

## CLUB CIRCULAR - 26, 2018/10/29

**Subject:** 2019 Year 11/12 Competition

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018

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**West Australian Football Commission**

**Audience:** Junior Club Presidents

<p><b>Summary:</b> A new combined Year 11/12 competition will be implemented in 2019 and beyond to improve retention of players through Youth Football and transition of players into Senior Football.</p>	<p><b>Club Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicate information to relevant club members</li><li>• Set up club registrations to suit new competition format.</li></ul>
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### **BACKGROUND**

The Youth Football Working Group produced a recommendation to “Develop a suitable competition format to deliver Year 12 football in order to drive transition from Youth to Senior.”

In 2017, a Working Group was established to conduct research and gather information in relation to the recommendation and ultimately agreed that the Year 11 & 12 Competition would be a combined competition from 2019 onwards.

Over the past 6 months, key WAFC staff have conducted significant consultation on a range of options relating to competition structure. After approval from the industry working group and the WAFC, the following changes will be implemented into the combined Year 11 & 12 competition in 2019.

### **KEY CHANGES**

**1. The Year 11 & 12 age groups will be combined allowing clubs to field teams with players mixed across both age groups.**

*This provides more opportunity for clubs to establish teams given they can attract players over two age groups. This ultimately will provide more opportunity for players to play club football at this age through more clubs having teams.*

**2. Matches will be played in the current conference structure however finals will have an added cross-conference component with the exact finals format to be determined through consultation with coaches and players.**

*Players were highly supportive of variety and playing new teams.*

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**3. Clubs with two teams will be able to move players between teams providing more flexibility for clubs to innovate.**

*The additional flexibility will allow clubs to ensure they meet player motivations and shift players between teams on weeks where there are less players available. Clubs can now operate as 'squads' and train together rather than traditionally being two separate teams.*

**4. Matches will primarily be played on Sunday afternoons but clubs will be encouraged to explore playing in alternate time slots such as 10.40 Saturday mornings in line with WAAFL Colts or Friday Nights.**

*Sunday afternoons are currently well supported by clubs however there will be a strong push to diversify playing times with the aim of meeting the motivations of players and creating a stronger link to senior clubs. Where possible two team clubs will play as double headers to drive club culture and atmosphere.*

**5. Senior Clubs will be provided with the opportunity to submit teams into the competition pending they meet specific criteria ensuring Junior Clubs are aligned to their club and a WAFC Manager provides approval.**

*Senior clubs in areas which don't currently have a team in the Year 11/12 competition will be able to work with Junior clubs to partner and nominate a team, potentially acting as a conduit for multiple junior feeder clubs.*

**6. WAFC staff will work with each Junior Club to set up a clear Alignment Agreement with a minimum of 1 Senior club which will guide the transition of players from Junior to Senior football, provide cross over opportunities for Year 11/12 & WAAFL Colts and clearly set out Senior Club engagement in the appointment of coaches.**

*Every junior club should have at least one senior club that it is working with to transition players otherwise players won't have a clear pathway. Traditionally this has been left up to clubs to implement and has been done to varying levels of success. The more Year 11/12 players can be familiar with a senior club, the greater likelihood they will have to transition. These agreements will also drive the appointment of non-parent coaches who will ideally be linked to the Senior club to promote transition.*

**7. The competition will be re-branded and revamped.**

*Players in Year 11/12 don't want to be seen to be in 'Junior Football' so from a brand perspective this competition will be separate itself from 'Junior Football' and a standalone brand will be established. This will be coupled with greater social media focus and innovative awards structures (such as all-star teams) to drive engagement and elevate the competition above Junior Footy.*

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Detailed competition rules & regulations around finals qualification and other elements are currently being developed as part of the annual By-Law review and will be circulated to clubs in line with the Junior Football Rules & Regulations. Note that key changes are subject to minor amendments.

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