



PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING POLICY

The Player Development and Training Policy is designed to provide a clear understanding of the objectives and focus of coaching and training at each phase/stage of a player's development during their time with the Heathmont Jets Junior Football Club.

Stage 1: Fundamental Stage (Under 8's, Under 9's and Under 10's)

Main Objectives:

- Maximum participation
- Learning fundamental movement and game skills
- Enjoyment and fun

The coaching and training program at this stage should be well-structured with an emphasis on ***maximum participation, enjoyment and fun***. This is a critical period for ***motor skill development*** and therefore emphasis should be placed on the development of ***basic motor skills such as efficient and correct running and jumping techniques***.

Players should also be introduced to and educated in the ***basic skills*** associated with Australian Rules football using ***skill development activities and drills*** and a wide variety of ***game-related activities***. ***Fundamental rules*** of the games should also be introduced, and there should also be a focus on developing ***cooperation*** with others through a variety of ***minor games and skill-related activities***. Coaches should also aim to nurture the physical and emotional development and wellbeing of players at this stage of their development.

Training:

Pre-Season:

Pre-season training should begin **4 to 6 (maximum) weeks** before the start of the season. **One or possibly two sessions per week** are sufficient. Each session should be of **60-75 minutes duration** with an emphasis on **skill development and understanding of the nature of the game**.

In-Season:

Players at this stage of development are only required to train ***once a week for a maximum of 75 minutes***.

All players should be encouraged to attend all training sessions and to participate in a cooperative manner. However, non-attendance at training shall not affect a player's selection or game time.

Players should bring mouthguards and helmets to all training sessions. Training may also be cancelled due to excessive heat, inclement weather or poor ground conditions. Accordingly, parents are expected to remain at training. They are also encouraged to assist the coaches with training.

Stage 2: Modelling Stage (Under 11's; Under 12's and Under 13's)

Main Objectives:

- Participation
- Further development and refinement of the fundamental skills of the game
- Enjoyment and fun

This stage remains a critical period for *skill development*, and the focus should be on further developing and refining the *basic skills* of the game and also on developing the player's physical capacities.

Players can be introduced to some basic *technical and tactical skills*, with an emphasis on *positional play and different team roles*. Players at this stage can also be introduced to some broader facets of the game including *team principles and team rules, simple game plans*, and basic performance-enhancing techniques such as nutrition, hydration, recovery, goal-setting, etc. *Decision-making* should also be an important element of the player's development at this level through *game sense and decision-making drills*. The coaching focus should still be more about learning rather than "winning", with fun and enjoyment still paramount.

Training:

Pre-Season:

Pre-season training should begin **6 to 8 weeks** before the start of the season. **One or possibly two sessions per week** are sufficient. Each session should be of around **75 minute's duration** with an emphasis on skill development and understanding of the game.

In-Season:

Players at this stage of development and within these age groups may train ***one or two nights a week for a maximum of 60 - 75 minutes per session.***

All players should be encouraged to attend training and to participate in a cooperative manner. The occasional non-attendance at training shall not affect a player's selection or game time. However, a player who is not able to regularly attend training, without good reason, and where the coaches believe that the player's failure to regularly attend training could prejudice his/hers skill development and the ability to effectively compete at a higher level, may have their game time reduced.

Players should bring mouthguards (and helmets if applicable) to all training sessions. Training may also be cancelled due to excessive heat, inclement weather or poor ground conditions. Accordingly, parents are expected to remain at training. They are also encouraged to assist the coaches with training.

Stage 3: Establishment Stage (Under 14's and Under 15's)

Main Objectives:

- Development of higher-level skills of the game
- Development of physical capacities (fitness for the game)
- Technical and tactical understanding of the game
- Enjoyment and fun

At this stage there should be a focus on optimising the development of *individual, positional and team skills*, as well as further developing the *physical (fitness) capacities* of the players.

Knowledge, understanding and application of *team principles and team rules, tactics and strategies and game plans* should be further developed and reinforced and linked to specific performance outcomes. By this stage players should have established an understanding of their role within the team structure and a focus should be placed on contributing to the team by being aware of their positional responsibilities. Players should be provided with opportunities to further develop and refine their *decision-making skills* by being placed in appropriate complex environments and situations at training such as *game sense activities, competitive drills and match simulations*.

Increased emphasis on *competitiveness and "winning"* is appropriate at this stage of development, although this should not be "at all costs". Participation, fun and enjoyment remain key ingredients of both training and game-day.

Training:

Pre-Season:

Pre-season training should begin **8 to 10 weeks (maximum)** before the start of the season. **Two sessions per week** are sufficient. Each session should be of **75 - 90 minutes duration** with an emphasis on skill development and development and understanding of game plans, etc.

In-Season:

Players at this stage of development and within these age groups should train **two nights a week for approximately 90 minutes per session**.

All players should be encouraged to attend training and to participate in a cooperative manner. The occasional non-attendance at training shall not affect a player's selection or game time. However, a player who is not able to regularly attend training, without good reason, and where the coaches believe that the player's failure to regularly attend training could prejudice his/hers skill development and the ability to effectively compete at a higher level, may have their game time reduced.

Players should bring mouthguards (and helmets if applicable) to all training sessions. Training may also be cancelled due to excessive heat, inclement weather or poor ground conditions. Accordingly, parents are expected to remain at training. They are also encouraged to assist the coaches with training.

Stage 4: Specialising Stage (Under 17's and Under 18's)

Main Objectives:

- Optimise higher-level skills of the game
- Maximise the development of fitness capacities
- Individual, positional, team and competition skills
- Enjoyment and fun

Further refinement and application of ***team principles and team rules, tactics and strategies and game plans*** should be a major focus at this stage of development, again linked to specific performance outcomes. ***Decision-making*** in increasingly complex environments and situations and under higher pressure should be provided at training through ***game sense activities, competitive drills and match simulations***.

While the coach has overall responsibility for the development and well-being of the team we expect players at this stage of their development to become more accountable and take greater responsibility for their own training and performance. This is also often a watershed period in terms of player development - some players are already beginning to aspire to play senior football while others are less driven in this regard. Hence it can be a difficult period with boys having various aspirations. Our aim is to help the players develop to the best of their abilities and while the Club will seek to achieve this, it will very much depend on the desires of the players and their individual commitment to not only training but also their own development.

Training:

Pre-Season:

Pre-season training should begin **8 to 10 weeks (maximum)** before the start of the season. It may also be appropriate to do **2 to 4 weeks of training prior to Christmas. Two sessions per week** are sufficient. Each session should be of **75 - 90 minutes duration** with an emphasis on skill development, establishing an appropriate fitness base and development and understanding of game plans, etc.

In-Season:

Players at this stage of development and within these age groups should train ***two nights a week for approximately 90 minutes per session***. The sessions may be extended or a third training night provided for those players receiving specialist coaching from the Club's Development Coach.

All players should be encouraged to attend training and to participate in a cooperative manner. Non-attendance at training may affect a player's selection or game time where the coaches believe that the player's failure to regularly attend training could prejudice the player's skill development and the ability to effectively compete on game day.

Players should bring mouthguards (and helmets if applicable) to all training sessions. Training may also be cancelled due to excessive heat, inclement weather or poor ground conditions.

(Note: These stages of development are modelled on the "Stages of Player Development" identified by the AFL)

Effective Date and Review

This policy is effective from **1 December 2014** and is to be reviewed annually in August.