



FFA Player Pathways – Girls



A guide to the development pathways available to female football players in Australia.

Introduction

The FFA player pathways for girls has been put together to support the development of all potentially talented players throughout their football journey. The pathways for young players to reach their potential can vary immensely and as such there is not just one way to achieving national team selection. Many factors can influence a player's journey including social, emotional, psychological, physiological and technical/tactical. The Australian football player pathways displays the various support programs that are in place for girls to access in helping them reach their potential.

The Australian Football Player Pathways – Girls



What is the Skill Acquisition Phase?

9-12 years of age is the golden age of learning technique which FFA call the Skill Acquisition Phase (SAP).

The focus at this age is on the development of game related functional skills.

What is the purpose of a Skill Acquisition Phase program?

As this is the golden age of motor learning, it is important to give players aged 9 to 12 years access to good quality training environments close to home, which focus on the development of game related functional skills. These are the technical skills a player needs to perform effectively during a match. Training at this age should be FUN and focus on the 4 core skills in both attack and defence. The 4 core skills are:

- First Touch
- Striking the ball
- Running with the ball
- 1 vs 1

What can players expect to receive in a SAP program?

SAP programs can run either as a full time program or as a part time program.

Full time programs involve training 2 or 3 sessions per week and a match on the weekend against other SAP programs.

Part time programs provide 1 or 2 additional training sessions per week on top of the ALDI MiniRoos session(s). Players play for their ALDI MiniRoos team on the weekend in their community football competition. Both full time and part time programs run for 40 weeks of the year.

Who organises SAP programs?

Member Federations (MF) accredit clubs and associations with a SAP licence.

In order to obtain a SAP licence, clubs must reach a minimum criteria set out by the MF in consultation with FFA.

This ensures the program is delivered by qualified coaches following the FFA National Football Curriculum and Skill Acquisition GIG Methodology.

Who can attend a SAP program?

Any player aged 9, 10, 11 or 12 who has a passion to play football can access part time programs where they are available.

Full time programs often involve a selection process by the clubs providing the program. For more details contact your local Member Federation.

Do girls play with boys in a SAP program?

There are a number of options available for girls at this age. Girls who choose to play just with other girls can access Girls SAP. For girls who prefer to play with boys at this age, they can access a mixed SAP program which is often just referred to as SAP.

What is a National Training Centre?

A National Training Centre (NTC) is a centralised full time football program for girls aged 14 to 17 in most capital cities across Australia.

What is the purpose of a National Training Centre?

The purpose of the NTC is to provide potentially talented players access to a quality training environment and exposure through the National Youth Championship and NTC Challenge with the view of identification into Junior Matildas and Young Matildas camps.

Who organises a National Training Centre?

The NTC is a full-time program run by the Member Federation with guidance and support from FFA Technical Department. Member Federations facilitate the organisation of the NTC and appoint appropriately qualified coaches for each age group. Each NTC has a Head Coach who works with the MF Technical Director to administer the program and provides players, parents and coaches with all the necessary information relating to the NTC including trials, training times and venues, and competitions.

What can players expect to receive at a National Training Centre?

Players selected into a NTC environment train 4 sessions per week and the overall program runs for a minimum of 40 weeks of the year. NTC is a holistic approach to player development focusing on individual and team playing principles as well as injury prevention and management, nutrition, strength and conditioning.

Do players selected in a NTC play games?

Players selected in a NTC play in the Women's Premier League competition in their Member Federation in an age group higher than their age. These players may also participate in a week-long event against NTC programs from across Australia at the National Youth Championship (NYC) in Coffs Harbour for U14 and U15 year old girls or at the NTC Challenge at the AIS, Canberra for U17 year old girls.

What is a Talent Support Program?

Talent Support Programs (TSP) exist across regional and metropolitan areas to give identified players access to additional training to supplement their club training.

What is the purpose of a Talent Support Program?

The purpose of TSPs is to provide potentially talented players aged 13 to 16, who are not part of an NTC program, access to a quality training environment which complements their club training.

Who organises a Talent Support Program?

TSPs are run by the Member Federation with guidance and support from FFA Technical Department. Member Federations facilitate the organisation of the TSP and appoint appropriately qualified coaches for each age group.

What can players expect to receive at a Talent Support Program?

Players receive 1 or 2 training sessions per week in addition to their club training, focusing on individual and team playing principles. These training sessions are organised at a time that club training is not scheduled so that players can combine both. A TSP training session can be replaced by a match.

How do players access a Talent Support Program?

Players are identified throughout the year by a network of Talent scouts observing community and WNPL matches; coaches and Technical Directors from clubs can also nominate players to be considered for a TSP. Players should attend their closest TSP to minimise travel time.

Are matches played as part of a Talent Support Program?

Matches between TSP hubs are played at regular intervals. These matches are played at a time that a training session would normally occur. Staff from MF and FFA technical departments, as well as National Team Unit staff (where possible) observe TSP matches.

What is the Future Matildas Program?

The Future Matildas Program (FMP) is a full time program for players aged 17 to 20 who have the potential to become Matildas.

What is the purpose of the Future Matildas Program?

The FMP is a full-time program based in Sydney to give the most potentially talented players aged 17 to 20 a high-quality football training environment outside of the W-League season.

What can players expect to receive at the Future Matildas Program?

Players receive support in all facets of their football development from National Team staff and NSW Institute of Sport, including high performance services in areas of medical and sport science, training facilities and equipment.

How do players access the Future Matildas Program?

Players aged 17 to 20 who have been identified by National Team staff as having the potential to be international players in the future can be invited into the program.

Do the Future Matildas Program players play matches?

Yes, the FMP play regular matches each week against boys NPL teams or other quality opposition.



What is a High Performance Football School?

A FFA High Performance Football School (HPFS) runs a holistic football program for identified potentially talented players in academic years 9 to 12.

What is the purpose of a High Performance Football School?

The purpose of HPFS is to provide potentially talented players aged 14 to 18, who have been identified as potential national team players, with additional training to support them in reaching their football potential. The HPFS supplements the development undertaken at clubs and NTC programs.

What can players expect to receive at a High Performance Football School?

Players invited into a HPFS receive 4 training sessions per week during the school day conducted by highly qualified coaches and have regular contact with Junior Matildas and Young Matildas coaching staff. They also have access to strength and conditioning, injury prevention programs, sports science, nutrition, match analysis and sport psychology. Player individual training loads are carefully monitored to ensure they can perform at their best.

How do players access a High Performance Football School?

Players are identified at National Youth Championships and National Training Centre Challenge by MF and FFA Technical Study Group members and invited to be part of the HPFS.

Do players invited to a High Performance Football School have to change schools to be involved in the program?

Yes, players invited to be part of a HPFS would be required to change schools if they wish to be part of the program.

Where are High Performance Football Schools located?

Currently there are three HPFS:

- Westfields Sports High School in Sydney, NSW
- Maribyrnong Sports Academy in Melbourne, Victoria
- John Curtin College of the Arts in Perth, Western Australia.





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