

Junior & Youth Football Coaching Guidelines



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Name:

Signature:

Date:

The guiding principles for all Sherwood Magpies Junior & Youth Coaches and Assistant coaches to encourage and facilitate the enjoyment and development of each player. By doing so, the potential of each individual player within the structure of each team and age group should be realised alongside the key objectives for the team and the broader club as a whole.

By facilitating an educational coaching style that nurtures a players strengths through positive reinforcement and creating a welcoming environment, coaches will be able to ensure the key fundamentals of football can be taught in an engaging, inclusive and positive environment providing all players with a high quality football experience consistent with the Sherwood Football Clubs vision of maximising participation for all skill levels and ensuring kids have fun and grow their love for the game of Australian Rules Football. Here at Sherwood, we are particularly passionate about participation in team sport as it is a fantastic grounding for children to learn about teamwork, leadership and resilience. It's also a great place to develop communications skills, learn to control and deal with anxiety and adversity, build self-esteem and confidence, discipline and finally the benefits of hard work and that life isn't always fair.

1. Match Outcomes

In junior football (Superstars to u10) a match score is not recorded, nor should match outcomes be the focus of coaching staff. In u11 football, match scores are recorded, but there is no ladder or competitive finals. In youth football, u12-u16 boys and u13-u17 girls there are competitive finals series, and best & fairest awards both in club and league level.

Winning at all costs is not the primary adjective of any team at Sherwood Football Club, this is not limited to youth football, but also includes the clubs senior teams.

Winning competitive games of football is a desired outcome that should flow from the guiding principles of our clubs junior/youth coaches outlined above.

2. Club Culture

Key aspect of the Sherwood Magpies AFC club culture are to field teams who conduct themselves with respect for their teammates, their opposition, officials, volunteers and the game itself. Tolerance and respect for others is a key facet of this culture, and does not prevent a player from showing competitive spirit and aggression consistent with what is required to play Australian Rules Football.

3. Coaches are mentors and leaders

Coaches are charged with the ongoing development of Club Culture as outlined in point 2 via their integral position as leaders and mentors of young players. Coaches agree to the zero tolerance policy regarding vilification, discrimination, violence and abuse at training, on match day or in any other capacity.

4. Development focus specific to each player

Given the variety of talent and skill level, and variance of development of that talent and skill level, combined with physical stature, athletic ability and 'footy nous' – coaches must seek to coach, instruct and nurture players in the following key areas

- Fundamental skill acquisition (kicking, marking, handballing)
- Understanding of the game (rules, positions and regulations)
- Understanding basic team play, structures, tactics, shepherding, leading, creating space etc (as appropriate to each age group)
- Understanding the three basic principles of football and how to apply tactics
 - 1) We are in possession of the ball
 - 2) The opposition are in possession of the ball
 - 3) The ball is in dispute
- Instruct, nurture and educate players on positions, use of the body, use of space and basic decision making.
- Develop and apply sufficient focus to other key football skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork and encouragement.

5. Rotation and Game Time Policy

To maximise individual player development and fundamental skill acquisition, coaches will ensure players are given opportunity to put into practice what is learnt at training by ensuring game time is also maximised.

Club policy on game time:

u8, u9, u10 mixed and u11 girls – equal game time for all players wherever practical and possible, also ensuring exposure for all players to all positions on the ground in equal measure. Where possible, records or match day monitoring of game time should be activated to adhere to this policy. 'In game' rotation is encouraged, players should not sit out entire quarters, even if it is part of an equal game time strategy.

u11 mixed – equal game time for all players wherever possible, however this is where positional play and development of players in certain positions is commenced. Players should still be exposed to *at least* 2 parts of the field. Parts of the field are clearly defined as forward, midfield and back.

Youth Football u12 boys and u13 girls – when maximum numbers are available, minimum of 2.5 full quarters per week (35 + minutes) should be the bare minimum for each player, no player should sit out entire quarters of football unless for disciplinary reasons, injury or other factors unrelated to the match outcome and skill level of the player

Youth Football u14-u16 boys and u15-u17 girls – minimum two quarters or more per game averaged over the season with rotation documentation to support this policy.

In youth football, coaches and assistant coaches discretion can be applied in the case of attitude, discipline, injury and fatigue as well as training attendance where applicable. This discretion should be monitored by the team manager and reported where applicable to youth coaching coordinators. Any disciplinary matter should also be communicated to parents or guardians, as well as the individual player.

In junior football, coaches discretion in relation to game time is only applicable in the case of injury, poor attitude or discipline and should not be overt in nature.

Finals Football (youth) – Where a youth team qualifies for finals with 22 or more available players, the coach must communicate with the coaching coordinator and all stakeholders (players, parents, guardians) their finals selection and game time policy as soon as practicable and not on match day. Minimum game time of 1 quarter is expected.

6. Coaching development

All coaches should be committed to ongoing development of their own skills, knowledge and methods. Minimum Level 1 Online Coaching Accreditation in adherence with AFLQ policy is mandatory and any costs associated will be reimbursed.

All coaches are required to have at least 3 x base level session plans prior to season commencement. (Junior and Youth Coaching Coordinators in conjunction with previous coaches and Senior Coaching Director can assist here as appropriate, especially prior to season commencement) As it is a volunteer role, it is not expected that every session has a new and improved session plan, but by having some pre built session plans, coaches will be prepared for the season ahead and then modify and adjust as required.

Sherwood Football Club will identify and provide opportunity for coaches to advance to Level 2 accreditation as well as internal club coaching development opportunities, particularly in conjunction with the QAFL Senior football program.

All appointed coaches must have a current Blue Card.

7. Injury Management

The safety of players at Sherwood Football Club is the highest priority. Coaches, assistant coaches, and first aid officers must ensure the health and safety of a potentially injured or fatigued player are the number one priority in that assessment.

Coaches and managers either directly, or via direction of a volunteer must ensure grounds are in safe condition, post pads are on and other safety equipment is in place before the commencement of play.

See separate policy relating to concussion or possible concussion.

8. Guiding principles of a Sherwood Football Club coach

It is acknowledged that all players are individuals and react differently to various forms of coaching methods. Common terminology is the 'carrot or stick' approach. However, the use of foul language, fear, or humiliation (private or public) are not acceptable and considered inappropriate and in most cases also ineffective.

Positive reinforcement and encouraging intervention are key tools in the coaches repertoire. Skill errors are an error in execution only, while decision making is an error in judgement – these key differences should be acknowledged when providing feedback to players. Errors in judgement can be rectified on match day via positive coaching, errors in skill execution are rarely able to be corrected on match day.

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