

Maribyrnong Park Football Club Junior Policy

MARIBYRNONG PARK SPORTS CLUB INC. **ABN 74 570 981 658**

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1. Purpose Statement

The Maribyrnong Park Football Club is a thriving football community characterised by our pursuit of excellence both on and off the field, the encouragement of participation by players, members and families alike; valuing club spirit and pride and engendering respect, support and loyalty from the Marby and broader community.

1.1 Aim of the Program:

- To introduce and implement a structured skill development program.
- To actively support individual player improvement for all skills and abilities
- To identify and develop talent.
- To provide a safe, healthy and disciplined training environment.
- To create an environment that inspires club and team spirit.
- To teach the values of perseverance, integrity, equality, honesty and friendship.
- To foster good community citizens.

1.2 Achieving the Aim:

- To introduce and expose players to the basic disciplines, principles, skills and requirements
 they will be expected to develop to be the best footballer they can be both on and off the
 field.
- To provide the best possible teaching, training and coaching through the football season.
- By promoting a respectful, tolerant, inclusive, engaging and enjoyable atmosphere whereby every player, member and family has an opportunity to participate fully in the club community whilst promoting player development.

2. Junior Conduct

2.1 Junior Participation

The **encouragement of participation** by all players and members, volunteers and family is the core purpose of the club alongside player development. The aims of the program above and principles outlined in this policy are designed to maintain a fair and inclusive community to achieve a positive junior football club environment.

3. First Aid and Health Safety Requirements of Players

The safety of our players is paramount. As such, various policies have been established to ensure the safety and wellbeing of players on match day and training alike.

- Further information available on the club website regarding the below policies:
 - Concussion Policy
 - Disclosure of injury policy
- All first aid helpers/trainers are to have at a minimum Level 1 first aid accredited or medical
 qualification and will be required to provide the club with copies of these qualifications.
- The club maintains first aid kits to minimum standards.

- Any player requiring additional first aid supplies needs to contact the club to make provision. All
 players with medical conditions must report these to the club
- It is each players responsibility to provide any medications they may require whilst engaged at club related activities
- All players must wear a properly fitted mouth guard to all training and match day activities.

4. Player Participation and Selection

The club will strive to provide a fair, consistent, transparent and reasonable system for determining team selection. This may include educating parent/guardians and players to appreciate that while team sports sometimes require compromise and flexibility, they also offer opportunities to develop and extend skills and build friendship groups to benefit of the club, team and individual players.

4.1 Player Numbers

Up to 24 players per team are eligible to play each round (U10, U12, U14, and U16 level), and up to 15 players per team for U8's.

Note: If team lists exceed these numbers, some players will be required to be rostered off each week during the season. It is expected that players will be rotated equally. To assist the process players and parent/guardians should communicate with the Team Manager should the player not be available for any reason during the season.

To achieve our purpose, the club is committed to fielding competitive and development teams in each age group, that;

- 1. Encourages registration numbers that supports listing 15 players in each U8 team and ensuring first year U8 players, have a minimum of one friend in their team.
- 2. Encourages registration numbers that supports listing up to 24 players in each U10 team ensuring first year U10 players, have a minimum of one friend in their team.
- 3. Encourages registration numbers that supports up to 24 players in each U12 & U14 teams so players are fairly developed, the club is competitive, and players are available for selection by the club or third parties for representative football opportunities. Where possible new players to the club in older age groups are matched with a minimum of one friend.
- 4. U16 player numbers will vary depending on total numbers registered and an understanding that most U16 sides are highly competitive and are also reviewed by the club and third parties for representative football opportunities.

4.2 Team Selection Process

Team selection becomes very complex as the club's player numbers increase.

Our guiding principles are to achieve our purpose to field both development and competitive

teams in each age group, in the equally important pursuit of excellence and participation. This ensures ALL players have the opportunity to develop and improve their skill levels. Participation in pre-season training and practice matches will provide the opportunity for coaches and coordinators to observe each player's skills, character and effort to assist in determining the eventual selection of teams.

This process takes considerable time and effort from a group of volunteers, including, but not limited, to coaches, coordinators, independent specialist assessment groups and committee representatives. Individual needs will be taken into consideration where possible but not to the detriment of the club, teams and fellow players. Those responsible for selecting teams will aim to get the best possible outcomes for everyone concerned.

Football clubs provide an excellent opportunity to establish new friendships at both a player and parent/guardian level. Our club encourages you to take the opportunity to meet and mix with new players and parent/guardians'.

The Maribyrnong Park Football Club focuses on the development of the player skills and selection to a team where the player has the best chance of participating in both training and match day activities. MPFC does not encourage or support the building of teams only around particular school or friendship groups.

4.3 EDFL Grading Policy - effect on team selection

The performance of each side in each age group contributes to our position at the end of the season. The EDFL use this positioning to determine what division our team's commence for the following season. (Note typically the first 4 rounds of the season team's grading are reviewed by the EDFL and adjustments made where required). More information on the EDFL's grading policy can be found on their website.

Competitiveness of all Team 1's (normally Division 1) is a major consideration in team selection. All coaches in each age group along with the Junior Football Director and age group coordinators will work together using the <u>outcomes</u> of **2023 MPFC Junior Skills Matrix (Appendix 1)** <u>assessment</u> as the basis for the selection of each team.

Along with age eligibility as outlined in **4.4**, all Team 1's (from U12 and older) are selected to ensure competitiveness and the majority of players are picked based on character, ability and commitment to the football program.

Sometimes sibling priority is a consideration if both players are capable of playing at this level and it provides balance throughout the other teams.

In addition, the club will not disadvantage another player who has followed and met the general team placement guidelines.

Team 1 (normally Division 1) Selection to ensure competitiveness

Selection of players based on:

- o character
- o ability
- o commitment to the football program

Teams 2 - 4 (normally Division 2 - 6) Selection to ensure balance of teams

Selection of players based on:

 A good balance of players approximately of the same skill level grouped together to allow each team to develop as equally as possible e.g. beginning, developing, extending.

Following from Team 1 selection the club goal is to provide the remaining teams with a good balance of players to allow each team to develop as equally as possible.

Players and parent/guardians should keep in mind that it is important for player's development that they participate with other players who are reasonably close to the same ability so that teaching and training programs can be effective and safe.

The purpose of our club is to foster player participation and excellence in footy, and to ensure players of all abilities who love the game, improve their skills and commit to wanting to become better rather than being forced. Each player is encouraged and developed to realise their full potential as a footballer. As a part of the process of developing junior footballers, it is important that players be graded in teams that best suit the needs of the club, team and the player.

4.4 Football Selection Age Groups (U12, U14 and U16)

It is the view of the EDFL, the club and wider football community experts of the ongoing need to establish the commitment and skills of each player to create the best possible development environment for players. Therefore, we must providing a suitable environment for players wanting to experience football for the first time through to players who wish to develop their football skills for possible selection to representative football squads throughout Victoria.

The Junior Football Director along with the age group coordinator will manage the program of assessment (via the 2023 MPFC Junior Skills Matrix) to ensure:

- That all players are placed on a team that is consistent with their level of development so they feel comfortable and can participate in training and match day games equally.
- b) That player's safety is considered in team placement selection.
- c) That excellence and participation is considered and balanced.

4.4.1 Eligibility for Team Selection (U10)

Top age players are eligible for Team 1 selection. First year players within an age group (bottom age players) are not eligible to play in Team 1.

4.4.2 Eligibility for Team Selection (U12, U14)

Top age and highly skilled players are eligible for Team 1 selection. Typically, first year players are not eligible to play in Team 1 unless they demonstrate the skills and aptitude described in section 4.3 and must have approval from impacted coaches in the age group, the age group coordinator, Junior Football Director and the Junior Committee.

4.4.3 Eligibility for Team Selection (U16)

Player selection for all teams will be based on character, skills and commitment. At this level, it is generally accepted that the players are there because they have made a choice and are capable of making their own decisions through strong leadership.

4.5 Post Team Selection

Once players and team selection has been reached **a recommendation** from the Junior Football Director will be provided to the Junior Committee and Club President and Secretary who will confirm the placements. The club expects that coaches, players and parent/guardians will respect the decisions of the selection process.

From this point, the club expects that the focus switch from which team a player is selected, to the team and players development. It is important that parent/guardians are supportive of the club and most importantly of their player/s during the selection process. Individual concerns should be discussed with the Age group Co-ordinator or in writing to the Club Secretary for review and consideration.

There will be continuing assessments to ensure players further their development. This may or may not include players moving between grades during the season to maximise development opportunities.

5. Rotations and Participation Guidelines

The following are guidelines and reasonable adjustments may occur from game to game as required to support safety, development and excellence.

Ideally each player, up to and including the lower division U14 team, should receive a minimum of 3 quarters in the home and away season and 2 quarters for the final's series.

This may vary depending on safety, injuries, issues of player discipline and attendance at training and player fitness levels. Players will also field different positions to complement their development.

It may be necessary at the U16 and highest U14 teams for some players to receive more game time. This may be due to a player being considered for selection to a representative team.

5.1 Club Commitment to Rotation and Participation

Establish an environment of enjoyment from learning and playing football by developing player's skills and confidence whilst still fostering excellence in football.

Establish a framework that provides the opportunity for all players to develop their skills and confidence across a range of positions.

The club through its Coaching Director and coaching group aim to deliver a sequential development program to give every player the chance to experience a positive regular season, which may lead the players to experience playing in a final's series.

5.2 Rotation and Participation U8, U10 & U12

U8, U10, U12

During the Regular season, coaches will ensure fair playing time amongst the players with special attention to:

- Attendance on training nights,
- Number of matches played in a season,
- Amount of playing time on match day, and

Player rotations through the forward, centre and back positions either every match or on a scheduled and even basis dependent on the age group, maturity and development level.

5.3 Rotation and Participation U14

U14

During the Regular season, coaches will ensure fair playing time amongst the players with special attention to:

- Attendance on training nights,
- Number of matches played in a season,
- Amount of playing time on match day, and
- Rotation among players as the need arises.

It is also acknowledged that at the U14 level, the coach will have some discretion over the position a player is best suited to. This is to enhance player's development and provides team balance with the possibility of player selection for a representative football team.

5.4 Rotation and Participation U16

U16

During the Regular season, coaches will ensure fair playing time amongst the players with special attention to:

- Attendance on training nights,
- Number of matches played in a season,
- Amount of playing time on match day, and
- Rotation among players as the need arises.

It is also acknowledged that at the U16 level, the coach will have some discretion over the position a player is best suited to. This is to enhance player's development and provides team balance with the possibility of player selection for a representative football team.

5.5 Finals Selection

It should be highlighted and recognised that finals football is different from the home and away season. The player rotations and participation will be based on the following principles so as many players get an opportunity to experience finals football. An understanding that player selection and

playing time gives the team the best possible opportunity to do well. Positions do not necessarily need to be rotated. This will be left to the coach's discretion.

Players from the club's other teams will not be used to substitute players who have played in the side for the year unless of emergency or illness. In addition, should a team have less than 24 players, the coaches of that particular age group, may request additional players to meet the shortfall.

Ideally, a player will play a minimum of 2 quarters.

An understanding that the policy will provide coaches at the two higher level U14's through to all U16's a greater scope for varying the playing time than those at the younger year levels.

6. Weekly and End of Season Awards

As Maribyrnong is part of the EDFL, the club has a requirement to hand out a certain number of awards and recognise players on a weekly basis and for overall season performance. All players will receive a participation award with 7 additional awards for each team.

6.1 Weekly Voting Process

The Team Manager will hand out Four (4) cards for each game:

- One (1) to the coach (for the coach's award)
- One (1) to the assistant coach
- and Two (2) to parent/guardians on a rotating basis to ensure a fair and equitable distribution between parents / guardians over the course of the season.

The team manager is to keep a record of the names of parent / guardians who have voted over the season.

6.1.1 How to Vote

The votes for each game shall be cast in the following order:

- 5 Votes to the best player on the ground
- 4 votes to the next best player
- 3 votes to the next best player
- 2 votes to the next best player
- 1 vote to the next best player

Each voting card must have the name of the person casting the vote clearly written on the voting card. Voting cards completed without a name may be deemed ineligible.

6.1.2 End of Season Awards

The 5 highest vote getters for the season will receive, at the end of year presentation day, the following five awards:

1st Best & Fairest

- 2nd Best & Fairest
- o 3rd Best & Fairest
- 4th Best & Fairest
- o 5th Best & Fairest

There will be a further two special awards:

- Most Improved; &
- Coaches Award

Individual teams cannot purchase or give any further awards for their particular playing group.

6.2 EDFL Voting Procedure

Based on EDFL guidelines for weekly voting results, the end of year votes may have no bearing on the weekly votes posted by Team Managers viewed on the EDFL website.

7. Conduct of Coaches, Officials, Players, Parent/Guardians' and Visitors

The aim - to teach, encourage and develop players consistent with the club's constitution, policies and guidelines and to encourage involvement from the club community.

Other than parent/guardians', Coaches have the most influence on players in a football club. It is, therefore, their role to provide the best possible teaching and learning conditions, since players will only persevere with learning if they enjoy it.

To foster enjoyment for players the club and coaching group must design and implement programs for group organisation, discipline procedures, reward mechanisms and an understanding of the difference between the playing group (young people) and adults (parent/guardians' and coaches).

These programs as taught as part of the AFL Foundation Coaching course (Level 1 accreditation) are structured around sequenced skill development sessions delivered in drills and matches that engage and challenge children at all junior playing levels.

7.1 Duty of the Coach

Primary Role:

Player Development incorporating safety, legal and ethical responsibility practices in the design of programs and interactions with committee, players, parent/guardians', officials and volunteers of the club.

7.2 Coaches Code of Conduct

- Teach players the meaning of loyalty and respect to the club.
- Respect and follow the club's policies, procedures and guidelines.
- ❖ Be positive role models for the players, community and club.
- Report any behaviour that may bring the club into disrepute.
- Always promote a positive environment.
- Foster the values of being part of a team environment.

- ❖ Teach the meaning of friendship and avoid being selfish.
- To always maintain a safe environment for the players.
- ❖ To design training programs to develop teams as equally as possible.
- ❖ To get commitment from the players that they want to improve.
- ❖ To positively support all players giving regard to both their strengths and weaknesses.
- Consider maturity and skill levels of players.
- Always address players as young people not adults.
- Zero tolerance for using offensive language, sexist or racist references.
- ❖ Not to involve themselves in negative behaviours with opposition coaches, officials, players, visitors or umpires.
- Assume responsibility for the conduct of their officials, players and parent/guardians', which are supported by the team manager and match day official.
- Place winning in perspective.
- Establish communication protocol with team parent/guardian group.
- * Recognise the importance of proper injury treatment.
- Keep up to date with coaching developments.
- ❖ Must have AFL Foundation Level 1 or 2 Accreditation.
- Must have a current working with children check.
- ❖ All junior coaches will be accountable to the relevant age group coordinator.

7.3 Coaching Accreditation

The EDFL requires coaches to be accredited to AFL Foundation Coaching (Level 1). Maribyrnong Park Football Club supports this position and requires our coaches to complete the program prior to the start of the season.

7.4 Coaching Accreditation and Professional Development

The club will conduct a series of meetings in the lead up to and throughout the season to discuss any issues, concerns or ideas the coaching group may want to address.

Subject to cost, the club will provide independent training for coaches. Should a program be provided, coaches must attend.

7.5 Coach Appraisal

The age group coordinator will be responsible for providing information, assisting coaches and providing feedback throughout the season.

A player/parent feedback survey will be conducted, and appropriate feedback provided.

7.6 Match Day Officials Conduct

Match Day (official role) Parent Help Conduct

- During a scheduled practice match or game all officials are representing our club and setting an example to players, parent/guardian's opposition and visitors. As such the Coach's Code of Conduct applies to Match Day officials.
- Follow the EDFL and club protocols to resolve any concern in a calm and professional manner.

- Although very unlikely, always be aware of the potential for issues to escalate and be prepared to deal with them appropriately.
- In extreme cases should the opposition club's behaviour threaten the safety or cause distress to our players the club officials of the day should advise the umpires that the game would be forfeited.
- Any concern by an official should be made aware to the age group coordinator in writing so the matter can be followed up using the appropriate channels.

7.7 Players Conduct

Players Conduct

- Show respect and commitment for the club.
- Show respect to club facilities and property.
- Show respect to teammates, coaches, parent/guardians and visitors.
- Show respect to opposition players, coaches and club.
- Show respect to match day umpires and officials.
- Show respect and appreciation to all volunteers.
- Show respect for the laws and rules of EDFL/AFL and club.
- Treat all teammates and opposition players, as you would like to be treated.
- No swearing for any reason.

7.8 Spectator Parent/Guardians' & Visitors Conduct

Parent/Guardians' & Visitors Conduct

- Show respect and commitment for the club.
- Show respect to teammates, coaches, parent/guardians' and visitors.
- Show respect to opposition players, coaches and club.
- Show respect to match day umpires and officials.
- Show respect and appreciation to all volunteers.
- Show respect for the laws and rules of EDFL/AFL and club.
- Show encouragement to all players.
- No swearing for any reason.
- No yelling or criticising of the umpires or officials.

- Be aware of the rules and accept the umpire's decision understanding that the club and players make more mistakes than umpires on match day and the umpires in most cases are juniors themselves.
- Never criticise a player in front of others for making mistakes or losing.
- Never interact with a player or official of another team in a negative manner.
- Support all the efforts to remove verbal, racial and physical abuse and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence.
- Support your club officials to foster high standards of behaviour from your football club and the league.
- If a parent/guardian or visitor acts in a manner inconsistent with this code of conduct, the club reserves the tights to take action against the parent/guardian or visitor as deemed appropriate and in accordance with the grievance procedure in Section 26 of the club's constitution.

8. Club and Team Administration

As a community sports/football club, Maribyrnong Park relies heavily on the support of volunteers.

The club has a framework of policies, guidelines and standards, which volunteers agree to abide by. Since the club framework will continue to evolve over time, it is important for volunteers to remain current with these developments. These documents can be found on the club website.

8.1 Timetable – Oval/Training Times

At the commencement of each season, the Junior Committee will provide a timetable for place, day and time of training for each player age group. The club has two ovals, which will be shared equally as possible to ensure the proper development pathway for each team and player.

Coaches and their support group are always to comply with these training schedules. If any change is sought, they must seek approval from the Director of Coaching, or if not available, the Junior President.

8.2 Volunteers

8.2.1 Match Day Roles

All players / families (guardians of players) accept that it is a requirement to participate in the club volunteer rosters.

Match days require several positions to be filled by parent/guardians. A roster will be drawn up and distributed to all parent/guardians at the start of the season by the Team Manager.

The positions include:				
Match Day Official	 Umpire's Escort 			
Timekeeper	Boundary Umpire			
First Aid	 Goal Umpire 			
Assistant Coach	Water Carrier			
Runner	Sponsors banners			

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to find a substitute if unavailable on their given rostered day.

All coaches, officials, players and parent/guardians are to arrive at the ground 45 minutes before match starting time.

8.2.2 Weekly Club Requirements

The club also requires assistance for off-field activities to be filled by parent/guardians. A roster will be drawn up and distributed to all parent/guardians at the start of the season by the Team Manager.

The positions include (but are not exclusive to):		
Canteen – training nights		
Canteen – match day		
Junior meal nights		
Social functions		
Club room maintenance		
Ground maintenance		
Operation of the "Marby Barby" stand		
Home team Match day set up/pack up		
Club Bar supervision / service		

It is the parent/guardians' responsibility to find a substitute if unavailable on their given rostered day.

These duties are critical for the club to operate sustainably and generate revenue alongside increasing costs associated with running a sporting club.

8.2.3 Official Team Leaders

There are four positions that are critical to ensure a smooth season:

- a) Coach,
- b) Assistant Coach,
- c) Team Manager; &
- d) First Aid/Trainers

Following coaching appointments, coaches need to source these roles and their personal details need to be provided to the Junior Committee before the beginning of the official pre-season.

8.2.4 Working with Children Checks

All volunteers working in any capacity with children will need a "Working with Children" check. These can be obtained free of charge through your local Post Office and need to be provided to the Junior Committee before the beginning of the official pre-season.

8.3 Game Day - Team Managers:

<u>Home Games:</u> The EDFL requires Team Managers from the **first team of the day** to complete Ground Check List and signed off with their counterpart. Signed Ground Check List to be completed on-line prior to the first match of the day.

*Other Match Day Procedures for Team Managers:

- Final team sheet to be filled out signed and handed to umpires prior to the commencement of the match.
- Hand out official garments to Match Day Officials
- Co-ordinate volunteer roster and ensure team volunteering duties (non-game duties include canteen, BBQ, Bar etc) are covered
- Hand out vote cards as described in section 6.1
- Exchange team sheets with opposition Team Manager
- Ensure Goal Umpire is organised
- Ensure Time Keeper is organised
- Provide 2 match balls to the umpires. Opposition team to select one ball (home game only)
- On completion of the match please ensure retrieval of the following:
 - Match balls (home match only)
 - Official garments from Match Day Officials
 - Vote cards, place in a sealed envelope and place in vote box ASAP
 - o Goal card from Goal Umpire and give to umpires
 - Time card from Time Keeper and give to umpires
 - o Sign completed match report and relay any fines or issues to age group coordinator
 - Team Managers must enter final match results from team sheet to the EDFL website

8.4 Presentation Day

The Junior Committee will set the date for the end of year Presentation Day during the season. As this is usually the premier function for junior level officials, players and parent/guardians', we encourage all teams and age groups to participate on that day to remain committed to our philosophy of being one club.

We encourage parent/guardians of players to recognise the efforts put in by the volunteers of their respective teams.

8.5 Counting Votes

Under the supervision of the Junior Committee, each team's officials will conduct an end of season vote count. During the event with results provided immediately to the Junior Committee in order to purchase trophies accordingly.

9. Concerns/Complaints Process

From time-to-time members of the football club community may have concerns or complaints in relation to the football administration or football operations. Should this circumstance arise, the club constitution has a formal process to assist members in resolving these concerns.

^{*}Please note the club will provide training to all Team Managers to assist them in carrying out their duties for the season.

In the first instance, any concern needs to be raised in writing to the respective Team Manager. Should the matter not be resolved, the correspondence can be forwarded Junior President or Club Secretary.

Regardless of the situation, no parent or guardian should approach an official on training nights, other than the Team Manager and on match day, the Match Day Official.

If resolution is not achieved through this process, the Junior Committee will make a determination in consultation with the Club President, which will be communicated in writing. If this does not clarify the situation to the satisfaction of the member, then a formal grievance resolution process can be undertaken according to Section 26 of the club's constitution.

9. Facilities Management

9.1 Team Property

Team Property		
•	Footballs & carry bag	
•	Training markers/cones	
•	Tackle bags (shared item)	
•	First aid kit	

10.2 Match Day Official Clothing

Match Day Official Clothing		
Bib, Cards, Pens and Flags for Goal Umpires		
Boundary Umpire bib and whistle		
Trainer bib (Must wear white pants/shorts) and First aid kit		
Umpire's Escort bib		
Runner bib		
Water bib		
Coach bib		
Assistant Coach bib		
Team Manager bib		
Match Day Official bibs		
One drink bottle holder and drink bottles		
Timekeeper's card, timer and pens		

Any loss or excessive damage of this property needs to be replaced by the team.

All property/equipment is the responsibility of the respective Coach and Team Manager to maintain and secure.

10. Personal Medical Insurance

All EDFL clubs are required to take out costly public liability insurance, which covers the club and its employees/volunteers. These policies are specifically written for sporting clubs such as ours. The club's policy does not cover out of pocket expenses.

However, we believe that it is in your child's best interest to have your own private medical insurance as a backup. All players play at their own risk and acknowledge that Australian Rules Football is a contact sport where injuries may occur from time to time.

The club urges all families to seek their own personal medical coverage including Ambulance cover, which we strongly recommend.

Further information on insurance cover and claim forms can be obtained from www.jltsport.com.au

11. League Rules

The EDFL has relevant rules. These can be obtained from the EDFL website: www.essendondfl.com.au

12. Club Committee and Coaching Contacts

Please refer to the website:

https://www.marbylions.com.au/

Appendix 1 – skills matrix/player KPI template