



Touch Football Australia

National Junior Development Framework

Contents

Section One - Introduction	3
Important	4
Version Control Register	4
Acknowledgements	5
Age Qualification, Definitions and Terminology	5
Framework Development	6
Contacts	6
TFA Resources and Equipment	7
Section Two - Touch Football as a Junior Sport	8
Getting Young People Involved	8
Opportunity for All	8
Mixed Gender Participation	9
The Thrill of a Life Time	10
Touch Football in the School System	11
The Touch Football Player Pathway	13
Coaching and Refereeing - Branches of the Player Pathway	14
Encouraging and Educating Good Behaviour	15
Section Three - Playing Touch Football	16
AusTouch: The Introductory Step	16
Competition Philosophy for Juniors	16
Age Divisions for Junior Competition	17
AusTouch Playing Rules	17
AusSquad: The Specialisation Step	19
Coaching Junior Touch Football	20
Planning Your Sessions	21
Equipment	21
Coaching Sport Skills	22
Stage of Development for Junior Participants	23
Recommended Skills for Touch Football	24
Positional and Substitution Guidelines	25
Physical Growth and Maturation	27
Section Four - Competition Guidelines	29
Play by the Rules	29
Management Guidelines for Junior Competition	30
Committee Structure	30
Injury Prevention, Safety and Child Protection Policy Guidelines	32
Physiological Considerations for Junior Sport	32
Medical Consideration	35
Playing Field, Equipment and Uniforms	36
Child Protection Policy	37

Section One - Introduction

The Touch Football Australia (TFA) National Junior Development Framework has been created by TFA to ensure that all young Australians are provided with the opportunity to develop and enhance their lives through the sport of Touch Football.

The purpose of this document is to provide a national structure to align the junior programs in each of the states and to bring the playing level of juniors across Australia, up to an equal standard. The framework will assist affiliated touch associations, volunteers and schools in the development of junior affiliates, competitions, pathways, programs and related activities.

The TFA Junior Development Framework has a number of objectives that aim to ensure positive, enjoyable and safe experiences are provided to children in the sport of Touch Football. Those objectives include the following:

- Provide enjoyable experiences for all children so as to encourage lifelong participation.
- Provide supportive environments for participation through the development of skills and good sporting behaviour.
- Provide the safest possible environment for participation and active involvement in the sport of Touch Football and related activities.
- Provide equal opportunities for children regardless of their gender, race, ability, cultural background, religion, geographic location or age.
- Encourage and actively cater for the development of talented children.
- Encourage, cater for and provide pathways for children to develop skills in refereeing, coaching, selecting, managing and administration.
- Provide a consistent and coordinated approach to all Touch Football programs in both the school and the community.

While all care has been taken in the preparation of this publication, Touch Football Australia accepts that errors, omissions or inaccuracies may occur. This publication is of a general nature only and should be used in conjunction with related policies, such as the Member Protection Policy. It is not intended to be relied upon, nor as a substitute for, professional advice.

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Important

The following points should be considered at all times:

1. Touch Football Australia is the national sporting organisation and all affiliated clubs/associations are insured under the National Insurance Scheme.
2. It is essential that you comply with all relevant laws, by-laws and regulations. You and your affiliate must take all due and reasonable precautions to prevent or mitigate losses. Failure to do so may prejudice your rights and entitlements under our insurance policy. Please do not hesitate to contact Touch Football Australia should any assistance be required.
3. The preparation of this document is in no way a commitment from Touch Football Australia to provide funds or make any other contribution now or in the future.
4. Touch Football Australia policies and procedures are living documents which reflect progress in administrative requirements and industry standards. As such, to maintain currency, policy and procedures are periodically reviewed and updated. It is important readers ensure they are reading and using the most up to date version. To confirm the current version, please contact Touch Football Australia at www.austouch.com.au.
5. Touch Football Australia also welcomes suggestions or improvements to our policies and procedures.

Version Control Register

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2	January 2013	Introduction of TFA National Junior Development Framework	Marianne Maguire	

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Elements of the Touch Football Australia National Junior Development Framework have been reproduced from the Australian Touch Association Junior Policy.

Age Qualification, Definitions and Terminology

For age level, the ages indicated are to be taken as at 31st December of that year.

Juniors under 20 years

Youth 13 to 20 years

Children 5 to 12 years

The following are a list of terms utilised throughout this document.

Affiliate A local entity that conducts and/or administers Touch Football competitions and which is a member of Touch Football Australia

ASC Australian Sports Commission

TFA Touch Football Australia

Framework Development

Junior sport moves, evolves and grows as quickly as children, and as such, TFA will continue to update this document with the most relevant information, policies and procedures.

TFA values the thoughts and views of our members and stakeholders; if you have any feedback or would like to contribute to the development of this document, please contact Touch Football Australia.

Contacts

Touch Football Australia and the sport's associated state bodies have staff who are dedicated to the development of our youngest participants and future stars of the sport, as well as the growth of Touch Football throughout the country.

For more information or to discuss junior development in your state, town, affiliate or club; please contact your closest development staff member.

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TFA Resources and Equipment

Touch Football Australia produces a wide range of coaching resources, clothing for players and officials, and game equipment which are available for affiliates, members and the general public to purchase via the 'Online Shop' on the website.

Our Online Shop is an effective and efficient service that is provided to our members to view and purchase merchandise. View the merchandise catalogue, order form or a range of sponsor catalogues, by visiting austouch.com.au and locating the [Online Shop](#) tab at the top of the page.

Section Two - Touch Football as a Junior Sport

The second section of the Junior Development Framework focuses on the sport of Touch Football and its benefits as an activity option for young people. This section explains how young people can become involved in the sport, the opportunities that it provides, the culture of the sport, the participant pathway and how Touch Football can become an activity that can span a lifetime.

Getting Young People Involved

Touch Football is played by both boys and girls from as young as five years old through their entire childhood and adolescence. Children enjoy Touch Football because it's a fast, easy to learn, safe and fun sport to play.

Touch Football supports the development of children as individuals through the values of the sport, which are Leadership, Integrity, Professionalism, Diversity and Excellence¹.

Children who participate in Touch Football have the opportunity to learn the importance of team work and team spirit; and it allows them to develop their communication and social skills. Touch Football also develops physical skills such as hand eye and motor skills, and instils the concepts of good fitness routines while maintaining enjoyment.

As Touch Football is a sport that can be participated by people well into their senior years and at the social level, the ideal that participation in sport is fundamentally fun is never lost.

Opportunity for All

All young Australians must be given the best opportunity to develop their physical potential and fitness, and to develop interests in sport. These opportunities are provided in the following ways:

- Promotion of Touch Football should be actively pursued for both boys and girls
- Access to facilities, equipment, qualified & accredited coaches & referees, sponsorship, and media coverage should be available for both boys and girls.
- Schools, clubs and various community groups are encouraged to develop and integrate strategies for children with a disability into their programs.

¹ http://www.austouch.com.au/fileadmin/user_upload/Download_Documents/Strategic_Plan.pdf

- Racial and religious customs must be taken into consideration so as not to deny access to programs. For example, uniform codes may need to be relaxed to allow female Muslim children to participate in long skirts, stockings, and scarves.
- At all times efforts must be made to resolve any conflict in a “fair and reasonable way” and so not to preclude any child from participating.
- Equal opportunity for involvement and maximum participation, to meet children’s needs are to be ensured regardless of gender, body shape, age, geographic location, race, cultural background, religion or ability.

Mixed Gender Participation

Touch Football is one of the few sports offering girls, boys, young women and men the opportunity to play together and against each other on the same field. The key reason for this is that Touch Football is a minimum contact sport that does not place young participants or females in physical danger when competing with physically larger participants or males; as is the case with many other sports.

At a senior level mixed participation is very common, with many mixed competitions outnumbering single gendered competitions at a social level. However this does not appear to be the case in junior competitions. While there are junior mixed competitions that do exist at the social level, most junior competitions are single gender.

While all theories into why this is the case, are purely anecdotal at this stage, it is widely believed that the key reason for the preference of single gendered competitions is the changes that adolescents experience and the associated socialisation issues that it creates.

In some instances one model may work better than the other and in other instances they may work as well as each other. Some affiliates may not have the equality of numbers to justify mixed competitions. As a general rule, affiliates are encouraged to test and trial in order to do what works best for them.

The Thrill of a Lifetime

The pathway that Touch Football provides to athletes not only prepares them for competition at the elite level, it also assists in their personal growth and development.

Junior Touch Football not only encompasses training and competition, but also the opportunity to play with friends and have fun. This relies on

- a broad-based program and the sequential development of skills across a wide range of activities
- a positive experience at all levels
- pathways for young people to continue in their sport at more advanced levels
- recognition by sport providers that sport is a service and young people are their customers.

Also, contemporary sporting experiences for young people need consideration of the ever-changing environment they are growing up in. Constantly changing are

- family structures
- work commitments of parents/carers
- the demands on young people for their time (e.g. school and homework, sport, recreation)
- consumerism and the need of young people to keep pace with their peers
- media and communication technologies (e.g. the internet and mobile phones)
- perceptions of young people (their challenge of authority, and need for independence and individuality).

These changes continue to affect the ways in which young people access sport, the experiences they gain from their sporting opportunities, and the ways they communicate about these experiences. Our challenge is to deliver Touch Football in a meaningful way for today's young people so they develop a passion for our sport which takes them into adult life.

As most people become older they tend to become less physically active and as such, the sporting habits and values formed in the growing years are important in helping people to remain active and healthy.

Touch Football is a sport that people can enjoy at all ages in different forms. Children from as young as five can begin participating in Touch Football; adults enjoy it at a social or more competitive level; and families can also put teams together, with children, parents and grandparents enjoying a game of Touch Football in their local social competition.

Touch Football has many benefits for young people that contribute to their holistic development, and continue to provide benefit to them as adults.

Experiences within junior Touch Football are important for continued participation. To motivate young people to make a life time commitment to sport, we must

- listen to their views on what makes an enjoyable sports experience for them
- present sport to fit their needs
- at all times, give them a fair go.

Junior Touch Football also provides an holistic experience, by encouraging and educating good behaviour in the sport environment that positively influence other components of a child's life.

Touch Football in the School Curriculum

Touch Football is one of the main sports on Australian school's physical education curriculum because it is a sport that promotes physical activity while maintaining safety through minimal contact. It also promotes equal inclusion by both boys and girls, develops team, communication, social and leadership skills, as well as hand eye coordination.

Creating Links

Touch Football Australia recognises the benefits of sport in the school system and considers it as a high priority to build relationships and create opportunities to improve programs and develop new resources. Creating links between school children, their parents and teachers to affiliated clubs and competitions, as well as linking affiliate coaches and community volunteers back to school programs is a constant focus.

Affiliates are encouraged to work closely with their state development staff to create a strategic junior development plan that encompasses school development, programs and linkages to the affiliate. Once a plan has been formulated, affiliates, with the assistance of development staff, should begin creating links with schools to implement school programs and to promote the sport and their club within the community. These links are essential as they ensure that a systematic and coordinated delivery of Touch Football is provided, which reduces wastage and inefficiencies caused by duplication and under-utilisation of resources. Close links will also provide for a smooth transition for participants between school and community sporting competitions.

Duplication

Whilst it is recognised that duplication can result in more opportunities for participants, there are also negative effects of this. When school and community sporting groups offer competition for similar age groups, duplication can lead to over training, burn out and unnecessary competing demands on children. It also leads to excessive burden on parents, coaches, officials, community organisations and schools.

Establishing mechanisms that will ensure ongoing communication and consultation between school and community organisations can reduce the duplication of junior touch activities.

Some strategies to reduce duplication in the provision of junior touch include

- coordinated scheduling of school and community competitions at all levels
- junior development programs that incorporate both school and community based components
- promotion of programs to encourage participation co-ordinated by both clubs and schools

Shared Resources

Where possible, school and community groups should implement measures to share the resources used in the delivery of junior Touch Football. Shared resources could include human (coaches, referees and administrators), facilities and equipment. This would help avoid unnecessary extra costs and inconvenience for the participants, and lead to a more efficient and effective junior Touch Football delivery system.

The Touch Football Player Pathway

	JUNIORS/INTRODUCTION 5 - 12 YEARS	YOUTH/DEVELOPMENT 13 - 20 YEARS	ADULT 21 + YEARS
MASTERY SUSTAINED SUCCESS			WORLD CUP
			TRANS TASMAN
		YOUTH TRANS-TASMAN	ELITE 8
			STATE OF ORIGIN
ELITE REPRESENTATION AND SUCCESS		NATIONAL YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS	NATIONAL TOUCH LEAGUE
		SCHOOL SPORT NATIONALS 12'S AND 15'S	STATE TOURNAMENTS
TALENT PRACTICE AND ACHIEVEMENT		AUSSQUAD PROGRAM	REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS
	JUNIOR AFFILIATE COMPETITIONS	STATE/REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS	
FOUNDATION PARTICIPATION/ SOCIAL	AFFILIATE AND SCHOOL GALA DAYS	JUNIOR AFFILIATE COMPETITIONS	AFFILIATE COMPETITIONS
	AUSTOUCH PROGRAM	SCHOOL COMPETITIONS	
	SCHOOL CLINICS		
	PHYSICAL EDUCATION SCHOOL CURRICULUM		

This model has been developed from the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) FTEM (Foundation, Talent, Elite and Mastery) model. For more information regarding the FTEM model, visit ausport.gov.au/ftem

Coaching and Refereeing - Branches of the Player Pathway

Touch Football not only provides a playing pathway for young people, it also provides opportunities in areas of coaching and refereeing.

Junior Coaching Pathway

TFA has a commitment to coordinate the development of junior coaches in conjunction with state, regional and local affiliates. Only accredited Course Presenters may conduct a Community or Level One Coach course that allow for the learning styles of junior aged coaches. The cost to juniors should be kept to a minimum. Junior coach course costs should, where possible, be met or subsidized by the association.

It is recommended that the minimum age is 14 years for junior coaches. This is with a qualification from the Community Coach Course. This allows for the development of ideas, ability to understand the rules and their effect on the game and players. Assistance from a senior coach is also recommended.

The same incentives that are promoted to junior participants should be available to junior coaches. Local affiliates together with state and regional development officers should promote the junior coach development program alongside the junior player program within the local school system by way of written advice, and regular visits to promote the knowledge of how to participate in becoming a junior coach.

Junior Referees Pathway

The development of our junior referees has become an integral component to the overall success of our referee programs. TFA has a commitment to coordinate the development of junior referees in conjunction with state, regional and local affiliates. Our states have begun to implement specific junior programs to provide pathways for their young developing referees. The programs are mentoring systems that provide support and education with the aim of increasing the retention rates of junior referees.

Only accredited Course Presenters may conduct a Level One Referee course that allow for the learning styles of junior aged referees. The cost to juniors should be kept to a minimum. Junior referee course costs, should where possible, be met by the senior association.

Junior referees, are not to be permitted to officiate at senior competitions unless deemed competent as a Level 1 referee as assessed by an accredited Level 1 Referee Coach. Should they not meet the required criteria they are not to control senior matches until attaining a minimum age of 14 years and then only with a senior experienced buddy referee.

Junior referees should be encouraged to provide refereeing services at all school and other junior events (e.g. state, regional and local affiliates). However, they should not be appointed to games that are above their capabilities. It is recommended that the minimum age is 11 years for junior referees. This allows for the development of ideas, ability to understand the rules and their effect on the game and players.

It is recommended that payment for officiating on junior games not be monetary, rather subsidies to attend junior workshops, school championships, junior state cups or, referee apparel. Payment should be with the view of incentive.

Junior referee nominations should not be submitted for selection to officiate at any corporate run event (especially those that offer prize money). The greater percentage of these events may not be affiliated and therefore TFA would be deemed to be responsible for the referees once they had sanctioned the event and accepted their nomination. As TFA rules may not always be used and the players may not all be affiliated there is potential for a situation to arise that would be beyond TFA's control.

The same incentives that are promoted to junior participants should be available to junior referees. Local affiliates together with state and regional development officers should promote the junior referee development program alongside the junior player program within the local school system by way of written advice, and regular visits to promote the knowledge of how to participate in becoming a junior referee.

Encouraging and Educating Good Behaviour

As Touch Football is a sport that is played by people of all ages, genders, and a variety of cultures, it is imperative that an environment is created that caters to all participants. As a part of the education that is provided to our volunteers through our technical courses and administrative support, Touch Football Australia encourages affiliates and their members to implement and uphold values of tolerance, positive gamesmanship and enjoyment for all.

The pathway that Touch Football provides to athletes not only prepares them for competition on the field, it also assists in their personal growth and development. Every player, coach, referee and administrator in every Touch Football team and competition in Australia must agree to and sign the TFA Code of Conduct to be eligible to participate. This is incorporated in the player agreement to demonstrate that Touch Football Australia strongly supports good behaviour, as well as to ensure that all members are aware of what it means to be a part of the Touch Football community.

Section Three - Playing Touch Football

Section three of the document provides information designed to assist junior athletes in their participation in the sport; this includes suggested programs, rules, skills and positional guidelines. Information for coaches relating to session planning, suggested equipment and guidelines for teaching young athletes is also provided in this section.

AusTouch Program - The Introductory Step

The AusTouch program is the first stepping stone in the Touch Football player pathway, introducing kids to the basics of Touch Football in a fun and progressive program, which builds on the skills, concepts and rules over the sessions. AusTouch is designed to be suitable for kids that have had limited or no past involvement in Touch Football; it can also be used to increase the skill level of older participants or for some of our youngest Touch Football participants, those 5 – 8 year old kids.

By breaking down and simplifying the skills, rules and concepts of the sport, the AusTouch program provides a non-threatening introduction to Touch Football for new participants, as well as a development pathway towards formal competition. The AusTouch program is an instrumental tool in transitioning participants from informal school and social activity into a structured community club based sporting environment.

Competition Philosophy for Juniors

Competition is an intrinsic part of sport that involves measuring performance against an opponent, oneself or the environment. Competition provides stimulation and challenge as well as the opportunity to apply, test and further develop skills in a game situation. Properly managed, competition should be seen as a healthy and desirable part of Touch Football.

Within Australian society, competition is closely associated with success and failure. Junior Touch Football participants should be taught that “winning” and “losing” are merely results of a sporting competition. There should not be an over emphasis on winning in junior Touch Football as this can lead to dissatisfaction with the sport in general.

All junior Touch Football participants should be encouraged to achieve, do their best, and develop their full sporting potential. The pursuit of excellence is as desirable in junior Touch Football as in other forms of endeavour. A challenging competition is therefore an important element of this development process.

Therefore, the emphasis in junior Touch Football competition should be on the quality of the experience and its appropriateness to the age and ability of the participants. Participants should be given opportunities to succeed and do their best through competition. In keeping with a “sport for all” philosophy, school and community organisations should make adequate provision for appropriate levels of competition for junior participants. They should cater for all levels of ability, ensuring a satisfying experience for all participants.

Age Divisions for Junior Competitions

There is no set rule for setting age divisions within a junior competition. There are a number of factors that can influence decisions and age divisions within competitions will vary from affiliate to affiliate.

The number and age variance of junior participants plays a key role in this decision, as a larger pool of players will allow for a great number of age divisions. If an affiliate places a focus on the development pathways of their participants, they may be influenced by the age divisions offered at representative tournaments; for instance, national competitions are currently contested at the u18, u15 and u12 age levels.

Other affiliates who successfully align themselves with local schools will structure their competition to reflect school years as opposed to age divisions.

Age Divisions

U8
U10
U12
U14
U16
U18

Year Divisions

K –Yr 2
Yr 3 - 4
Yr 5 - 6
Yr 7 - 8
Yr 9 - 10
Yr 11 -12

AusTouch Playing Rules

While the official playing rules are able to be utilised for competition at any age level, many affiliates sometimes alter or modify some rules to assist the learning process, to ensure that opportunities are provided to all participants or to maximise the enjoyment for participants.

TFA has put together a set of modified playing rules referred to as the AusTouch Playing Rules that may assist affiliates in providing the best experience for their youngest participants. Competition administrators are welcome to use some or all of these rules to figure out what works best for their competition.

The aim of this modified set of rules is to:

- provide equity of opportunity to participate and experience a feeling of success
- encourage optimum skill development and understanding of the game of Touch Football
- reduce the emphasis on “win-at-all-costs” and promote enjoyment
- promote a safe learning environment
- assist players in the transition from junior Touch Football to the adult game.

Player Numbers

6 players on the field, with up to 3 substitutes (all players to play every position)

Equipment

1 junior AusTouch Football, 6 marker hats, whistles

Area

50m x 35m (half a full size Touch Football field)

Length of Game

2 halves of 15 minutes each way with a break of 5 minutes at half time

Rules

- The attacking team maintains possession of the ball for six touches. All forward passes, dropped balls and late passes are to be counted as a touch.
- The acting half cannot run with the ball and they must pass it to another player before they can join in further play (stand and pass).
- The defending team cannot move until the first receiver has caught the ball.
- For minor infringements the referee may allow a replay of the action (eg. Rollball infringements).
- No penalties are to be awarded. Instances including violent behaviour, kicking the ball, etc will result in a restart of the set of six (attacking team) or a change of possession (defending team).

General Notes

- Actions against the nature and spirit of the game should be dealt with immediately.
- Referees and coaches are encouraged to reinforce the codes of conduct/behaviour.

Referees Notes:

- Apply rules with due regard to the age level and ability of players.
- Adopt an encouraging and pleasant manner at all times to ensure an open and free-flowing game. No penalties are to be awarded.
- Stop play and use simple language to explain decisions.
- In cases where play is recalled or replayed for the team in possession, the referee should hold the ball and explain the ruling before allowing the play to recommence.

Coaches Notes:

- Coaches may coach on the field at least 5 metres behind the team.
- Coaching Level recommended – Community Coach or higher.
- Substitution of players should ensure that all players receive an equal amount of time on the field. This should be managed by an adult.

AusSquad Program - The Specialisation Step

During the teenage years, many young people who participate in sport tend to begin the transition from participating in many sports for enjoyment, to specialising in one or two sports and usually due to the progression into representative teams. Coaching clinics and talent development programs play a role at this level by assisting young people to make informed decisions about their specialisation in sport. Specialisation allows an athlete to set goals, as well as understand and take pride in their role within the team. Specialisation should only occur with children over the age of 10, when they are old enough to understand the concepts of having different positions on the field.

The AusSquad program has been created as the link between the AusTouch program and senior competition, to complete the junior pathway.

Program Concept

The AusSquad program will consist of a number of clinics in which young athletes will be taken through skills, rules and concepts of the game. The program will provide coaches with certified educational resources that they will utilise in delivering clinics. Theory modules have been designed to educate young athletes about self-improvement and their off field development.

The AusSquad program will also create a complete pathway for coaches to develop their skills and progress to an elite level.

Key Project Aim

To develop and complete the elite junior pathway and to retain talented athletes and officials.

Key Project Outcomes

- Improve technical infrastructure from the grassroots level up
- Improve the elite development of youth within TFA operated states
- Increase the quality and quantity of accredited coaches in Australia
- Increase the quality and quantity of young referees in Australia
- Develop consistent nationally recognised messages throughout the structure.

The program will improve the overall skill base of young participants (11-18 year olds) as it provides a nationally recognised skill set, delivered by accredited coaches. The completion of the player pathway and focus on individual development will also be a key in increasing the national retention rate of young Touch Football athletes.

Coaching Junior Touch Football

The overall aim of coaches is to help young people build a love of participating in sport for lifelong involvement. This section deals with the coach as an instructor.

Aim for Quality Coaching

Coaches aim to pass on to young people a sound understanding of the

- skills, tactics, strategies and rules
- etiquette and behaviour standards

The aim of this is to help them build an ability to make decisions independently and to participate within the ethos of Touch Football.

Coaches aid learning outcomes best by being flexible and not overly directive. They need to plan:

- what they will instruct
- how they will instruct
- how they will structure tasks

Planning Your Sessions

In planning both individual sessions and seasonal programs for junior, coaches need to consider:

- maximising participation and enjoyment
- ensuring that all participants have the same opportunity to experience all facets of the sport, regardless of ability
- being inclusive of all young people, whether from other cultural backgrounds, or with special needs where practically possible (eg a disability, or medical condition)
- setting learning goals (movement skills, values and attitudes)
- the actual learning tasks and objectives for the session
- the objectives of the season
- overall management plan (use of space and time and what equipment and facilities are needed)
- evaluate after each session so improvements can be made

Equipment

One of the benefits of Touch Football is that the game requires minimal equipment. An official game of Touch Football does not require the use of large goal posts, nets, on field equipment such as stumps or game assistant equipment including bats, gloves and protective pads. The equipment required for a game of Touch Football is a ball and 6 cones to mark the corners and halfway points of the field.

This is also beneficial particularly to volunteers taking on a coaching role, as the equipment required in undertaking a training session is also minimal. A suggested training kit for a coach training a Touch Football team should consist the following:

Essential Equipment

- 3 - 4 Touch Footballs
- 20 Cones (for field marking, skill and drill positioning and visual aid in demonstrations)
- 16 Singlets or Coloured Sashes (to divide players into teams for opposed sessions)
- 1 - 2 Whistles

Non-Essential Equipment

- Agility Poles (for drills involving speed and change of direction)
- Hurdles (for speed and agility training)
- Speed Ladders (for speed and improved footwork)
- Heavy Touch Footballs (for improved passing technique and distance)

Coaching Sport Skills

Key considerations in creating effective learning experiences for young people to develop sport skills include:

- Instructing
 - keep instructions simple and clear
 - use language best suited to the level of the participants
 - have a positive manner when working with young people
- Increase time on task
 - refine time spent on management so time engaged in the activity can be increased
 - keep instruction time for a specific skill to a minimum to allow more time for trying it
- Vary content
 - sometimes teach the whole skill, and at other times break it into parts, depending on the complexity of the skill
 - playing a modified game first can help participants understand the context of skills
 - change between individual, pair and group activities
- Increase the challenge
 - alter times, distances, heights etc. as skills improve
 - move sequentially from simple to more complex techniques over time
 - change from static to dynamic (e.g. standing long passes to run in and pass), increase the number of players, and introduce defenders
- Practice
 - practice each skill randomly through the session (e.g. 3 – 5 minute blocks of one skill at various times)
 - plan to practice under similar conditions to competition as often as possible
- Giving feedback
 - successful coaches give immediate feedback that is very specific and offers ideas on correction
 - feedback must always be given in a positive environment
 - feedback can be verbal or nonverbal (e.g. thumbs up)
- Questioning
 - consider the level of the question in terms of the breadth of response you want
 - a good sequence is (a) plan the question (b) get the attention of the young person (c) ask the question and wait (d) respond, giving feedback or probing for a more extensive response
 - good questions encourage young people to analyse why they chose a particular strategy, why they adjusted their technique, or how they would respond to a similar situation in the future

Stages of Development for Junior Participants

Approximate Age Range	Skill Descriptors	Social Descriptors	Considerations for Touch Football
Foundation 5 – 7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skill movements • Capable of 2 or more skills • Effort more critical than outcome • Able to respond to simple instruction • Limited decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egocentric • Work well as individual, pairs & small groups • Responds to positive feedback • Can follow simple instructions & visual cues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short sessions • Simple skills in a sequence • Simple relays, and short games with small numbers • Encourage creative play • Limit number of skills introduced to 2 – 3 per session
Foundation 8 – 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can apply skills in modified games • Girls are better at balance activities • Boys enjoy explosive power based activities • Look to always improve basic skill techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work well in pairs, small groups & teams • Responds to positive & constructive feedback • Can develop strong sense of belonging • Emphasis on fun, equality & inclusion • Can understand rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can perform specific skills for Touch Football • Incorporate problem solving, appropriate behaviour & cooperative play • Can develop sense of team work • Short instruction mixed with practice, skill correction, and continued skill development • Prompt to practice at home
Talent 11 – 14 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine skills and understanding of game strategies • Modified rules and safety remain important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracted to fun, belonging, competition and social opportunities • See sport as opportunity for freedom and independence • Skill difference due to puberty • Basic play concepts • Cannot depersonalise criticism • Peer acceptance important • Family support pivotal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can increase intensity and complexity to challenges • Fun and appropriate fitness activities • Coaching is important • Continue to rotate positions • Variety of training methods and activities • Awareness of social, nutritional, hydration & injury prevention • Continued emphasis of skill development

Recommended Skills for Touch Football

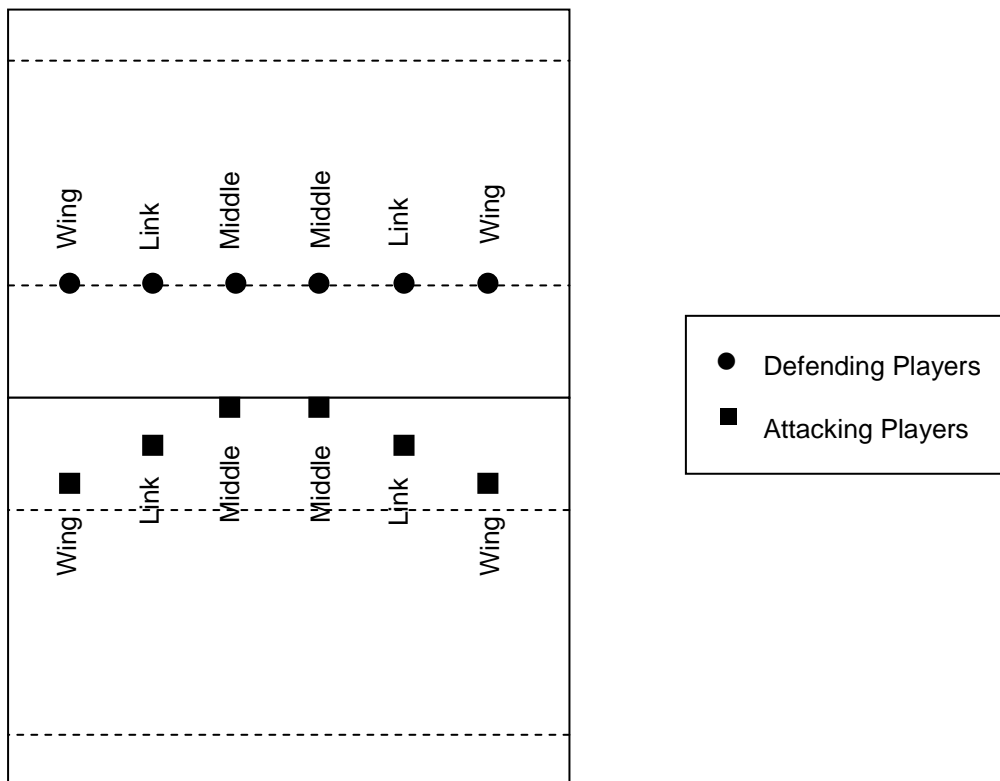
	Foundation	Talent	Elite	Mastery
Movement Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running backwards Side stepping Side to side shuffling Sprinting with the ball Swerving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stepping a Defender Agility – Forwards Agility - Backwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running attacking lines Backwards at speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stepping off both feet High level agility
Ball Skills – Passing & Catching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gripping the ball Stationary passing Passing on the run Catching Acting Half pass (introduce) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spiral Pass Passing Left and Right Acting Half Pass Draw & Pass Dummy Wrap Pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running Pass both sides Cut Out Pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long cut out passes both hands Long pass off ground Quarterback passes 4 on 3 passes
Rollball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stepping over the ball Static rollball Dynamic rollball (introduce) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dynamic Rollball Rollball positioning (side of defender) Dump-Split 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downtime minimal Rollball at speed Elite Static Rollball (strike-dump) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Left & right handed roll balls Footwork into Rollball Swiping Splitting off the ball Dominant Rollball
Rucking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting Half position Acting Half role First Receiver role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Receiver Positioning Rucking at Pace Wrapping from half 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rucking patterns Direct rucking Expansive rucking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition into line attack Exit patterns
Attack Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running into space Effecting the touch in attack Scoring a Touchdown The Tap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoring a Touchdown - Diving Switch Wrap Scooping Decision Making: 2-on-1 execution Attacking Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slide Dive - Elite Switch Variations (A, B, C's etc) Wrap Variations Decision Making: 3 on 2 execution Attacking lines – V line, Hooking lines etc Walking in defensive player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase Plays Set Plays Attack styles - Static vs Running Sequences of set Plays Decision Making: 4 on 3 execution “Bounce” lines
Defence Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Returning Onside Moving Forward to perform touch Foundation Line Defence (eg Squeeze policy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruck Defence Shutdown Defence Wrap Defence Switch Defence Defensive space awareness Body Positioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line defence policies Hold (tread) defence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-touch positioning Position specific roles Dominating the touch Holding in defence Press and isolate
Game Concepts & Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Basic understanding of rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non verbal communication Subbing Good understanding of rules Positional differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subbing rotations Rule Interpretations Position specific roles Drop offs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of all rules and interpretations Line defence position specific roles Playing with a 5 on field

Positional and Substitution Guidelines

Position and substitution are aspects of the game that should only be taught to children once they have learnt basic game playing skills. The recommended age for introducing the concepts of position and substitution, and for transitioning to more competitive formats, is ten years and above; this allows children time to understand the concepts and reasoning behind why there are different positions on the field and when they should substitute.

Once specialisation takes place, children should be given the opportunity to play in all positions and learn the individual skills of that position. As players grow older and their skills develop, so to do specialised roles of the positions. The positions on a Touch Football field and their general key roles are as follows:

Positions on the field:



*It is important to note that the following list of positional skills is an ideal list and is applicable to older and more experienced participants.

Middle

- Has agility and mobility in defence on the line
- Is a confident and competent communicator with an ability to organise in attack
- An ability to perform the rollball cleanly when defence is shutting down
- Good understanding of running correct lines
- An ability to use good body position and technique to dominate the ruck when attacking or defending (youth)
- Has an ability to throw the long ball
- An ability to create attacking options or initiate attack
- Very high work rate
- An ability to perform the rollball with both left and right hands, as well as defend with both left and right hands
- Must be disciplined to stick to policy in both attack and defence
- An ability to change direction on the spot

Link

- Speed and agility with and without the ball
- High involvement in attack, working off the ball running correct lines and reading the play
- Connects with both the middles and the wings
- Has a good understanding of phase play
- Excellent understanding of line defence with agility to match
- Good level of fitness
- An ability to transition into the middle
- An ability to run from half and possess agility and power
- An ability to perform the rollball with both left and right hands, as well as defend with both left and right hands

Wing

- Confident and competent communication skills with an understanding of the wing position
- Ability to control game on changeovers in both attack and defence
- Excellent knowledge of line defence, knowing when to hit and when to stay out
- Is patient and knows when to involve themselves in attack
- Must be one of the best defenders in the team with an ability to read the game
- Explosive speed with a good change of direction
- An ability to catch the long ball

Physical Growth, Maturation and Adaptation

The development of a child is driven by three distinct processes: growth, maturation, and adaptation. These have important implications for training and competition.

Growth is the increase in overall body size with changes in muscle, bone and fat and this affects motor skills. Growth is complicated because

- different parts of the body grow at different rates
- periods of growth start and stop at different times.

Maturation is the genetically programmed series of changes leading to maturity.

These changes occur in the same sequence in everybody, but there are great individual differences in

- when puberty starts
- how long it takes (it can be 18 months to 5 years)
- how much growth occurs in the adolescent growth spurt.

Adaptation occurs as a result of external rather than genetic factors (e.g. intensive training). The growth spurt in height happens first and is followed by the growth spurt in weight and finally the growth spurt in strength.

Implication for Touch Football

The uneven spread in growth and maturation in young people of the same age makes chronological age of limited value in determining the developmental status of a young person. This creates challenges related to opportunity and training.

Opportunity

Opportunities (e.g. being selected to participate) may not be offered to some young people because of their current developmental status. Therefore sport providers must be aware that late maturing young people may be disadvantaged when competitions are based on chronological age encourage young people despite their current body shape as this may be different later on.

Young people and their parents/carers should focus on personal improvement, and not comparison with others of the same age. The result is more young people having a chance to realise their potential, and an expansion of the talent pool for future success in sport.

Training/Practice

For the most part, training and sport activity is beneficial for the best possible physical growth and development of young people. However, it is important to remember that young people differ from adults in the quality of their tissues and are not able to take the same stresses. Consequently training must be conducted differently for young people particularly if they are specialising and involved in a narrow range of activities.

Injuries do occur on occasions but are usually reversible. There are times during periods of growth when tissues are more vulnerable. For example, it takes considerable time for a bone that has lengthened to become strong, and for the muscles, tendons and ligaments to grow to the new length of the bone.

Section Four - Competition Guidelines

The fourth section of the Junior Development Framework focuses on the volunteers involved in the sport of Touch Football. The information provided in this section is designed to assist volunteers in creating a safe environment for both participants and themselves, setting up and administering junior competitions, as well as continue to develop both the participants, policies and processes within their junior affiliate.

Play by the Rules

'Play by the Rules' is a joint initiative between the Australian Sports Commission, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, all state and territory sport and recreation and anti-discrimination agencies and the Queensland Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian.

Play by the Rules aims to create a safe, fair and inclusive culture across sport by:

- contributing to policy, programs and practice at national, state/territory and local levels
- adopting a behavioural and social change approach to shift knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of all people involved in sport and recreation
- engaging with the media and in social discourse around relevant issues
- developing and promoting evidence-based and content-focused key messages
- building capacity of all people involved in sport to prevent and deal with behaviours that does not promote these values

The information that is provided focuses on the protection of child welfare, creating safe and enjoyable sporting environments and codes of behavior for [participants](#), [coaches](#), [officials](#), [parents](#) and [administrators](#). To view relevant sections of the 'Play by the Rules' website go to playbytherules.net.au and locate the 'Managing Risks' tab at the top of the page.

Management Guidelines for Junior Competition

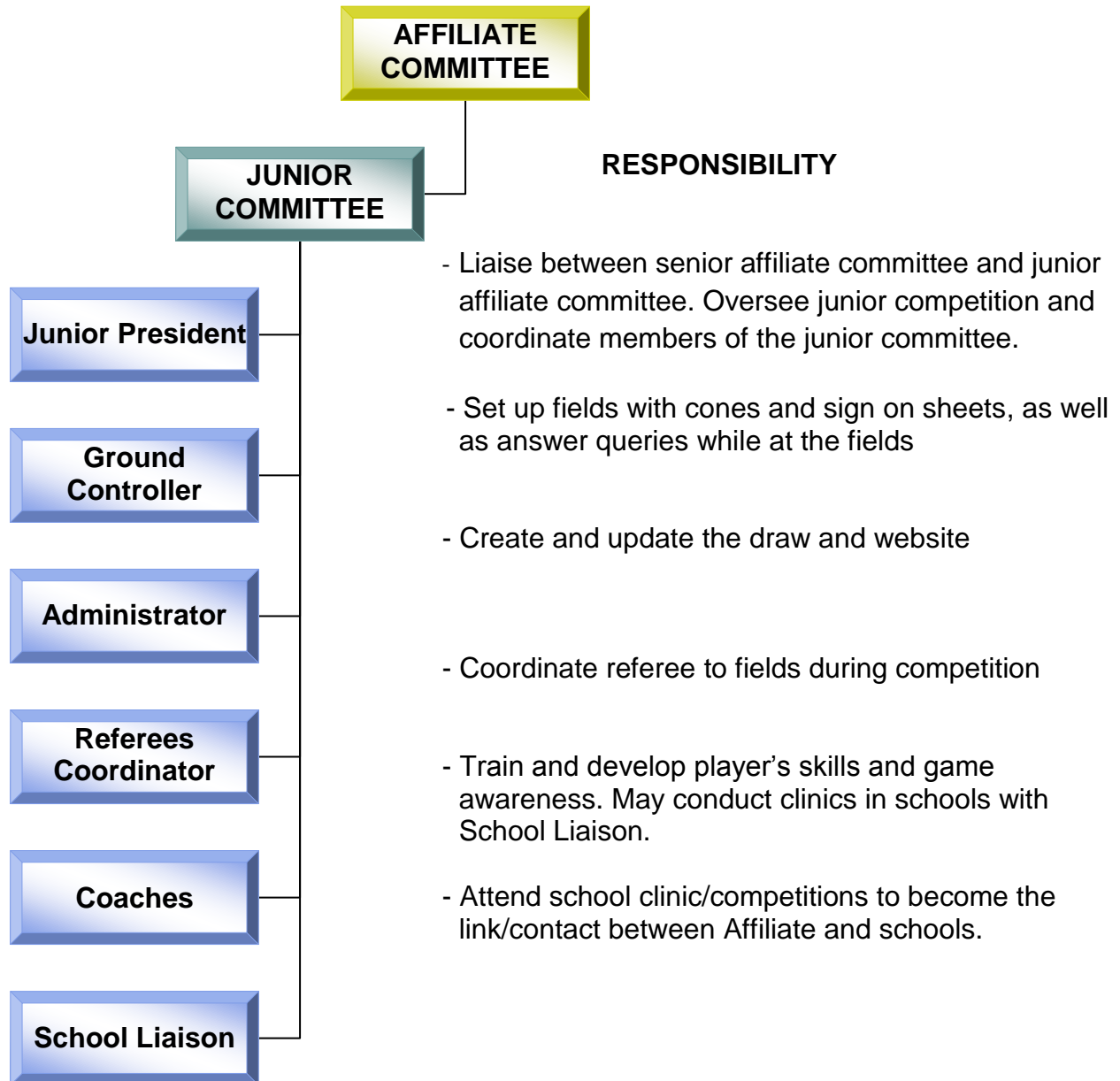
The development and implementation of structured junior competition within every affiliate in Australia is a key objective for Touch Football Australia. The two greatest challenges that are faced by affiliate committees are the ability to recruit new volunteers, and the required knowledge surrounding junior development and child protection. These sticking points can frighten and prohibit committees from attempting to develop junior participation within their affiliate, which in the long run, affects their ability to run the affiliate as a lack of junior development may result in the loss of new participants entering the affiliate.

The aim of the following is to assist affiliates in the thought process, set up, implementation and continued development of either a standalone junior affiliate or a junior competition within a senior affiliate.

Committee Structure

For a junior affiliate to be sustainable, it is essential that a junior committee is put in place to manage the competition in the same way a committee would manage and run a senior affiliate. In instances where a junior competition is operating within a senior affiliate, a junior committee should be set up to sit underneath the senior committee. In this situation, the senior affiliate committee would be responsible for all financial and legal decisions and reporting, while the junior committee would be responsible for the operation and development of the competition.

Below is an example of a junior committee within the affiliate committee structure. It is important to note that this is an example of an ideal committee with a number of volunteers to fill positions on the committee. In situations where volunteer assistance is limited, it is possible for two or three people to combine the roles required to operate a junior competition.



Injury Prevention, Safety and Child Protection Policy Guidelines

Touch Football is a sport that is conducive to junior participation because it promotes active participation and physical fitness for both boys and girls, while providing a sport that is extremely safe as it involves minimal contact and no particular equipment.

To ensure a safe environment for young players, those involved in the delivery of junior touch football need to

- take into account any long or short term medical condition participants may have
- ensure that junior touch fields and equipment are appropriate and safe
- take into account the ways in which the physical and emotional maturity of a child differs from that of an adult
- ensure that participants are properly prepared for their sporting involvement, especially through quality teaching and coaching
- ensure that coaches/teachers have adequate first aid knowledge.

Further information on safety in sport is available from Sports Medicine Australia sma.org.au and their respective state offices.

Physiological Considerations for Junior Sports

Warm up and cool down exercises should accompany all sporting activities. Repetitive training techniques should be avoided, and endurance activities restricted, so that developing bones, joints and muscles are not injured. Children should play in a variety of positions and not over train in particular skills.

i) Body Temperature Regulations

Compared with adults, children have a larger skin surface area to body mass ratio, and their sweat glands are immature, making them more susceptible to heat loss or heat gain. Touch sessions should not, therefore, be of long duration (over 30 minutes) in conditions of extreme temperature (over 30 degrees) and humidity (over 50%).

ii) Fluid Replacement

Children do not instinctively drink enough fluids to replace the amount they lose during activity. Water is essential to fluid replacement. Regular fluid intake before and during training and competition is also an important component of a nutrition program and should also be encouraged.

iii) Nutrition

The nutritional needs of junior sport participants are affected by their level of activity. A balanced diet that provides them with all the essential elements should be encouraged.

iv) Weight Training

Before adolescence, weight training does little to increase muscle size or strength; time and effort may be better spent on lifting technique or skill development. At any level, weight training should only be undertaken with the supervision of a qualified instructor.

v) Stress

Whether children find playing touch stressful depends on the attitudes of parents, coaches, referees, officials and supporters. Adults should not set unrealistic goals but instead should offer support and encouragement.

vi) Drugs and Sport

The drugs most commonly used by (mostly older) children are alcohol and tobacco. Their use affects general health and well-being and sports performance.

Less common but still of concern is the use of performance-enhancing drugs, which some children may use in response to pressures to 'win at all costs'. The ATA anti-doping policy states that doping is forbidden. The ATA condemns the use of performance enhancing substances in sport as both dangerous to health and contrary to the ethics of sport.

Everyone involved in junior touch can help children to develop appropriate attitudes by discussing the issue with them, emphasising participation rather than outcome, and setting a good example. It should be stressed that good training practices and a healthy lifestyle are the factors that most contribute to enhanced sport performance.

vii) Sun exposure

Organisers of Touch competitions and events have a responsibility to protect junior participants to the greatest extent practicable, from the dangers of exposure to the sun.

Participants should be encouraged or obligated to wear hats, protective clothing such as long sleeves and apply 15+ (as a minimum) sunscreen on exposed skin and wear.

Touch organisers should also maximise the provision of shaded areas at venues and events.

viii) Hot and/or humid conditions

Coaches should be aware that children are a high risk group for developing heat illness due to their poorly developed ability to sweat and cool the body. This may result in over heating which is a precursor to heat illness.

When assessing the environmental conditions both the temperature and the humidity need to be considered. The humidity is particularly important as the higher the humidity of the air the less effective sweating is in cooling the body.

In hot or humid conditions:

- Children should be watched closely for signs of heat illness;
- A non-oil based sunscreen should be used where appropriate, as oil based sunscreens can block the skins pores and affect the sweating mechanism;
- Appropriate clothing including hats should be worn at all times where possible
- Clothing should be:
 - light weight
 - light coloured
 - loose fitting
 - made of natural fibre, e.g. cotton or fabrics specifically manufactured for hot conditions such as CoolMax or Dri-Fit
 - adequately ventilated

Adequate fluid should be consumed before, during and after the game to prevent dehydration. A flavoured solution may be more palatable to children and therefore more likely to be used.

Heat Illness

All children should be continually monitored for signs of heat illness when exercising in hot or humid conditions. If there is any suspicion of heat illness, stop the child from participating in the activity and seek medical advice.

In the early stages of heat illness the child may present with any of the following:

- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Headache
- Hot
- Cramps
- Nausea
- Flushed skin
- Fainting
- Excessive sweating

If any of the above indicators are present:

- Remove the child from the field/event;
- Lay the child down in a cool place;
- Give plenty of cool water;
- Cool the child (reduce the body temperature) by placing wet towels
- Over them or sponging the body with cool water.

ix) Exposure to cold conditions

Children are also susceptible to illness in cold climates, in particular thin/lean children because they have a greater body surface to mass ratio from which to lose heat.

Children also have a less developed perception of when they are cold and therefore may continue to exercise when they should actually stop. Coaches should pay particular attention to these factors when children are playing water sports or are subject to wet conditions as the water will enhance the loss of body heat.

In wet or cold conditions:

- Avoid standing exposed for long periods
- Wet clothing should be changed as soon as practicable
- Wear appropriate clothing
- Dress in layers to trap the heat and prevent heat loss
- Add or remove layers of clothing as necessary according to exercise level/conditions
- Jackets with a hood may be worn or removed according to exercise level/conditions
- Clothes with press clips or drawstrings (e.g. waist, arms, neck, etc.) so they can be loosened or tightened as necessary. A drawstring at the neck is not recommended due to the potential risk of choking if the string gets caught on equipment
- Hat and gloves to reduce the amount of heat loss.

Do not train or play outdoors during a thunder storm as there is potential for being struck by lightning.

Medical Consideration

Some children have medical conditions that may affect their participation in physical activity. Particular care should be taken in the case of long-term conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and heart or lung disease). Coaches/teachers should be aware of each child's specific needs and also know how to deal with an emergency.

Medical opinion should be sought when the fitness or performance of any junior touch football participant is questionable, and when recovery from illness or injury is in doubt.

Playing Field, Equipment and Uniforms

Touch Football is a sport that does not require goal posts, nets or on-field equipment which means there is considerably less chance for a participant to injure themselves by running into, falling on or being hit by these objects. The only equipment required to assist in the game are plastic cones to mark the corners and half way points of the field.

Nevertheless, the following measures should be adopted to reduce the risk of field related injury during touch activities

- properly supervise all participants during sessions
- modify rules and field dimensions (as appropriate)
- cancel matches or training where inspection of playing surfaces shows they are unsuitable or unsafe for play.

Wearing Glasses

Players and Referees are permitted to wear glasses or sunglasses while competing in Touch Football events. The minimum recommendation is that the glasses be fixed on so they can't fall off, usually with some form of elastic going around the back of the head.

Touch Football Shoes/Boots

Touch Football shoes/boots may be worn in all games and trainings, but must comply with Rule Three (3), Point Three (3) of the Touch Football Australia Playing Rules – 7th Edition. *“Shoes with screw-in studs or cleats are not to be worn by any player. Light leather or synthetic boots with soft moulded soles are permitted, provided individual studs are no longer than thirteen millimetres (13 mm) in length; the measurement being taken from the sole of the boot.”*

Jewellery

For the safety of all those participating, all Jewellery is required to be removed or taped over prior to taking the fields. This includes watches, bracelets, rings, earrings, neck chains, body studs or other items of jewellery.

Medical alert bracelets or necklaces are not considered jewellery but if worn, they must be taped to the body. Silicon wristbands must also be removed before taking the field.

Fingernails may need to be trimmed or taped.

Other Items

Players are NOT permitted, under any circumstances, to play either with their arm in a cast, be it made of plaster, fibreglass or any other material, or with fingers in splints, or have any covering which may be dangerous to another player.

Child Protection Policy

In the sporting environment, parents place a considerable amount of trust in the officials and volunteers who coach and referee their children. Child protection policy and legislation has received considerable focus in recent times and the requirement for sporting clubs and associations to comply can be quite daunting. It is important for committees to realise that these policies are designed to protect not only the children who are participating, but also coaches, referees, volunteers and even committee members.

As a component of the [Member Protection Policy](#), Touch Football Australia has incorporated information relating to child protection and requirements regarding the screening processes for all people who work with children within the Touch Football community.

All affiliates and competitions involving participants less than 18 years of age are obliged to take these steps to minimise the exposure of risk to children participating in activities in which the organisation is involved. Affiliates and associated competitions **must** comply with the following steps to ensure that they and the children involved in activities conducted by them are protected.

To access the TFA Member Protection Policy visit austouch.com.au, locate 'Our Sport' within the 'Play Touch Football' tab at the top left hand side of the page, and select 'Rules and Policies'.