



AFL Barwon

Junior Football Review Final

AFL Barwon | October, 2017

Introduction

Background

Analysis and Feedback

Proposal

Feedback Process

The junior football competitions review is to examine the structure and format of all junior competition structures, and junior pathways and design and recommend a model for the future.

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

The junior football competitions review is to examine the structure and format of all junior competition structures, and junior pathways and design and recommend a model for the future.

The review has been put in place to help address some of the major issues identified in the current structures. Some of the issues known were; Only One GDFL club having a team in each junior age group, clubs failing to retain junior players, the significant drop in Colts players moving into senior football and unpredictable fixture times due to the growth of competitions.

The junior review will strategically ensure that there continues to be participation growth for a diverse range of participants with a focus on club sustainability. It will also look to ensure junior pathways are effective to maximise the participants development and enjoyment. Other key focuses will be to maximise use of facilities, create family friendly fixtures, create a regional approach to talent programs and creating stronger relationships with clubs and schools.



The junior football competitions review is to examine the structure and format of all junior competition structures, and junior pathways and design and recommend a model for the future.

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

The junior review will align with the G21 and AFL Barwon Regional Strategy that provides a framework to support the future development, governance and growth of football and club based netball throughout the region over the next 10 years.

The strategy is a collaborative planning project between government authorities in the G21 region, AFL Barwon, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria and other key stakeholders.

The strategy document identifies six strategic priorities across the region, with the first one to “support the capacity of the building of clubs and their people”. This priority includes – support club development and policy development; review competition structures; and continued implementation of Club Health Checks



The junior football competitions review is to examine the structure and format of all junior competition structures, and junior pathways and design and recommend a model for the future.

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

PRIORITY 1

Support the capacity building of clubs and their people

One of the many roles of the AFL Barwon Football Development Managers (FDM's) is to coordinate training and education programs aimed at building the capacity of volunteers. However, the significant gaps in volunteer capacity and understanding of administration cannot be addressed by the FDMs alone. The FDMs require access to a suite of professional partners to support clubs with governance, financial management, strategic planning and general administration.

To further address gaps in governance processes and volunteer capacity, investigation into paid administration models is also essential. Options for part time employment, traineeships or shared roles between clubs needs to be provided for club consideration with AFL Barwon offering guidance on recruitment and general employment conditions.

Clubs also need to be supported to capitalise on participation growth opportunities in NAB AFL Auskick, youth girls, access all abilities programs and AFL 9's. For example, linking to schools to access facilities, offering a summer NAB AFL Auskick competition (particular for clubs with weaker junior numbers to recruit junior players) or creating pathways for female players from NAB AFL Auskick to senior ranks, provide options for clubs to grow their player and member base. However, a clubs' capability to capitalise on these opportunities is again dependent on volunteer capacity and ability to strategically plan for expansion both on and off the field.

Any club development and expansion of the game must include support to game officials. This includes umpire recruitment and retention policies and programs, provision of appropriate training facilities, support for umpires schools programs, review of umpiring financial structures and umpire payments, expanding development pathways and encouraging club involvement in developing umpires.

The structure of football and netball across the region will also need to change if the sports are to continue to grow. As identified in the AFL Barwon Strategic Plan, consideration needs to be given to Sunday competitions, offering junior programs over the summer months, changing match schedules for junior games, and sharing of players between clubs.

At the junior level, participation trends across clubs vary with several clubs glutted with numbers while others struggle to attract new players.

Ensuring equality in numbers of players across junior ranks and the introduction of a salary cap and/or points system to discourage mass importation of players were identified by AFL Barwon Clubs through their Club Health Checks as two options to grow participation.

Competition equalisation is a priority for AFL Barwon. The competition and club structure is currently under review and it is the intent of AFL Barwon to support and retain all existing clubs whilst achieving this equalisation. The introduction of a salary cap and/or points system to remediate disparity between clubs is also being investigated by AFL Victoria. This is through a state wide strategic initiative that includes representation by the AFL Barwon General Manager.

Strategic directions to support the capacity building of clubs and their people.

- 1.1 AFL Barwon to complete strategic review of current club and league structures and work with key stakeholders to assist club sustainability and competition equalisation. Review to consider movement between Divisions to ensure club competitiveness.
- 1.2 AFL Barwon to support clubs to develop five year strategic plans to improve operational performance and guide business objectives around facility and asset management, financial planning and club participation and growth.
- 1.3 AFL Barwon and Netball Victoria partner to review competition structure to include night / alternate days matches to accommodate growth in participation and maximise use of existing grounds, courts and facilities.
- 1.4 Establish models for sharing of players and transitioning players between clubs across junior grades to ensure equity in participant numbers.
- 1.5 Continued Implementation of Club Health Check process on an annual basis to measure club development and identify governance, volunteer capacity and administration gaps and implement training and support to address these gaps.
- 1.6 Engage a network of professional partners to support FDMs to address club governance gaps and club volunteer technical understanding of strategic and financial planning.
- 1.7 Support GFUL and CDUA umpire recruitment and retention policies and programs including establishing development pathways and identifying initiatives for clubs to actively promote umpiring to their member base.
- 1.8 Provide education to clubs that encapsulates policy and procedure needs for implementing both healthy sports environments and improved governance processes.
- 1.9 Investigate options for paid administration models and traineeships, providing guidance to clubs on general employment conditions and facilitating opportunities for clubs to share administration costs.



PAGE | 16

1.1

AFL Barwon to complete strategic review of current club and league structures and work with key stakeholders to assist club sustainability and competition equalisation.



Project Objectives

Background

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

This project shall provide AFL Barwon, with quantitative statistical data, informed local knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing football in the area to guide the establishment of appropriate recommendations.

- The following areas will be discussed with all stakeholders:
- Participation statistics (football and community)
- Competition structures and the current level of competitiveness
- Player Pathways including Auskick to junior club relationship status
- Fixturing
- Age Groups including Colts & Women's / Girls Football
- Grading process
- Facility use and allocations
- Team per clubs spread including;
 - Mega clubs
 - Small clubs
 - Clubs with no juniors

- Junior players match loads
- Impact of the points system on junior football structures
- Coaching, Recruiting and Training practices
- Umpiring, both GFUL & Club
- Representative Football, GJF Interleague, V-Line Cup, GDFL / CDFNL Academy, Falcons, Next Generation Academy (GFC), Multicultural Academy
- School relationships

This project has been identified as a priority project with significant implications to AFL Barwon responsibilities and is consistent with the AFL Barwon's strategic direction of managing the future of football in the region. It was also identified as a significant project that needed to be undertaken from feedback from all stakeholders as part of the senior football restructuring project that has been undertaken in the region.

Clubs were asked to provide formal feedback via an online survey at the start of 2017. Each club was then contacted to have a face to face meeting to discuss their responses....

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

COMPETITION STRUCTURES AND THE CURRENT LEVEL OF COMPETITIVENESS

- The original survey responses for the ideal colts age group had an even preference for all 3 age groups (Under 18, 18.5, 19). However, after the club visits there was a strong support for changing the group to Under 19's.
- The preferred age group breakdown from colts and below had an overwhelming support for 2 year age groups.
- The majority of clubs believe the current level of competitiveness with the graded structure is working effectively
- A percentage of clubs were unaware that we internally graded non-competitive age groups but overwhelmingly supported this concept



Clubs were asked to provide formal feedback via an online survey at the start of 2017. Each club was then contacted to have a face to face meeting to discuss their responses....

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

GRADING PROCESS

- 85% of clubs agreed that talent should be spread evenly amongst clubs with multiple teams in the non-competitive age groups. This was supported by strong number of responses endorsing the internal grading of these age groups.
- 74% of clubs agree that teams should have the ability to be repositioned after grading.
- There was a wide range of thoughts on the carry over of points from grading. 50% agreed with the current structure with the other 50% supporting 2 or 0 points carried over.
- The biggest concern with grading from the club visit responses was the pressure from parents surrounding the fixture and knowing the time slots



Clubs were asked to provide formal feedback via an online survey at the start of 2017. Each club was then contacted to have a face to face meeting to discuss their responses....

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

FIXTURING

- From the survey responses, 55% agreed with standardised fixture days however after the face to face club meetings there was heavy support for this. There seemed to be more support for this in the older age groups.
- There was very little support to play games mid week.
- Friday night football had a strong preference amongst clubs where facilities and conditions suited.
- The ability for clubs to generate revenue from a 3 or 4 game fixtures on a Sunday was seen as a positive. Clubs struggle to create a club atmosphere with only 1 or 2 games fixtured at their venue.

FACILITY USE AND ALLOCATIONS

- 87% of clubs saw the 4 game home Saturday fixture with the senior club as still being relevant.
- Secondary club ovals and School ovals were deemed as underutilised facilities.

PLAYER PATHWAYS INCLUDING AUSKICK TO JUNIOR CLUB RELATIONSHIP STATUS

- 90% of clubs have a working relationship with their Auskick centre.
- Only half the clubs indicated that they have a junior induction day for graduating Auskickers.

Clubs were asked to provide formal feedback via an online survey at the start of 2017. Each club was then contacted to have a face to face meeting to discuss their responses....

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

- 63% of clubs indicated that they have a strong relationship with schools.
- Only 42% of clubs stated that they were using school ovals for matches or training.
- There was some support from clubs for AFL Barwon to explore the option of linking clubs to schools based on their geographical zone.
- Only 29% of clubs answered that they were aware that schools had AFL School Ambassadors.

TEAM NUMBERS PER CLUB

- 95% of clubs were receptive to working with other clubs.
- 60% of clubs were in favour of capping junior team numbers per age group.
- There was some support by clubs to cap junior transfers.
- Clubs were willing to explore the option of sister club relationships, although there were some concerns surrounding the logistics of this as many have tried before.
- There was overwhelming support for creating new clubs in growth areas.

Clubs were asked to provide formal feedback via an online survey at the start of 2017. Each club was then contacted to have a face to face meeting to discuss their responses....

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

JUNIOR PLAYERS TRAINING AND MATCH LOADS

- There was very limited support for mandating training loads across all age groups although there was some support for the lower age groups adopting the AFL Victoria guidelines as policy. Coach education was seen as a critical element of this.
- There was very limited support for capping the number of games a participant can play in one weekend.

IMPACT OF THE POINTS SYSTEM ON JUNIOR FOOTBALL STRUCTURES AND JUNIOR RECRUITMENT

- Clubs strongly supported the introduction of player points system as it has lead to a greater focus on junior pathways and development.
- Clubs acknowledged that they had strong concerns about their players being poached by other clubs.
- Limiting transfers had some support with clubs although it was acknowledged that this maybe addressed if team numbers were capped.

“The player points system is having a positive effect on our club. It is helping us keep the focus on junior development and creating an environment that all stakeholders are interested in being part of.”

Clubs were asked to provide formal feedback via an online survey at the start of 2017. Each club was then contacted to have a face to face meeting to discuss their responses....

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

COACHING

- The support for further coaching education had overwhelming support. Some clubs were unsure whether this should be made mandatory.
- Clubs suggested that the education sessions could be regionalised.
- Only 55% of clubs indicated that they have the same coaching philosophy throughout the club.
- Very few clubs acknowledged that they performance managed junior coaches.
- 82% of clubs provide role descriptions to volunteers.

REPRESENTATIVE FOOTBALL

- There were no major concerns with representative football in our region.
- The structure of representative football will change in 2018 and onwards with the introduction of talent academies with both the Geelong Falcons and the Geelong Cats.

“Our senior coach has expressed a desire for junior coaches to focus on the development of skills across all junior levels while ensuring all players are having fun and enjoying their football”

Clubs were asked to provide formal feedback via an online survey at the start of 2017. Each club was then contacted to have a face to face meeting to discuss their responses....

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

UMPIRING, BOTH GFUL AND CLUB

- Clubs were in overwhelming support for additional club umpiring education sessions.
- 76% of clubs were in support of league appointed umpires in all age groups . There was a major concern that there would be an increase of costs on participants and clubs.
- 44% of clubs actively promote participants to take up umpiring.
- It was noted that the inexperience of umpires was a major concern for the players development and safety. Clubs have a strong preference to see more senior type umpires officiating and mentors running with junior umpires.
- Clubs raised the minimum age standards as a starting point to address this.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- 82% of clubs were aware of the junior match guide.



Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

COMPETITION STRUCTURES AND THE CURRENT LEVEL OF COMPETITIVENESS

- Change the competition name to AFL Barwon Junior Football
- Change Age groups for 2018 to Under **19, 17, 15, 13**, 11, 10, 9
- Competitive age groups with grading divisions, ladders and finals for **Under 13 and above**

Grading Process

- Grading will still be 4 rounds
- Clubs can be re-graded up until round 8 under unique circumstances
- Grading games will carry 2 premiership points and 0 percentage
- Greater education of clubs & coaches around internal team selection to have even sides in non competitive age groups

FIXTURING

- Set time periods will be established for all competitive game start times.
- Boys Under 13 / 15 / 17 (Sundays) Under 19 (Saturdays) / Girls Under 12 / 15 / 18 / Seniors (Sundays)
- The 4th game on a Saturday senior fixture will come from only Non Competitive grades or Second Colts sides.
- Non competitive Age groups will still be flexible, Fri Nights / Sat Morning
- Non competitive age groups fixtures will be released for 6 rounds, then another 6 rounds and then the final 4 to ensure competitiveness remains
- Clubs can liaise with each other to make changes once the season fixture is released.

Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

FACILITY USE AND ALLOCATIONS

- Have greater collaboration with Councils and Clubs re Second Oval usage to take pressure of main ovals
- Address School oval usage with AFL Victoria and State Government

PLAYER PATHWAYS INCLUDING AUSKICK TO JUNIOR CLUB RELATIONSHIP STATUS

- Get AFL Barwon Auskick District Managers to help club transition Auskick Participants into Junior clubs
- Auskick will have to consider alternative times or venues with fixed times being introduced

SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

- AFL Barwon to introduce the Clubs to the School Ambassadors in their region

TEAM NUMBERS PER CLUB

- Teams to be capped as follows for season 2018;
- 2 x Under 19 Teams
- 3 x Under 17 Teams
- 4 x Under 13 & Under 15 Teams (Starting 2019 for Under 13)
- Unlimited non competitive Age Groups
- All junior age groups will only be able to play 23 players (inc U/19) in a match for all male and female competitive teams (5 Interchange)



JUNIOR PLAYERS TRAINING AND MATCH LOADS

- AFL Barwon to educate Coaches and Clubs on AFL Victoria Training guidelines
- Refer attachment Guidelines for pre season training



Introduction

Background

Analysis &
Feedback

Proposal

Feedback
Process

IMPACT OF THE POINTS SYSTEM ON JUNIOR FOOTBALL STRUCTURES AND JUNIOR RECRUITMENT

- We will still help and encourage clubs that seek to have joint teams throughout junior age groups with other clubs
- AFL Barwon will group clubs from each league where junior players can move to clubs as 1 point players to help share the mass of juniors coming out of underage football. This will happen for season 2019, throughout 2018 we will consult all clubs on possible club links and what it may look like
- We would encourage clubs to work together once these links have been established and the relationships are set
- A Reference Group will be put into place to consult with clubs to assist with the sister clubs relationships.
- The Reference Group will also assist with Grading

COACHING

- Annual Junior Coaching sessions will be set up regionally
- AFL Barwon to develop on-line Coaching resources and education
- AFL Barwon to help clubs set up Coaching Co-ordinators in each club so coach education can come from 1 contact person within the club



REPRESENTATIVE FOOTBALL – Academies

- Current interleague program will cease
- New Talent Academies to be established with Geelong Falcons, Geelong Cats and AFL Barwon teaming together
- Boys age groups Under 13 / 14 / 15 / Girls age groups Under 13 / 15
- Under 15 Academy to lead into the V-Line Cup each September for Boys & Girls
- Each program will run 8-12 weeks
- Each club will be capped on how many players they have in the Academies (6 per club per age group)
- Games against other Regions Academies is a possibility

Other Academies



Next Gen Schools Program: Grade 5/6

- In school clinics that connect students with local club
- Term 1 roll out to allow registrations for 2018 season

Next Gen Academy: diverse/ indigenous/ other athletes

- In season program providing development for players from clubs and young people from other sports considering playing AFL (U15, U17)
- Aligns with AFL Barwon development academies and AFL Vic pathway opportunities

UMPIRING, BOTH GFUL AND CLUB

- Online education for club umpires to be made available
- Regionalise club umpire education sessions
- Clubs to appoint a umpire co-ordinator at each club to help with the education
- Work with GFUL in regards to;
 - Age of Umpires appointed
 - More Mentors for running Umpires – Investment needed
 - Look at Ball ups for out of Bounds rather than Throw ins – under 15 & below
 - Explore Entry cost for umpires at lower grades