

## **AFL Junior Match Guide – Proposed Changes**

The AFL Junior Match Policy Guide has been developed by the AFL with the stated aim of establishing a framework that ensures learning and development of young players towards the adult version of the game. The AFL wants to provide an environment where the young players can play the game and sequentially develop their skills through activities, games, match rules and conditions commensurate with their stage of learning and level of ability.

Over a period of time consultation with leagues and clubs was carried out, and in 2012 a research project was carried out by Deakin University into the impact of the presence or absence of the junior match policy on enjoyment and skill development of participants and on the attitudes and match day behaviours of parents, coaches, officials and administrators.

Although the introduction of the Junior Match Guide changes has been left to individual Leagues, nearly all Leagues in metropolitan and country Victoria have already adopted the basic changes. Some have made small modifications or not adopted minor parts of the Guide. During 2014 I have had the opportunity to meet with other League representatives and in particular our comparable metropolitan neighbours South Metro Junior Football League, South East Junior Football League, Eastern Football League, Northern Football League, Essendon District Football League and Western District Football League. I have been able to glean from them what is working, what doesn't and the changes they have made to the Guide. Some YJFL Board members also had a chance to look at some matches in other leagues where the changes had also been adopted.

Below is a chart of the changes endorsed by the AFL Board at its meeting on 14 July 2014 to be introduced for season 2015.

Peter Nicholls

General Manager

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Rules and Regulations	Under 8	Under 9	Under 10
Phase	<b>Introductory</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>Transition to Competition</b>
Players	12 a side	15 a side	18 a side
Maximum Ground Size – Use of Zones	80m x 60m approx. (2 games per oval) 3 equal zones	100m x 80m approx. 3 equal zones	Up to Full size No zones
Match Length	4 x 10 (1 hour)	4 x 12 (1 hour 15 minutes)	4 x 15 (1 hour 30 minutes)
Competition Details	No scores, ladders or finals.  No recording of best players and goalkickers permitted.  No representative teams.	No scores, ladders or finals.  No recording of best players and goalkickers permitted.  No representative teams.	Scores allowed but not published, no ladders or finals.  Goal umpires cards to be submitted to League for grading purposes.
Contact	No tackle or bump. There is absolutely no contact or spoiling, except when accidental in nature.	Modified tackle*/no bump. Players cannot bump/push an opponent, knock/ steal the ball out of their hands or smother an opponent's kick.	Modified tackle*/no bump.
The ball	Size 1 Synthetic	Size 2 Synthetic	Size 2 Synthetic
Umpiring	1 field, 2 goal umpires Parents.	1 field, 2 goal umpires. Parents.	1 field, 2 boundary umpires, 2 goal umpires. Club Supplementary Umpires
Coaching position	Onfield (1)	Onfield (1)	Sideline

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<b>Bounces</b>	1 bounce before disposing	2 bounces before disposing	2 bounces before disposing
<b>Marking</b>	A mark is awarded, irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled, to any player who catches it or makes a reasonable attempt to mark it.	A mark is awarded, irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled, to any player who catches it or makes a reasonable attempt to mark it.	A mark is awarded when a player catches the ball directly from another player's kick that has travelled at least 10 metres.
<b>Out of Bounds</b>	From a kick, a free kick is awarded against the player who last kicked the ball. From hands, or if there is doubt, the umpire shall call a ball-up 10m in from the boundary.	From a kick, a free kick is awarded against the player who last kicked the ball. From hands, or if there is doubt, the umpire shall call a ball-up 10m in from the boundary.	Boundary throw-in.
<b>Kick off the Ground</b>	Not permitted unless accidental.	Not permitted unless accidental.	Not permitted unless accidental.
<b>Stealing, smothering, shepherding, barging</b>	No stealing, smothering, shepherding or barging.	No stealing, smothering, shepherding or barging.	No stealing, smothering, shepherding or barging.
<b>Penalties</b>	No distance penalty applies. Players can be ordered off at the umpire's discretion.	10m penalty can be applied at the umpire's discretion if they feel a player has been hindered in any way. Players can be ordered off at the umpire's discretion.	25m penalty can be applied at the umpire's discretion if they feel a player has been hindered in any way. Players can be ordered off at the umpire's discretion.
<b>Age Group Day</b>	Under 8's Round Robin during season	Under 9's Round Robin during season (free YJFL ball for each player)	Lightning Premiership in first weekend of finals for each division of Under 10's

\* Note – Modified 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 forward player with the ball (i.e. push the player in the back).