirements listed below:

- Senior club players to attend junior club training a minimum of 4 times per year.
 - Directly taking training on an additional 2 occasions with the support of additional senior players.
- Schedule 2 Under 15s matches on senior matchday- where draw allows.
- Senior club to include Under 15s in their club communications and invite them to join senior club social media platforms.
- Senior club to include Under 15s team in 2 senior pre-season training sessions and 1 trainings session in the last 4 weeks of the junior season.
- Senior club to provide weekly awards to 13's & 15's teams for player that best represents the clubs' values and playing expectations. e.g.: This could be as simple as a training singlet or shirt.
- Senior club to invite Under 15s and their families to 1 home game as guests of the club.



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The senior club's requirements to develop a Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan are:

At all times, senior clubs need to present a professional image that junior players and their families would want to be a part of. These behaviours include:

- Appropriate coaching
- Professional look and standards at training
- Appropriate control of Social Media platforms
- Ensuring that the club rooms and its surroundings are kept in a presentable condition.
- Create a positive image and club environment that will welcome younger players. This is particularly relevant if you share a ground and change rooms with your junior club.



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Management and Validation of Plan:

The Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan will be requested in March each year. The plan will be validated by AFL Riverina and checks will be conducted to ensure the plan is being actioned and supported.

The successful implementation and delivery of your Junior Development and Junior Club Relations Plan will be considered as part of the assessment in determining whether your club meets the Minimum Standards criteria to participate in the AFL Riverina Premier and AFL Community Division 1 Competitions.