



# FFA Player Pathways – Boys

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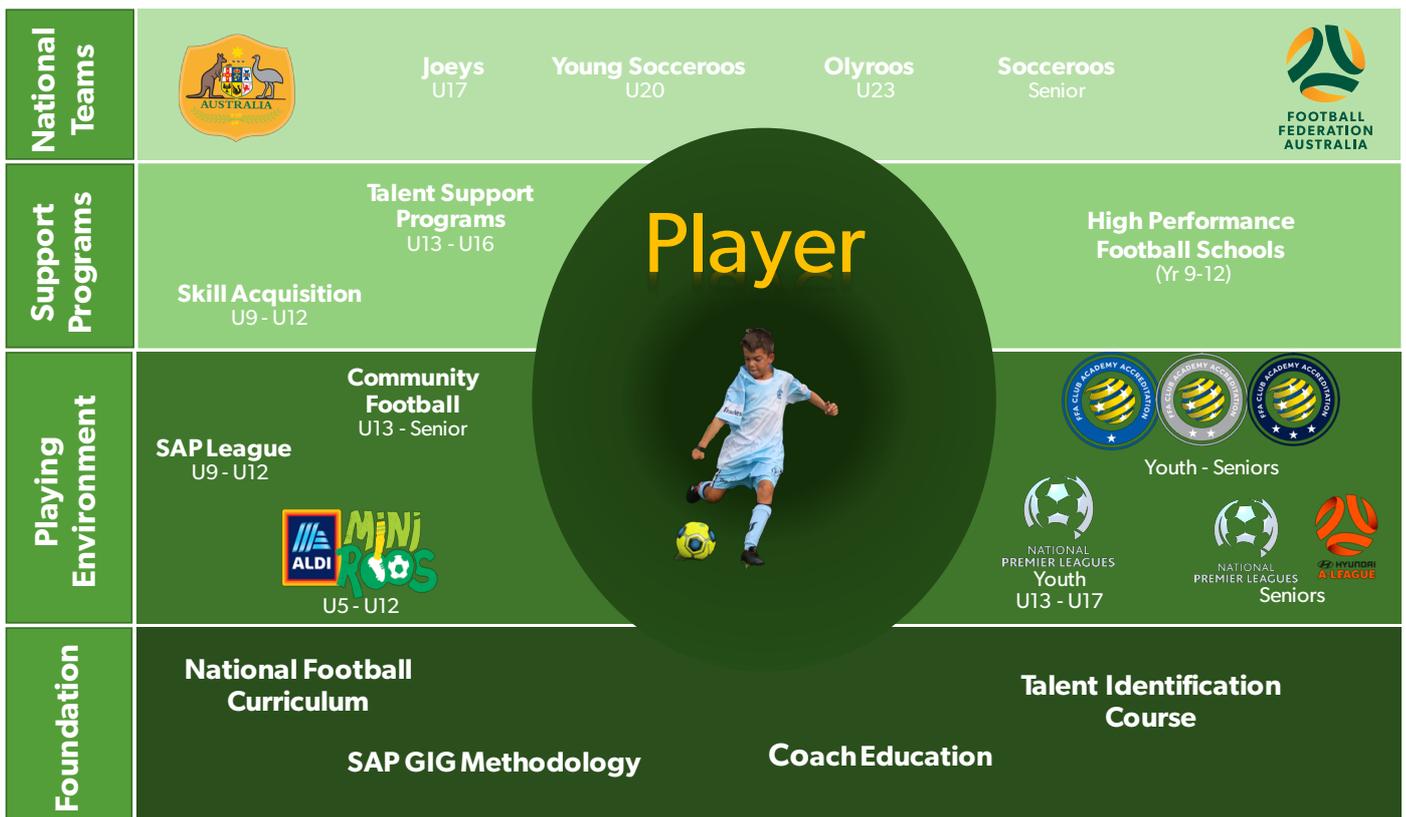


**A guide to the development pathways  
available to male football players in Australia.**

## Introduction

The FFA player pathways for boys 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 boys to access in helping them reach their potential.

## The Australian Football Player Pathways – Boys



## 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.

## What are FFA Accredited Club Academies?

FFA Accredited Club Academies are clubs who have an established youth development program that meet best practice criteria as specified by FFA and the Asian Football Confederation.

### What is the purpose of FFA Accredited Club Academies?

The purpose of the FFA Accredited Club Academies is to develop generations of better football players for the future. Receiving 1 or 2 Star accreditation recognises the club as having a high quality player development pathway in place.

### What can players expect to receive at a FFA Accredited Club Academy?

Players will receive 3 to 4 training sessions per week and a match with qualified coaches in an environment that is conducive to football development and growth. FFA Accredited Club Academies run for a minimum of 40 weeks per year.

### How do players access a FFA Accredited Club Academy?

Access to FFA Accredited Club Academies is gained through a trial process.

### Do the FFA Accredited Club Academies play matches?

Yes, FFA Accredited Club Academies play in the National Premier Leagues in both youth and senior competitions.

### Why are FFA Accredited Academies given 1, 2 or 3 stars?

The star accreditation reflects where the club is in terms of its individual growth and infrastructure.



## 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 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 NPL 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 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 National Team 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 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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