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PLAY *YOUR* WAY

JUNIOR FOOTBALL RULES

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

THE RULES OF JUNIOR FOOTBALL

This program handbook details the rules, structure and environment for the delivery of junior football across the country to create an optimal experience to drive participation and foster a lifelong connection to the game.

The below modified rules, developed based on research and best practice, provides the opportunity for participants in our junior competitions to develop their skills whilst experiencing activities relevant to their age, progression, physical development, and maturation level. The key focus is enjoyment, fun and satisfaction.

This handbook will provide you with a clear understanding of how football should be delivered across all junior and youth age groups to build a structure and environment which provides people a great experience, helping keep more players playing the game for longer and most importantly increasing people's enjoyment of footy!

RULE	JUNIOR FOOTBALL RULES
Age Policy	Competition Age Range: Where possible single age groups. Second option - 2 year age span (8,10,12,14,16,18)
Mercy Rule	The AFL encourages leagues, clubs and coaches once an unassailable lead is reached during a game (e.g. 60 points) to appreciate that it serves no purpose to inflict massive losses on teams. In these instances, a mercy rule should be applied that suits the local competition circumstances.
Game Day Environment	All leagues and competitions to adopt a baseline Game Environment initiative that aims to enhance the experience and environment of participants.
Max no. of games by a player in one season	It is recommended that the number of games that a player participates in across all levels and segments of football is monitored (including Talent, Club and School games) and that measures are put in place to support the welfare of the individual player, once a player gets to Under 14's. Across Youth Football Competitions it is recommended that players are not playing more than 25 games per season across talent, club and school competitions, and ideally should not be playing more than 2 games per week.
Fair Access & Opportunities	As a game, we all (Governing Bodies, Leagues and Clubs) must provide safe and inclusive environments that provide equal opportunities and access to funding, resources and facilities for women and girls, and that we equally value their contribution to Australian Rules Football.

MYTHBUSTERS

SEVEN MYTHS ABOUT JUNIOR AFL



MYTH

1

BUSTED!
No scores = more fun!

Having fun and learning the game is more important than winning!



FOOTY IS TOO COMPETITIVE

MYTH

2

BUSTED!
Little legs, little oval!

Kids are always part of the fun because the ball is never far away!



AFL FIELDS ARE TOO BIG FOR KIDS

MYTH

3

BUSTED!
Non-contact Junior Footy!

Right rules for the right skill level. Contact is gradually introduced to help kids learn and develop in a safe environment!



TACKLING IS UNSAFE FOR KIDS

ONLY THE BEST PLAYERS GET THE BALL!



MYTH

4

BUSTED!
Everyone gets a kick!

Reduced numbers and position rotations make sure everyone gets a go.

COACHES ARE INTENSE



MYTH

5

BUSTED!
Everyone gets a kick!

Our junior footy coaches are positive, encouraging and fully accredited. Best of all, most are parents just like you!

THE RULES ARE COMPLICATED

MYTH

6

BUSTED!
Play and learn!

The needs of your kids come first. That's why rules are modified for the right fit for the age group.



JUNIOR FOOTY IS CONGESTED

MYTH

7

BUSTED!
Stand your ground!

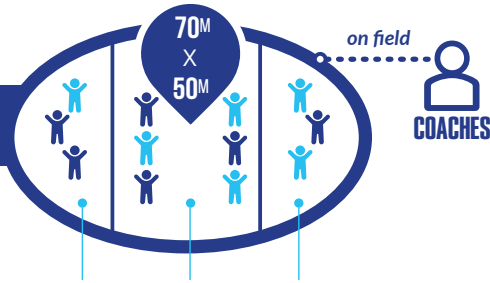
Zones prevent ball chasing and congestion. We make sure everyone gets a turn!



UNDER 8

UNDER 9

HOW TO PLAY



Number of players



3 equal zones

A MARK
is awarded



TO ANY PLAYER
to any player who makes a reasonable attempt to mark the ball

match
4x



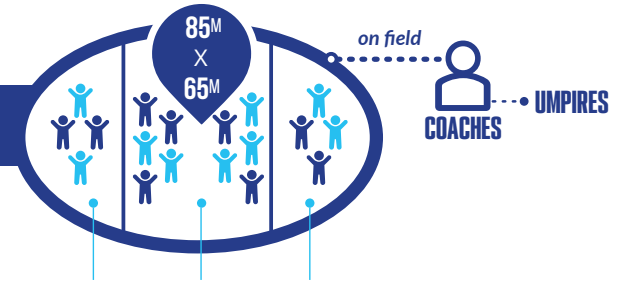
BREAKS
(5, B, 5 min)

NO BOUNCE
permitted



SIZE 1

HOW TO PLAY



Number of players



3 equal zones

A MARK
is awarded



TO ANY PLAYER
who shows control of the ball

match
4x



BREAKS
(5, B, 5 min)

1 BOUNCE
permitted



SIZE 2

No Tackling or holding of an opponent
No Smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands



No pushing (fending off), bumping or barging another player
No shepherding

Holding of an opponent
No Smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands

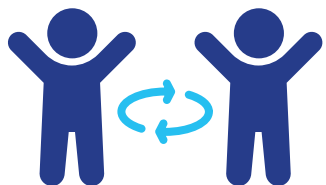


No pushing (fending off), bumping or barging another player

No shepherding



Modified tackling



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

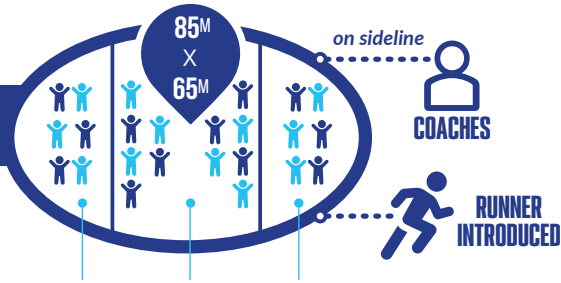
at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game



UNDER 10

HOW TO PLAY



Number of players



3 equal zones

A MARK
is awarded



TO ANY PLAYER
who shows control of the ball

match
4x



BREAKS
(5, 8, 5 min)

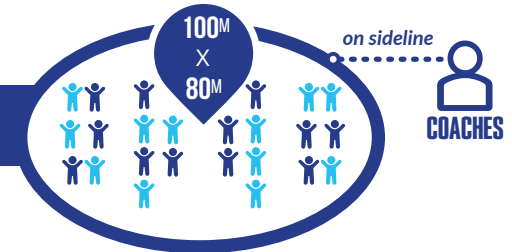
1 BOUNCE
permitted



SIZE 2

UNDER 11

HOW TO PLAY



Number of players



NO ZONES

A MARK
is awarded



TO ANY PLAYER

when a kick travels 10m to any player who catches the ball

match
4x



BREAKS
(5, 10, 5 min)

1 BOUNCE
permitted



SIZE 3

No Smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands



No pushing (fending off), bumping or barging another player

No shepherding

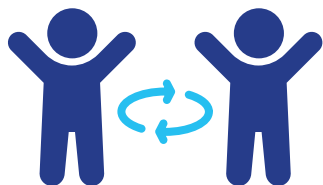


Modified tackling

Fending off, smothering, or barging



Full tackling and bumping



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

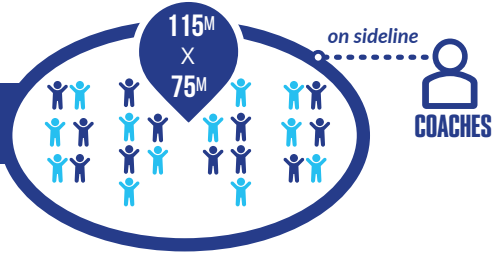
Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game



UNDER 12

UNDER 13/14

HOW TO PLAY



Number of players



A MARK
is awarded



TO ANY PLAYER

when a kick travels 10m to any player who catches the ball

match
4x



BREAKS
(5, 10, 5 min)

1 BOUNCE
permitted



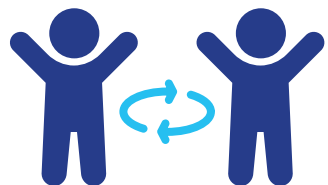
SIZE 3

Stealing the ball



Full tackling and bumping

Fending off, smothering, or barging



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

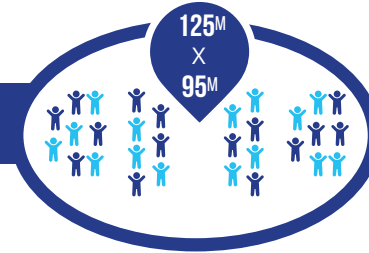
at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game

1-2 sessions
per week



HOW TO PLAY



Number of players



A MARK
is awarded



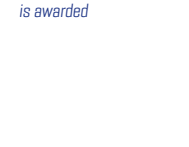
TO ANY PLAYER

when a kick travels 15m to any player who catches the ball

match
4x



BREAKS
(6, 10-15, 6 min)



SIZE 4

Stealing the ball



Full tackling and bumping

Fending off, smothering, or barging



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game

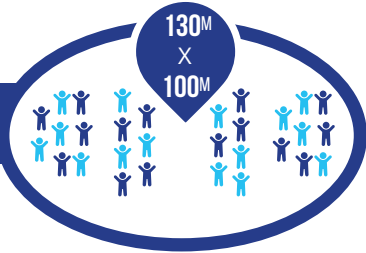
1-2 sessions
per week



UNDER 15

UNDER 16/17/18 GIRLS

HOW TO PLAY



Number of players

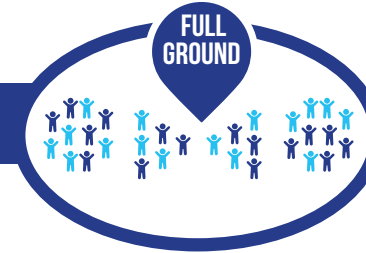


match
4x

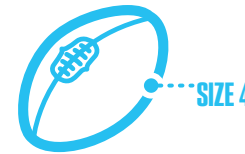


BREAKS
(6, 10-15, 6 min)

HOW TO PLAY



Number of players



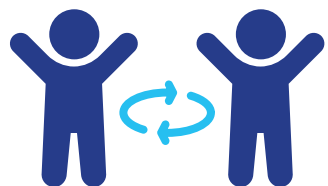
match
4x



BREAKS
(6, 10-15, 6 min)

- Stealing the ball
- Fending off, smothering, or barging
- Full tackling and bumping

- Stealing the ball
- Fending off, smothering, or barging
- Full tackling and bumping



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game

2 sessions
per week



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game

2 sessions
per week



UNDER 16/17/18 BOYS

HOW TO PLAY



Number of players



match
4x



BREAKS
(6, 10-15, 6 min)

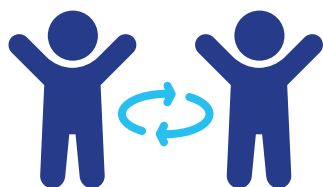
Stealing the ball



Full tackling and bumping

Fending off, smothering, or barging

2 sessions
per week



ROTATION OF PLAYERS TO OCCUR

at least every quarter to provide opportunities in several positions including the interchange.

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game

MATCH DAY CHECKLIST

As the Home Club you are responsible for ensuring that the game day environment is set up correctly. Please see below checklist of duties that need to be completed prior to the start of a match.

- Match Day Checklist (Team Manager or Ground Marshall to complete)
- Teamsheet saved in PlayHQ
- Field set up with correct sizing
- Match Ball
- Siren/AirHorn
- First Aid Officer in place with a stretcher visible
- Are all match day volunteer roles filled?
 - Ground Marshall
 - Goal Umpire
 - Timekeeper
 - Umpire
 - Scoreboard attendant (Applies Under 11 upwards)
 - Match day volunteers in the correct bib or uniform
- Coach (identifiable in appropriate bib)
- Runner (identifiable in appropriate bib - applies Under 11s upwards)
- Goal Umpire - Flags & bib



UNDER 8

x4



GROUND SIZE
70m x 50m

ZONES

6-A-SIDE

SCORING
No scores, ladders or finals

RESULTS
No recording of best players or goal kickers. No individual player awards.



UNDER 9

x4



GROUND SIZE
85 x 65m

ZONES

9-A-SIDE

SCORING
No scores, ladders or finals

RESULTS
No recording of best players or goal kickers. No individual player awards.



UNDER 10

x4



GROUND SIZE
85 x 65m

ZONES

12-A-SIDE

SCORING
No scores, ladders or finals

RESULTS
No recording of best players or goal kickers. No individual player awards.



UNDER 11

x4



GROUND SIZE
115 x 75m

ZONES

12-A-SIDE

SCORING
No scores, ladders or finals

RESULTS
No recording of best players or goal kickers. No individual player awards.



UNDER 12

x4



GROUND SIZE
115 x 75m

ZONES

12-A-SIDE

SCORING
Controlling Bodies Decision

RESULTS
Controlling Bodies Decision



- No tackling or holding of an opponent
- No smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands
- No pushing (fending off), bumping or barging another player
- No shepherding



- Holding of an opponent
- No smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands
- No pushing (fending off), bumping or barging another player
- No shepherding



- Holding of an opponent
- No smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands
- No pushing (fending off), bumping or barging another player
- No shepherding



- Full tackling and bumping
- Fending off, smothering, or barging
- Stealing the ball



- Full tackling and bumping
- Fending off, smothering, or barging
- Stealing the ball

BOUNCING THE BALL
No bouncing permitted

KICKING OFF GROUND
Not permitted

PLAYER ROTATION
Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING
Any distance, reasonable attempt

MERCY RULE

COACH ON GROUND

MODIFIED TACKLING

BOUNCING THE BALL
1 max

KICKING OFF GROUND
Not permitted

PLAYER ROTATION
Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING
Any distance, reasonable attempt

MERCY RULE

COACH ON GROUND

MODIFIED TACKLING

BOUNCING THE BALL
1 max

KICKING OFF GROUND
Not permitted

PLAYER ROTATION
Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING
Any distance, reasonable attempt

MERCY RULE

COACH ON SIDELINES

BOUNCING THE BALL
1 max

KICKING OFF GROUND
Not permitted

PLAYER ROTATION
Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING
10m, direct catch

MERCY RULE

COACH ON SIDELINES

BOUNCING THE BALL
1 max

KICKING OFF GROUND
Not permitted

PLAYER ROTATION
Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING
10m, direct catch

MERCY RULE

COACH ON SIDELINES



UNDER 13/14

x4



GROUND SIZE
125 x 95m

ZONES

15-A-SIDE

SCORING

Controlling Bodies Decision

RESULTS

Controlling Bodies Decision



- » Full tackling and bumping
- » Fending off, smothering, or barging
- » Stealing the ball

BOUNCING THE BALL

Unlimited

KICKING OFF GROUND

Permitted

PLAYER ROTATION

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING

15m, direct catch

MERCY RULE

COACH ON SIDELINES



UNDER 15

x4



GROUND SIZE
130 x 100m

ZONES

15-A-SIDE

SCORING

Controlling Bodies Decision

RESULTS

Controlling Bodies Decision



- » Full tackling and bumping
- » Fending off, smothering, or barging
- » Stealing the ball

BOUNCING THE BALL

Unlimited

KICKING OFF GROUND

Permitted

PLAYER ROTATION

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING

15m, direct catch

MERCY RULE

COACH ON SIDELINES



UNDER 16/17/18 GIRLS

x4



GROUND SIZE
Full ground

ZONES

16-A-SIDE

SCORING

Controlling Bodies Decision

RESULTS

Controlling Bodies Decision



- » Full tackling and bumping
- » Fending off, smothering, or barging
- » Stealing the ball

BOUNCING THE BALL

Unlimited

KICKING OFF GROUND

Permitted

PLAYER ROTATION

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING

15m, direct catch

MERCY RULE

COACH ON SIDELINES



UNDER 16/17/18 BOYS

x4



GROUND SIZE
Full ground

ZONES

18-A-SIDE

SCORING

Controlling Bodies Decision

RESULTS

Controlling Bodies Decision



- » Full tackling and bumping
- » Fending off, smothering, or barging
- » Stealing the ball

BOUNCING THE BALL

Unlimited

KICKING OFF GROUND

Permitted

PLAYER ROTATION

Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).

MARKING

15m, direct catch

MERCY RULE

COACH ON SIDELINES

COACHING TIPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

UNDER 8S	AVAILABLE PLAYERS	FIELD 1		
		ON FIELD	BENCH	ZONES
6	6	6	0	2-2-2
7	6	6	1	2-2-2
8	6	6	2	2-2-2
9	6	6	3	2-2-2
10	6	6	4	2-2-2
11	7	7	4	2-3-2
12	8	8	4	2-3-3
13*	6	6	1	2-2-2
14	6	6	1	2-2-2
15	6	6	2	2-2-2
16	6	6	2	2-2-2
17	6	6	3	2-2-2
18	9	9	0	3-3-3

UNDER 8S	AVAILABLE PLAYERS	FIELD 2		
		ON FIELD	BENCH	ZONES
13*	6	6	0	2-2-2
14	6	6	1	2-2-2
15	6	6	1	2-2-2
16	6	6	2	2-2-2
17	6	6	2	2-2-2
18	9	9	0	3-3-3

UNDER 9S	AVAILABLE PLAYERS	FIELD 1		
		ON FIELD	BENCH	ZONES
9	9	9	0	3-3-3
10	9	9	1	3-3-3
11	9	9	2	3-3-3
12	9	9	3	3-3-3
13	12	12	4	3-3-3
14	12	12	2	4-4-4
15	12	12	3	4-4-4
16	12	12	4	4-4-4
17*	9	9	0	3-3-3
18*	9	9	0	3-3-3

UNDER 9S	AVAILABLE PLAYERS	FIELD 2		
		ON FIELD	BENCH	ZONES
17*	8	8	0	2-3-2
18*	9	9	0	3-3-3

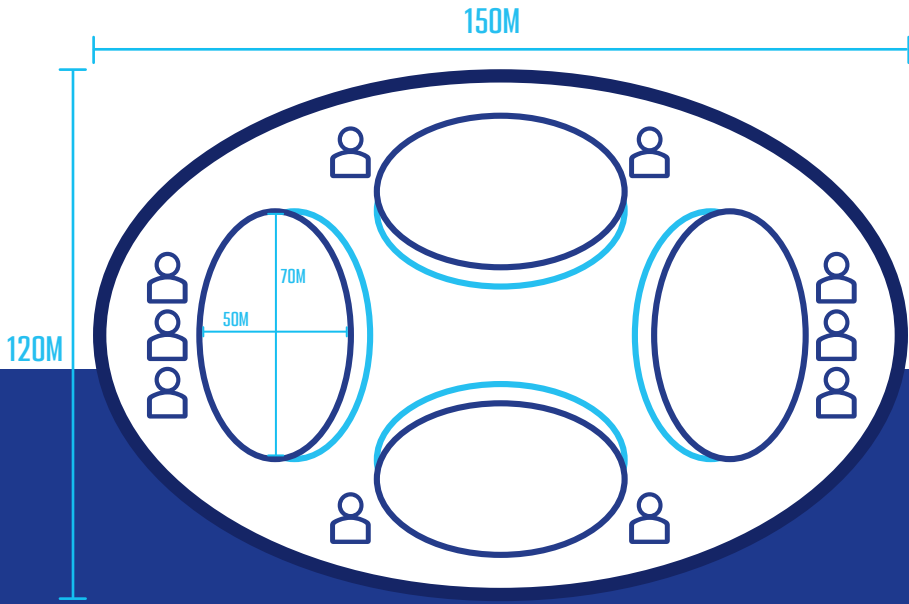
*When a team reaches 17 players available, recommendation is to set up a second field to maximise participation.

*When a team reaches 13 players available, recommendation is to set up a second field to maximise participation.

FIELD OF PLAY ACCESS UNDER 8

UNDER 10S	AVAILABLE PLAYERS	FIELD 1		
		ON FIELD	BENCH	ZONES
	12	12	0	4-4-4
	13	12	1	4-4-4
	14	12	2	4-4-4
	15	12	3	4-4-4
	16	12	4	4-4-4
	17	12	5	4-4-4
	*18	9	0	3-3-3
	19	10	0	3-4-3
	20	10	0	3-4-3
	21	11	0	4-3-4
	22	11	0	4-3-4
	23	12	0	4-4-4
	24	12	0	4-4-4

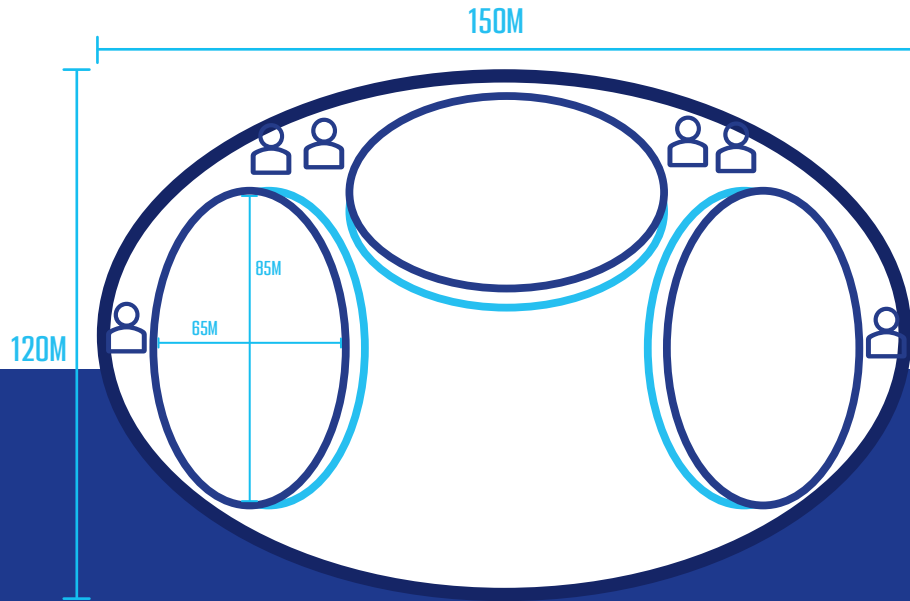
UNDER 10S	AVAILABLE PLAYERS	FIELD 2		
		ON FIELD	BENCH	ZONES
	*18	9	0	3-3-3
	19	9	0	3-3-3
	20	10	0	3-4-3
	21	10	0	3-4-3
	22	11	6	4-3-4
	23	11	6	4-3-4
	24	12	6	4-4-4



-  Spectators to be based on the outer side of the field of play
-  Field of Play
-  Team listed officials only

*When a team reaches 18 players available, recommendation is to set up a second field to maximise participation.

FIELD OF PLAY ACCESS UNDER 9/10



Spectators to be based on the outer side of the field of play

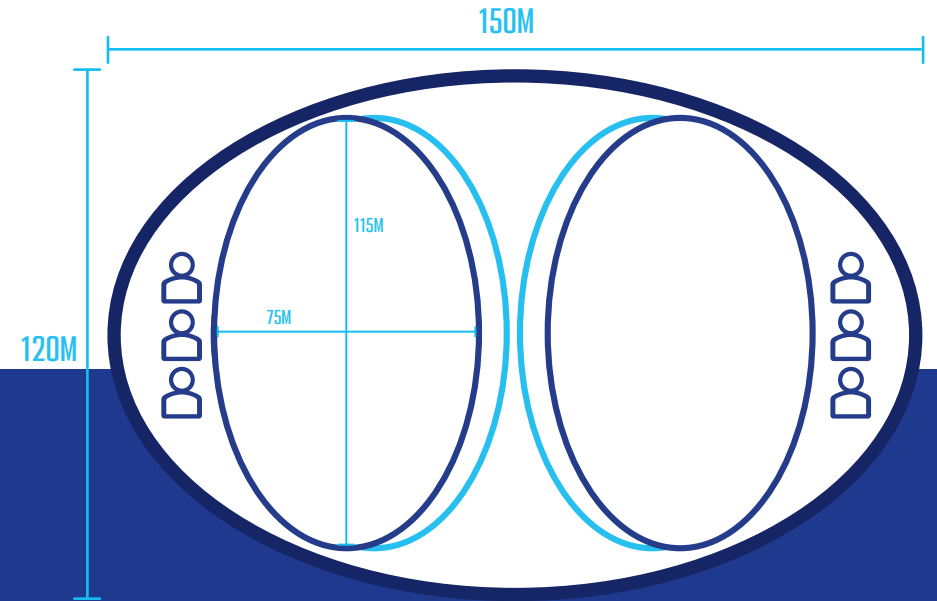


Field of Play



Team listed officials only

FIELD OF PLAY ACCESS UNDER 11/12



Spectators to be based on the outer side of the field of play



Field of Play



Team listed officials only

RULES	UNDER 8	UNDER 9	UNDER 10	UNDER 11	UNDER 12
Ground Size	70 x 50m (80 x 60m max)	85 x 65m (100 x 80m max)	85 x 85m (100 x 80m max)	115 x 75m (130 x 90m max)	115 x 75m (130 x 90m)
Game Time	4 x 10min qtr	4 x 10min qtr	4 x 10min qtr	4 x 15min qtr	4 x 15min qtr
Break Times	5, 8, 5mins	5, 8, 5mins	5, 8, 5mins	5, 10, 5mins	5, 10, 5mins
Ball Size	1	2	2	3	3
Ball Type	Synthetic	Synthetic	Synthetic	Synthetic or Leather	Synthetic or Leather
Zones	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Team No's	6 (9 max)	9 (12 max)	12 (15max)	12 (15max)	12 (15max)
Marking	Any distance, reasonable attempt	Any distance, shows control	Any distance, shows control	10m, direct catch	10m, direct catch
Tackling	✗	Modified (Wrap Tackle only)	Modified (Wrap Tackle only)	✓	✓
Bumping, pushing, shepherding, smothering, stealing the ball	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Bounces	✗	1 max	1 max	1 max	1 max
Kicking off Ground	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Scoring	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Prem Points	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Ladders & Finals	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Publishing of Names	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Rep Teams	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Coach on Ground	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Runner	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Season Length	10-14 games	10-14 games	10-14 games	10-14 games	12-16 games

RULES	UNDER 13/14	UNDER 15 (BOYS)	UNDER 15 (GIRLS)	UNDER 16/17/18 (BOYS)	UNDER 16/17/18 (GIRLS)
Ground Size	125 x 95m (140 x 110m max)	130 x 100m (150 x 120m max)	130 x 100m (150 x 120m max)	Full Ground	Full Ground
Game Time	4 x 15-20mins qtr	4 x 15-20mins qtr	4 x 15-20mins qtr	4 x 15-20mins qtr	4 x 15-20mins qtr
Break Times	6, 10-15, 6mins	6, 10-15, 6mins	6, 10-15, 6mins	6, 10-15, 6mins	6, 10-15, 6mins
Ball Size	4	5	4	5	4
Ball Type	Leather	Leather	Leather	Leather	Leather
Zones	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Team No's	15	15 (18 max)	15 (16 max)	18 max	16 max
Marking	15m, direct catch	15m, direct catch	15m, direct catch	15m, direct catch	15m, direct catch
Tackling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bumping, pushing, shepherding, smothering, stealing the ball	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bounces	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Kicking off Ground	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prem Points	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ladders & Finals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Publishing of Names	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rep Teams	State body decision	State body decision	State body decision	State body decision	State body decision
Coach on Ground	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Runner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Season Length	20 games max	20 games max	20 games max	20 games max	20 games max



For further information please visit
www.play.afl/play/junior-football-rules



play.afl