

Introduction to the AFL New Zealand Youth competition weekly handout

Welcome to the AFL New Zealand Youth Competition. It is exciting to have you take part in the 2016 Competition!

The Youth Competition is an “athlete first” competition and we aim to ensure that the focus is on the development of those taking part.

To reduce the time commitment needed to play in the Youth Competition, for both the players and their families, we will be utilising a weekly handout to pass on information as well as provide instruction on how to continue developing your AFL skills outside of Sundays in the competition.

The aim of the Youth Competition is to provide a fun and exciting environment in which to experience AFL and develop across 4 areas:

- AFL Skill Acquisition
- AFL Game Sense
- AFL Fitness and Conditioning
- Player Personal Development

The handouts each week will cover all of the above areas.

Overseeing the AFL New Zealand Youth Programme is the AFL New Zealand Youth and Talent ID Manager Mick Coultard.

During the season if you have any questions Mick is your best contact point. His contact details are as follows:

Email: mick.coultard@aflnz.co.nz

Phone: 027 205 0054

We also have a group of coaches and management staff in each region who are giving up their time to aid in your development. Please appreciate the work they do, but also, make the most of them! Take on board what they say, ask questions so that they can help you.

RULE OF THE WEEK:

Scoring and Restarting after Scoring

Goal

A goal (6 points) is kicked when the ball is kicked completely over the goal line (between the two goal posts) by an attacking player, without being touched by another player irrespective of it touching the ground before crossing the line. A kick is defined as the ball making contact below the knee.

Once a goal has been kicked the ball restarts in the centre circle with a ruck (the same as the start of the game and start after quarter/half-time breaks)

Behind

A Behind (1 point) is scored when:

- The football touches the goal post (one of the two big posts). This includes padding or anything attached to the post
- The football completely crosses over the behind line between a behind post (the little post) and a goal post.
- If the ball is kicked over the goal line but it touches another player on the way through
- If a defender Kicks/handballs/knocks or otherwise takes the football over the goal line/through the goal posts
- If the attacking player gets the ball over the goal line/through the goal posts in a way other than being kicked (i.e. run over/hand balled through)
- If a defending Player “Plays On” from behind the Goal Line or Behind Line and, in doing so, moves off the direct line between them self and the Player standing the mark.

After a Behind is scored play restarts with the defending team “kicking out” from within their “goal square” – the square in front of the goal posts. The defender must not step on the line or outside the square before kicking or else it is a “ball up” on the edge of the goal square. If wanting to run the ball out of the square, a player must kick it to his/herself before they leave the square.

SKILL OF THE WEEK:

Clean Hands and Handball

Picking up the ball clean and making an “effective” handball (a handball that reaches its intended target) are skills that can play an important role in determining which team

- Clean Hands:
 - Use 2 hands to pick up the ball
 - Attack the ball – meet the ball rather than waiting for it.
 - Get low (bend at the knees)
 - Maintain your momentum – don’t stop at the ball, move through it
 - Palms facing up and get under the ball

A good analogy to think about when trying to pick up the ball is to “chase the chickens.” Imagine you are trying to catch chickens and how you would get low to the ground to do so!

Clean hands drills in small groups

Ground ball Pick up in a triangle.

- Players in 3.
 - Roll the ball out to one who then picks up and handballs to the next person
 - 1 -2 balls per group
 - Focus on getting body-line right.
 - Player receiving must get in the right position to receive the handball
- Handball
 - Cradle the ball in the bottom hand
 - Make a tight fist with punching hand (thumb on outside)
 - Bend the elbow of the punching hand
 - Make contact just below the “x” of the ball
 - Catch your fist after you make contact with the ball

- Move towards your target

Find tips and drills to help with the handball here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=48&v=MWeHdGS-MiY

Handball drills in small groups.

Handball triangle

3 players set up in triangle.

One person at the “head of the triangle”

2 other players take turns handballing to the “head of the triangle”

(2 to 3 balls in each group)

THE POSITIONS OF AFL – DEFENDERS:

Marking Backs – Marking backs are typically bigger bodied players and will defend the Marking forwards of the opposition. They need to be strong in the contest one on one, making use of good body position and the spoil. The Marking Backs can be dangerous if they have the ability to out-mark their opponent and run and carry to quickly turn from defending to attacking. Playing out of defence relies on them being able to follow the team plan and be accurate with their kicking to the midfield.

Roving Backs – Roving Backs are typically smaller and quicker than the marking defenders, looking to get to the contest and clear the ball away from the danger area in front of goal. They have to be able to stay with their player when the opposition has the ball or the ball is being contested, but also be able to run and carry the ball when there is a turnover. Roving backs who can turn defence into offence are major assets to an AFL side.



Josh Gibson - Hawthorn Hawks



Shane Savage - St Kilda Saints



FITNESS AND CONDITIONING:

AFL New Zealand has partnered with 2 Strength and Conditioning groups to provide our Youth Girls and Youth Boys with expert advice on age and developmental appropriate conditioning.

James De Lacey and Daniel Ball from Dime Performance will be assisting with the Youth Girls

H2 Performance's Michael Halliday and Jeremy Houghton will be working with the Youth Boys across both age groups

Each week they U17 Youth Boys, U14 Youth Boys and Youth Girls will receive a separate handout listing possible conditioning sessions they can run during the week.

Here is a little bit of background of the fitness requirements for AFL players and different demands for Youth Athletes:

AFL is a very physically demanding game with players covering approximately 15000m per game. Not only is this a large distance to cover in the time given but this is done with constant changing between speeds and states such as jogging to full sprint. On top of this physical demand is the psychological demand of completing technical and tactical skills in an attempt to win the game. The importance of developing both technically proficient players, as well as physically dominant athletes is paramount for the success of AFL New Zealand.

YOUTH ATHLETES:

“You cannot train young athletes like adults.” This quote echoes across the world in sport science circles and is really important in ensuring proper physical development and not burning young athletes out. A pre-teen or a teenager has a different body to adults in its size, its strength and its changes due to growth. Add on top of that the social, emotional and mental changes that are occurring and we have to be very careful and strict in our development of young athletes.

NUTRITION:

Jacinta Lal, nutritionist, has jumped on board with AFL New Zealand and provided her expert advice on how you can get the most out of your eating. Throughout the season you will be provided with documentation on

- Eating for Performance
- Pre-match nutrition
- Post-match nutrition
- During-match nutrition
- Hydration