

# JUNIOR MATCHDAY PHILOSOPHY

*The new Junior Matchday Policies aims to provide an environment where young players can play the game and sequentially develop their skills through activities, games, match rules and conditions commensurate with their stage of learning and level of ability.*

## **PLAYING GROUND, ZONES, TIME AND EQUIPMENT**

Kids cannot 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 junior matchday philosophy is committed to a reduced playing area, playing time and suitable modified equipment to take the emphasis away from endurance and allow for greater skill development. With smaller grounds, the players are more engaged because the ball is never far away.

## **USE OF ZONES**

The junior football match program embraces “zones” for the younger children as an excellent teaching practice. Firstly, the use of zones prevents ball-chasing and subsequent congestion where all players congregate around the ball. Secondly, it enables groupings of players of similar size and ability to play within a zone.

## **TEAM COMPOSITION**

Reduced numbers allow individual players to have more frequent and longer contact with the ball while 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.

## **THE COACH ON THE GROUND**

The absence of stringent competition conditions should enable the coach to provide praise, teaching and feedback when required.

## **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, in an appropriate sequence for doing so.

The physiological and emotional readiness of children’s bodies to withstand 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 10-12 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 player’s development years, the ability to enhance the skill of picking the ball up takes precedence over the need to kick it off the ground.

## **PREMIERSHIP POINTS COMPETITIONS**

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

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



# Junior Matchday Guidelines 2023

Under 8s, Under 9s & Under 10s



Rules and Regulations	Under 8 Mixed	Under 9 Mixed & Under 9 Girls	Under 10 Girls	Under 10 Mixed
Phase	Introductory	Development	Transition to Competition	Transition to Competition
<b>Players</b>	12 a side plus up to 4 Interchange	15 a side plus up to 5 interchange	16 a side plus up to 6 interchange	18 a side plus up to 6 interchange
<b>Maximum Ground Size</b>	80m x 60m approx.	100m x 80m approx.	Up to Full size	Up to Full size
<b>Use of Zones</b>	(2 games per oval) 3 equal zones with 4 players per zone	3 equal zones with 5 players per zone	3 equal zones and in each zone should be 5 - 6 - 5. Players will not be required to wear armbands.	No zones
<b>Match Length</b>	4 x 10 (1 hour)	4 x 12 (1 hour 15 minutes)	4 x 15 (1 hour 30 minutes)	4 x 15 (1 hour 30 minutes)
<b>Competition Details</b>	No scores, ladders or finals. No recording of best players and goal kickers permitted. No representative teams.	No scores, ladders or finals. No recording of best players and goal kickers permitted. No representative teams.	Scores allowed but not published, no ladders or finals. All match paperwork to be submitted to League for grading purposes. No representative teams.	Scores allowed but not published, no ladders or finals. All match paperwork to be submitted to League for grading purposes. No representative teams.
<b>Contact</b>	Modified tackle*/no bump. Players cannot bump/push an opponent, knock/ steal the ball out of their hands or smother an opponent's kick.	Modified tackle*/no bump. Players cannot bump/push an opponent, knock/ steal the ball out of their hands or smother an opponent's kick.	Modified tackle*/no bump. Players cannot bump/push an opponent, knock/ steal the ball out of their hands or smother an opponent's kick.	Full tackle / no bump.
<b>The ball</b>	Size 2 Synthetic	Size 2 Synthetic	Size 2 Synthetic	Size 2 Synthetic
<b>Umpiring</b>	1 field, 2 goal. Parents.	1 field, 2 goal. Parents.	1 field, 2 boundary, 2 goal. Club Supplementary Umpires.	1 field, 2 boundary, 2 goal. Club Supplementary Umpires.
<b>Coaching position</b>	Onfield (1)	Onfield (1)	Coach is allowed on field to assist players, up to and including Round 8.	Sideline
<b>Bounces</b>	1 bounce before disposing	1 bounce before disposing	2 bounces before disposing	2 bounces before disposing
<b>Marking</b>	A mark is awarded, irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled, to any player who catches it or makes a reasonable attempt to mark it.	A mark is awarded, irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled, to any player who catches it or makes a reasonable attempt to mark it.	A mark is awarded when a player catches the ball directly from another player's kick that has travelled at least 10 metres.	A mark is awarded when a player catches the ball directly from another player's kick that has travelled at least 10 metres.
<b>Out of Bounds</b>	From a kick, a free kick is awarded against the player who last kicked the ball. From hands, or if there is doubt, the umpire shall call a ball-up 10m in from the boundary.	From a kick, a free kick is awarded against the player who last kicked the ball. From hands, or if there is doubt, the umpire shall call a ball-up 10m in from the boundary.	The ball going out of bounds will result in a boundary throw in unless it is on the full in which case a free kick will be awarded to the opposition. Each Club to provide a boundary umpire.	The ball going out of bounds will result in a boundary throw in unless it is on the full in which case a free kick will be awarded to the opposition. Each Club to provide a boundary umpire.
<b>Kick off the Ground</b>	Not permitted unless accidental.	Not permitted unless accidental.	Not permitted unless accidental.	Not permitted unless accidental.
<b>Stealing, smothering, shepherding, barging</b>	No stealing, smothering, shepherding or barging.	No stealing, smothering, shepherding or barging.	Permitted in Under 10's.	Permitted in Under 10's.
<b>Penalties</b>	No distance penalty applies. Players can be ordered off at the umpire's discretion.	10m penalty can be applied at the umpire's discretion if they feel a player has been hindered in any way. Players can be ordered off at the umpire's discretion.	25m penalty can be applied at the umpire's discretion if they feel a player has been hindered in any way. Players can be ordered off at the umpire's discretion.	25m penalty can be applied at the umpire's discretion if they feel a player has been hindered in any way. Players can be ordered off at the umpire's discretion.
<b>Age Group Day</b>	Under 8's Round Robin during season	Under 9's Round Robin during season (free YJFL ball for each player)	Lightning Premiership at end of season for each division of Under 10's	Lightning Premiership at end of season for each division of Under 10's

\* Note - 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 player with the ball (i.e. push 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 penalised for holding the ball.