

AFL Junior Match Program

11-12 years

15-a-side or 18-a-side: NAB AFL Auskick program or in club and school competitions

Purpose

To provide children in this age group with a fun, safe and positive experience through a well-structured match program that considers the level of maturity in their motor, cognitive, social and emotional skills.

The consolidation of basic game skills is still the focus at this age level rather than competition and winning, while further developing technical and tactical concepts. These concepts include positional skills and basic performance-enhancing techniques, e.g. warm-up, cool-down, nutrition, hydration, recovery and goal setting.

Spirit of the game

Prior to the commencement of play:

- › all players, coaches and umpires should gather on the ground and shake hands; and
- › the umpire and coaches should ensure players are aware of the rules and procedures to be followed in the conduct of the game.

The spirit of the game is to give all available players a game of football. Therefore:

- › where difficulty occurs fielding full numbers, both coaches must agree to even up player numbers;



- › excess players should be given to an opposition team unable to field the required numbers;
- › coaches should consider modifying the numbers per side to ensure all players participate. For instance, if planning a 15-a-side game but only 24 players are available, play 12-a-side.

The umpire should at all times:

- › endeavour to apply the rules of the games while awarding free kicks to players in preference to calling for ball-ups;
- › understand the spirit of the AFL Junior match rules for this age group is to enable all players to gather possession and to give **the player in possession of the ball every opportunity to kick or handball**. For this reason, restrictions are placed upon body contact (refer to **Contact/tackling**);
- › attempt to involve all players as the opportunities arise, particularly when indicating which player is to receive a free kick after the ball has been kicked out of bounds and by ensuring the effective rotation of players through all positions; and
- › enforce the **full possession rule** at all ball-ups (see below).

In relation to all **ball-ups**, the **full possession rule** applies as follows:

- › a player contesting a **ball-up** may not grab the ball and play-on; and
- › the player must knock, palm or punch the ball to a teammate or open ground, and may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player or hit the ground.

The game – premiership points competitions

11-years

The football match program to be offered to players 11 years old must comply with the modified match program presented in this document with no premiership points, no finals, no ladders, no match results (scores) and no names of players published. Skill clinics and participation carnival days may be held. No representative teams shall be selected.

12-years

The football program to be offered to players 12 years of age might:

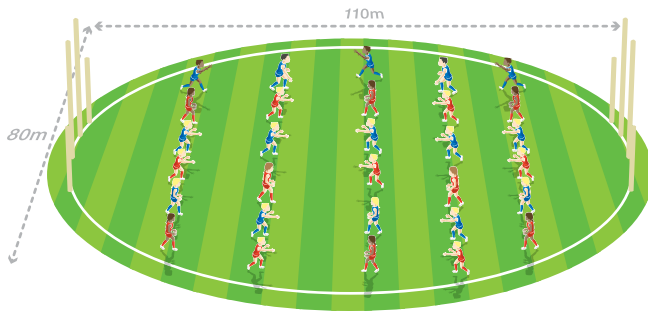
- (a) need to be the modified program presented in this document with no premiership points, no finals, no ladders, no match results (no score) and names of players published. Skill clinics and carnival days may be held. No representative teams are to be selected;
- or

- (b) be delivered in a well-conducted league with appropriate development structures based on the alternative premiership program outlined in this document for 13-14 years youth competitions.

Such a decision should be made by the relevant controlling bodies and must be endorsed by the state football body. No representative teams should be selected.

Playing ground and officials

The playing field is approximately 110m x 80m.



This field size is the optimum size and flexibility is often needed, in particular, smaller field sizes may be required depending on the number of players per team, age and ability level.

A field umpire and 2 goal umpires are needed. There are no boundary throw-ins, so no boundary umpires are required.

The ball

A synthetic or leather size 3 football made specifically for this age group should be used.

The team

15 players (5 lines of 3 players) participate. There are no rucks or rovers. Reserves: maximum of 5 recommended. To ensure maximum participation, if player numbers are such that 2 teams can participate in a game of 12-a-side, this should be considered. Where this is impracticable, players should be shared with other sides.

Interchanges may take place at any time, but all players must play at least three-quarters of a match.

Ensure the teams and opponents are as equal as possible (match sizes, abilities).

Rotate players every quarter to give them opportunities in several positions.

Playing time

AFL Auskick program – recommended total playing time of 30 minutes.

AFL Junior fixture – maximum of 4 x 15-minute quarters with no time-on.



Start of play and restarting after a goal

When all players are in their positions, a ball-up is conducted between 2 centre players of similar height, nominated by the umpire, in the centre of the ground.

Only centre-line players are permitted at the centre bounce. No more than 3 players from each team shall be closer to the ball-up than approximately 20 metres (full possession rule applies).

Note: there is no requirement to have a centre square marked on the ground.

Scrimmage and field ball-ups

Conducted between 2 players of equal size nominated by the umpire. Before the throw-up, the umpire should clear the area by sending players back to their positions. No more than 3 players from each team should be closer to the ball-up than approximately 20 metres (full possession rule applies).

Out of bounds

A free kick is awarded against the player who last kicked the ball.

If there is doubt, or if the ball came off hands or a body, the umpire shall call a ball-up 5 metres in from the boundary.

'Full possession' at the ball-up is not permitted (full possession rule applies).

Bumping

As per the Laws of Australian Football.

Tackling

The wrap-around 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 the player with the ball forward (i.e. push him or her in the back).

- › A player in possession of the ball, when held by an opponent applying the wrap-around tackle, should be given a reasonable chance to dispose of the ball by kick or by handball, or by attempting to kick or handball. If he or she fails to do so, a free kick shall be awarded to the tackler for holding the ball.
- › The field umpire shall conduct a ball-up when the player with the ball has it held to the body by an opponent, unless the player has had a reasonable time to dispose of it prior to being tackled. In that case, a free kick shall be awarded to the tackler for holding the ball.
- › The field umpire shall allow play to continue if the ball is knocked out of a player's hands by an opponent.
- › A player, who is held by an opponent when not in possession of the ball, shall be awarded a free kick.
- › No player shall be deliberately dumped or thrown to the ground by a tackle.

Barging

No barging or chopping past opponents is allowed. A free kick is awarded. Fending off with an open hand to the body, provided it is not above the shoulders or in the back, is allowed.

Mark

Any player catching a ball directly from the kick of another player shall be awarded a mark provided the ball has travelled at least 10 metres.

Bouncing the ball

Bouncing is optional, but no more than 2 bounces are permitted.

Distance run

While a player in possession of the ball is moving, the player must bounce the ball within 15 metres, irrespective of whether that player is running in a straight line or otherwise. As above, only 2 bounces are permitted before a player must dispose of the ball.

Kicking off the ground

Not permitted unless accidental.

Distance penalty

A player can be awarded a 25m advancement towards his or her goals if after a mark or free kick the umpire is of the opinion an opposing player hinders that player.

This could include acts such as overstepping the mark, wasting time, and using abusive language and behaviour.

Order-off rule

To be applied at the umpire's discretion, or by the controlling body where applicable. Bad language, poor sportsmanship and disputing umpiring decisions should be actively discouraged.

Coaches

The coach is not allowed on the ground. Messages may be delivered by a runner. However, the runner must follow the procedure of going directly to the player involved, delivering the message and returning directly to the coaching bench.

At the end of the game, all players and coaches should gather on the ground and shake hands. The umpire should also take this opportunity to address the players.

