

CLUB CIRCULAR - 39, 2019/11/01

Subject: Girls Footy Update

Date: 1st November

From: Jill Saunders
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Audience: Club Presidents and Female Coordinators

<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Girls age groups will be adjusted in 2020.• Clubs are encouraged to integrate girls into regular Sunday fixtures.• Auskick Girls is an Auskick Centre extension which will support the growth of girls footy.	<p>Club Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review information and assess what your club can implement.
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A message from Jill

For those who I haven't yet had the chance to meet, I'm Jill and am in the female growth role at WAFC. A large part of my role is to focus on the growth of Junior & Youth Girls Club Football. Recently, I've been looking into how we can best approach 2020, to ensure that female footy is moving from strength to strength.

I will be working in conjunction with our district staff to support clubs to drive female footy. We have reviewed a range of sources to make informed decisions on what we need to do to continue to grow, including:

- 2019 WA Football Customer Satisfaction Survey Results
- 2019 Club Competitions Survey Results
- The research paper – [Parents, girls' and Australian football: a constructivist grounded theory for attracting and retaining participation](#)
- Assessment on where we are growing most and least in the current female pathway
- Other general conversations with Clubs and other stakeholders

With the changes coming for 2020, both myself and our district staff are here to support you so don't hesitate if to yell out if you need help.

Youth Girls Structure

As we all know, we haven't previously provided an opportunity for girls to participate in WA Junior Footy in the Year 12 age group. In 2020 we will look to address this by implementing 2 year age groups across Youth Girls, leaving us with the following competition age groupings:

- Year 7/8
- Year 9/10
- Year 11/12.

The AFL Junior Match Policy recommends that children participate in competitions across a maximum of a two-year age span and these age changes address this.

We are aware that some clubs may not have enough girls to field a team for all three age groups and are happy to provide flexibility to maximise participation. We aren't wanting to have clubs lose players because of the change in age groups, so we will allow Year 10 girls to play up in 11/12's and work with clubs to assess whether we can support Year 9 girls to play down in Year 7/8.

Depending on the number of teams across each conference, we are open to the possibility of playing in geographical zones rather than the current conference structure, if clubs wish to explore this. We want to give the best chance for our youth girls competition to grow and will be flexible to ensure that 2020 is a season which works for players, clubs and administrators.

Match Days and Times

Note: This only applies to North & Central Conference due to Metro South and Peel currently adopting a Home & Away fixture with matches played on Friday Nights and Sundays.

A common theme coming through in the survey feedback is that as a result of girls only playing on a Friday night, we are inhibiting their ability to integrate into their club community. This is due to most teams being unable to play any home games and having to travel to play their weekly fixtures.

We understand that due to ground space there is a definite need to activate Friday Night Footy, however our end goal is that the competitions played on a Friday aren't allocated on gender. We see this will help ensure all teams feel just as much a part of the club as each other, which comes with significant social benefit. Future allocation of Friday Night Footy will also be made easier by lighting upgrades, allowing more clubs to be able to host Friday night games.

For 2020, we won't be completely shifting girls from Friday nights. Rather, we will have 2-3 rounds that will be fixtured for Sunday. This will give the girls an opportunity to play home games and experience their club community. We encourage all clubs to try to make these few rounds as much like any other Sunday as possible, where you have the capacity to do so. On these rounds, there won't be any fixtured Friday night games and teams are expected to play on the Sunday. We are aware that some teams rely on fixtures being on Friday evenings, so our competition staff will work with each JCC to ensure that competitions aren't negatively impacted. The Central Conference will also remove the junior girls' fixtures from Monday nights.

Another way to drive Junior Footy atmosphere is to ensure the canteen is always open at girls' games. Although seemingly small, there were many respondents to the survey who commented on canteens not being open, saying they felt as though it meant the club doesn't put any worth on the girls. We understand

they may be closed due to volunteer numbers, but if establishing a volunteer canteen roster is the way to ensure that girls get the same game day environment as the boys – let's do it!

Auskick Girls

As much as we like to think every little girl who wants to play Auskick will jump in with the boys, the reality is we still aren't getting many girls coming down to Auskick. There are a few clubs around the metro area who already do 'Auskick Girls', and their numbers, both in Auskick and Year 3/4, are much stronger than those who only offer mixed Auskick. Because of this, we are encouraging all centres with capacity/drive to run Auskick Girls in 2020.

Establishing Auskick Girls may sound like more work, but it is primarily publicising that your centre has 'Auskick Girls'. The program is the same as Auskick, run alongside Auskick. Though when breaking into grids you are providing 'girls grids' in each age group. We understand that some girls would prefer to play with the boys, and they are still more than welcome to continue to do so! But it is providing an option for the girls, and their parents, who would prefer not to play with the boys.

We have a few tips for clubs who are looking to start Auskick Girls, and myself and the district staff can assist where needed. Encouraging the sisters sitting on the sideline to join in, publicizing in local schools that your centre has Auskick, and making sure girls are playing with their own age group are just a few of the tips. [Here](#) is a bit more information about Auskick Girls, and what your club can do to implement it successfully.

Looking for some support at your club?

To make sure we're doing the most we can to help grow, or start, girls footy at our clubs we have developed a series of *Tips and Tricks* sheets. The tips and tricks cover coaching, club environments, Auskick Girls and junior/youth girls. We would suggest that you share these sheets with the relevant people at your club.

- [Auskick Girls](#)
- [Coaching](#)
- [Club environment](#)
- [Junior and Youth Girls](#)

We have been working to develop flyers that are able to be used by clubs. Currently we have the Tips and Tricks series, district talent pathways, female footy pathway and a flyer which can be edited for any clinics you're looking to run. If you would like any of these materials, please let myself or your district staff know.

And as always, if you need any support don't hesitate to yell out to either your District staff or myself. Let's continue to grow the girls' game!
