CLUB COACHING COORDINATOR HANDBOOK

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Includes excerpts from the **AFL Club Management Program**:
Planning for Football Clubs
Volunteer Management for Football Clubs
Junior Development for Football Clubs

Project Management: Lawrie Woodman

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INTRODUCTION

Coaches have been identified as key influences in providing a positive club culture. Coaches greatly influence club culture and also have a significant impact on the lives of individuals within the club, especially the players.

Australian Football coaches are accredited through a sound educational structure within the Australian Football League's National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) recognised by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). There is a growing need to support these accredited coaches in the multi-faceted role they play in the club/school football environment. The concept of a Club Coaching Director or Coordinator within each club is a means by which this support can be offered and delivered.

The role of the Club Coaching Director/Coordinator (referred to as Club Coaching Coordinator throughout this Handbook) is a pivotal one in the football club's environment

The Club Coaching Coordinator can support and oversee the growth and development of individual coaches and hence enhance overall effectiveness. This would facilitate the enjoyment of not only the coaches but all players and officials.

Success of the appointment of a Club Coaching Coordinator can only be measured by the roles and the responsibilities that are afforded to the coach in a particular coaching environment. These roles and responsibilities are varied and all-encompassing, and each club/school that accepts the invitation and appoints a Coaching Coordinator will clearly define the role they expect of the individual they appoint. This could range from a coaching director role, with full responsibility for directing the club's overall coaching program, including directing and developing the coaches, a coaching coordinator, who assists the club and the coaches with the administrative functions around coaching, or simply a practice coordinator assisting coaches with their practice organisation and possibly on match-day.

In general the role focuses on assisting, supporting and continually developing club/school coaches and their support staff. They can also act as a liaison between schools, the club committee, local league and other football stakeholders including the regional AFL Development staff.

Coaches play an important part in the development of players, and should also be developed themselves. Quality coaching gets the best out of all players and a quality coach will do this by constantly seeking to learn, improve and challenge themselves.

The Club Coaching Coordinator Handbook has been produced to assist the Club Coaching Coordinator in performing that role within the context of the club/school situation. We trust that it meets a need and is seen as a continuously developing document. If there is additional information you believe should be included in a revision of this handbook, please submit ideas and feedback to the AFL Coaching Development Manager.

> *".... of how a handful of seeds cast to the wind can make a majestic forest. We must sow seeds before we can reap the harvest and the more seeds we sow that fall on fertile ground the more we have the opportunity to reap. Often by giving a little more of precious time to nurture the planted seed we can reap rewards we never thought possible"*
>
> ***Laurie Lawrence***
> Australian Swimming Coach

RUNNER
VIC METRO

THE ROLE OF THE CLUB COACHING COORDINATOR

The various roles that a Club Coaching Coordinator might play in the club/school is segmented into three areas: administrative, educative and other potential duties. The first two are seen as mandatory requirements and the final segment, as the name suggests, is a list of potential duties which will further enhance the role given time available and other priorities.

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Assist the club/school in the planning process specifically related to the coaching portfolio.
- Assist the club committee in the appointment process of coaches and other volunteers.
- Develop a club coaching handbook, including the purpose/mission statement, codes of conduct, policies and procedures.
- Conduct club coaching meetings to cover areas of support, coach development and evaluation.
- Nominate suitable coaches for relevant coach of the year awards.
- Maintain accurate records of accreditation status of coaches.
- Assist coaches with their re-accreditation needs and processes.

EDUCATIVE

- Assist coaches to develop and constantly review their coaching philosophy.
- Develop a positive club coaching culture.
- Ensure the coaches have access to and complete AFL Level 1 or Level 2 coach accreditation requirements.
- Provide necessary and up-to-date information and technical knowledge on current coaching trends and practices to all coaches.
- Evaluate coaching performance at training/match-day.
- Develop a support/mentoring program at the club.
- Promote and apply a sequential Australian Football curriculum for all age groups in line with the AFL's Stages of Development.

POTENTIAL

- Develop and implement coaching profiles for succession planning.
- Investigate insurance cover for coaches and other related risk management issues.
- Develop links with primary and secondary schools.
- Arrange the conduct of an Introduction to Coaching Course at the club for assistant coaches/parents/volunteers.
- Use expertise to work with groups of players across age groups and utilise outside resources.
- Promote online learning opportunities.

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STATE TEAM

ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PRACTICE THE ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE

In each of the three defined role areas, there is a body of information that will provide structure to the role (content). This is followed by some suggestions that the Club Coaching Coordinator might take in approaching that role area – see AN APPROACH

1. Assist the club/school in the planning process specifically related to the coaching portfolio.

The AFL Club Management Program: Planning for Football Clubs on page 9 recommends 10 stages in the planning process:

STAGE 1	**Snapshot of the club**
STAGE 2	**Develop a purpose statement**
STAGE 3	**Build guiding principles**
STAGE 4	**Set goals**
STAGE 5	**Develop strategies/actions**
STAGE 6	**Establish key performance indicators**
STAGE 7	**Identify responsibilities, timelines and financial resources**
STAGE 8	**Write the plan**
STAGE 9	**Implement/monitor the plan**
STAGE 10	**Review**

> *Planning refers to the process of identifying goals or objectives and developing ways of achieving them. The Club Coaching Coordinator, along with the president and other significant members of the club/school, has a significant role to play in this planning process relating to club coaching structures. This planning process is a good exercise for every club, as a club which plans for the future is a club which plans to not only survive but continue to grow and prosper.*

The AFL Club Management Program: Planning for Football Clubs document clearly outlines in greater detail the processes involved at each stage. This *Club Coaching Coordinator Handbook* will highlight three stages in this planning process (the quotes included below are taken from the *AFL Club Management Program* resources):

1. Develop a purpose statement

A purpose or mission statement is a "clear, concise statement about what the club sees as its fundamental purpose." It is also important to include in this statement the manner in which it might achieve its purpose.

It is important for the club to articulate its purpose rather than just accepting the fact that the club has always been around in the competition and will roll along in the future. The purpose statement certainly provides a sense of direction for the club.

"The purpose statement answers the following questions:

- What is the organisation? (Its nature)
- What does it do? (Its products/services)
- Who does it serve? (Its customers)
- Why does it exist? (Its purpose)
- How does it do it? (The manner of achieving its purpose)"

An example of a mission statement:

Wangaratta Hill is a dynamic football club (the organisation/nature) which provides opportunities for players of all ages and abilities (its products/service/customers) to learn Australian Football skills, enabling all players to fulfil their potential and become better people (purpose) through quality coaching and club values in a safe, enjoyable coaching environment (the manner)

2. Build guiding principles

"During this stage, your club needs to reflect not only on why it exists but also on what it intends to do and achieve. The guiding principles tell the club administration and members where the focus and energies are best directed over the coming season or year. They underpin the club and reflect its core values."

An example of some of the guiding principles is supplied by the Beaumaris Junior Football Club in 2004 and provided here:

"Beaumaris Junior Football Club

- We recognise the BJFC is a significant part of the Beaumaris Football Club and acknowledge the need to integrate our standards and objectives into the senior club and vice versa.
- We foster an environment of fun and enjoyment for players, coaches, officials, parents and supporters by always encouraging and applauding the efforts of all players, coaches and officials; and never ridiculing mistakes or losses.
- We encourage an atmosphere of learning and skill development for players and coaches; therefore we insist all coaching staff must have a minimum Level 1 coaching accreditation. The BJFC financially facilitates this. We also aim to ensure coaches are supplied with the latest teaching aids and equipment.
- We believe in player rotation both on and off the field to ensure all players are given every chance to not only participate, but experience different positions over the course of the season. The BJFC strongly believes winning isn't everything at this level, but recognises competition is healthy for player development and team morale.
- We promote a positive, friendly, vibrant image and strongly support the concept of teamwork both on and off the field. We encourage and welcome parent and supporter involvement at both team and club level.
- We recognise the need to maintain a safe environment for the players."

3. Establish key performance indicators

To measure the goals of the club and assist coaches in developing their effectiveness, key performance indicators need to be established. In order for the key performance indicators to be useful, they must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely – the SMART model.

In particular, the Club Coaching Coordinator should assist individual coaches to determine what these key performance indicators might look like in terms of a number of areas in the coaching process. These areas might include teaching, skill improvement of players, developing relationships with other coaches, players, parents, administrators, communication, technical coaching knowledge, coach match-day performance, reviewing match-day performance of team, self-evaluation, self-development, duty of care issues and creativity. As suggested in *The AFL Club Management Program: Planning for Football Clubs,* the coach in consultation with the Club Coaching Coordinator would write goals, strategies and key performance indicators in any selected area from the list above.

AN APPROACH

It is recommended that the planning process occurs between seasons. Significant members of the club representing a cross section of the stakeholders might be responsible for the development of this planning process. Specifically the coaching portfolio component should be developed by a group chaired by either the club president or by the Club Coaching Coordinator and should be held in sufficient time to be instituted for the coming season.

Adequate details for this planning are found in the document: AFL Club Management Program: Planning for Football Clubs.

2. Assist the club committee in the appointment process of coaches and other volunteers

Many coaches and officials will be volunteers and hence the *AFL Club Community Program: Volunteer Management for Football Clubs* will be a useful resource. In clubs where coaches and other staff might receive remuneration, the principles discussed here will also apply to the process of their appointment.

1. The process of selecting and screening coaches/volunteers

Irrespective of whether the person is known to the club or not, there are some essential procedures that should be undertaken before the

appointment is made either as a coach or as a volunteer in another area. Writing position descriptions, advertising for the appropriate person, meeting with the potential coach/volunteer, screening potential coaches/volunteers and reference checks are significant features of the appointment process.

Developing a policy for the selection of appropriately qualified coaches and volunteers in alignment with the purpose statement and the club coaching trademark is of paramount importance.

For the appointment of coaches, the interview is an important time to not only find out more about the applicant but provide them with some background knowledge on your club and its purpose and its coaching trademark.

Before interviews start, it is important for your club to create role descriptions and form an understanding of the type of coaches you are looking to attract. The interview should be used as a chance to assess the candidates' personal coaching philosophies, knowledge and understanding of the game, people management and organisational skills, and their ability to inspire and motivate players.

Some specific coach interview questions for potential coaches for different age and development groups follow.

COACH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

U/8-U/12 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Experience

What is your previous coaching experience, in particular, with this age group?

Philosophy

1. What do you see as the most important reason children want to play football?
2. What elements of the game do you believe you can develop in the players at this age group?
3. How important is winning to you? Why?
4. What are your thoughts on modified rules for children this age?
5. What are your thoughts on a selection policy for finals matches?

Role Modeling

6. A player in your team has abused a teammate. As a coach, what would you do?
   OR
7. A player in your team has abused an umpire and then his parents continue to vocalise their discontent at the umpire(s). As a coach, what would you do?
8. How should you present yourself and act at training/game-day?
9. What do you see as your responsibilities as a coach of 9/10/11-year-olds?

Player Management

10. Do you have a solution on how you can make every player's involvement at training enjoyable and beneficial?
11. How would you manage players playing time and playing experience throughout the year?
12. What resources could you use to assist you in your role?
13. What policy would you implement to allow all players to have equal opportunity to display their skills?

Skill Knowledge and Development

14. Explain to the panel how you would introduce or teach kicking to players in your team?
15. You have 10 footballs and 10 cones in your coaching kit. You are in charge of 30 players. How would you conduct training to maximise all equipment and player involvement?
16. What needs do you see the club being able to fulfil to assist you in your coaching?
17. Are there any other questions or queries you (the coach) have of the panel?

U/13-U/15 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Experience

What is your previous coaching experience, in particular, with this age group?

Philosophy

1. What do you see as the most important reason teenagers want to play football at this football club?
2. What elements of the game do you believe you can develop in the players at this age group?
3. Do you believe in "tagging"? Why?
4. What are your thoughts on the importance of tactics and introducing them to this age group?

Role Modeling

5. A player in your team has abused a teammate/umpire. As a coach, what would you do?
6. How should you present yourself and act at training/game-day?
7. Do you have any ideas on how to reduce or eliminate "ugly parent" behaviour?
8. Do you have a role in this?

Player Management

9. What are your thoughts on rotating players in different positions and ground/game-time with this age group?
10. How would you communicate and implement your game-plan to your players so that all could understand it?
11. What resources could you use to assist you in your role?
12. What is your opinion on player "burn-out" – both physical and psychological?

Skill Knowledge and Development

13. Explain to the panel how you would improve the "tackling" ability of the "less-physical" players in your team?
14. You have 10 footballs and 10 cones in your coaching kit. You are in charge of 30 players. How would you conduct training to maximise all equipment and player involvement?
15. What needs do you see the club being able to fulfil to assist you in your coaching?
16. Are there any other questions or queries you (the coach) have of the panel?

> *Clubs can work towards retaining coaches by addressing these issues and any other issues raised. However, coaches will still leave for various reasons and your club needs to be prepared for change.*

U/16-U/18 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Experience

Why do you want to coach this team and how is your coaching experience relevant to coaching the team?

Philosophy

1. What style of play would you aim for in coaching this team?
2. Which activities would you use to assist players with game-paced skills and decision-making?
3. What do you perceive to be the success indicators of a youth coach?
4. Briefly describe some of the match strategies you will use to maximise the performance of the team and the development of the players?
5. What is your overall role as the coach of the youth team?
6. What are your thoughts on coaches using "run withs", "taggers", extra players in the backline, flooding the opposition forward line?

Player Management

7. What processes will you put in place to keep players and parents "in the picture"?
8. How would you utilise the support staff?
9. Do you believe youth players have characteristics and circumstances that require special communication and attention at this age group?
10. Explain how you have kept up to date with coaching methodologies and tactics?
11. How would you combat a 3-4-5 zone on your team's kick-outs?
12. If one of your players is consistently "hooking the ball" when kicking, what do you believe needs to be done to reduce this?

Role Modeling

13. A player in your team has abused a teammate/umpire. As a coach, what would you do?
14. How should you present yourself and act at training/game-day?
15. What needs do you see the club being able to fulfil to assist you in your coaching?
16. Are there any other questions or queries you (the coach) have of the panel?

2. Identify the need for succession planning

In *The AFL Club Community Program: Volunteer Management for Football Clubs* document it is stated that "it is normal for there to be some turnover of jobs from year to year – and it's healthy too. But high turnover rates can be a problem. They can stop clubs from planning effectively, can interrupt progress and can put people under unnecessary pressure. Volunteers can leave for a number of reasons, many of which seem to be related to the nature of the organisation and the volunteer work itself. Research has shown that volunteers leave because of:

- Poor training
- Bureaucratic rules
- Heavy workloads
- Feeling obligated
- Poor management

Clubs can work towards retaining coaches by addressing these issues and any other issues raised. However, coaches will still leave for various reasons and your club needs to be prepared for change.

A succession plan refers to the process of building a long-term future for the club. It enables any new people to take on roles without having to start from scratch again. When someone leaves a club, a succession plan ensures that all the club information doesn't leave with them. Succession planning is as much about documenting procedures as it is about identifying potential leaders, including coaches, within the club who are prepared to take on the coaching positions.

Clubs who can plan towards smooth transitions of coaching positions are less likely to experience disruptions to their day-to-day operations, and as a result are better positioned to replace coaches who leave the club.

A good succession plan includes:

- A football plan – This does not have to be lengthy. It is a working document outlining the club's priorities and should be consulted regularly throughout the year.
- Job descriptions – If the club has a set of job descriptions, and a clear list of jobs required around the club, it is on the way to a good succession plan. The club's coaches are integral to this.
- Coaching policies and procedures – This outlines the day-to-day coaching tasks at the club and who is responsible for carrying them out. It will also contain policies about selection processes, health and safety issues and volunteer management.
- Education and development opportunities – Not only do these increase job satisfaction, but they broaden the range of skills of each coach. This means that if someone suddenly leaves, you are more likely to have someone else ready to step into the vacant job."

The position of coach is of pivotal importance and should be filled by only the most suitable person. The preferred option is to retain the incumbent coach for continuity, however, succession planning is crucial. It is a process whereby future coaches are identified and mentored. There is a point of view that coaching positions are rotated to enable all potential coaches the opportunity of fulfilling that role. Discussion around this point of view within the club will establish a club policy on rotation of coaches or not.

AN APPROACH

The following approach could be used when recruiting coaches:

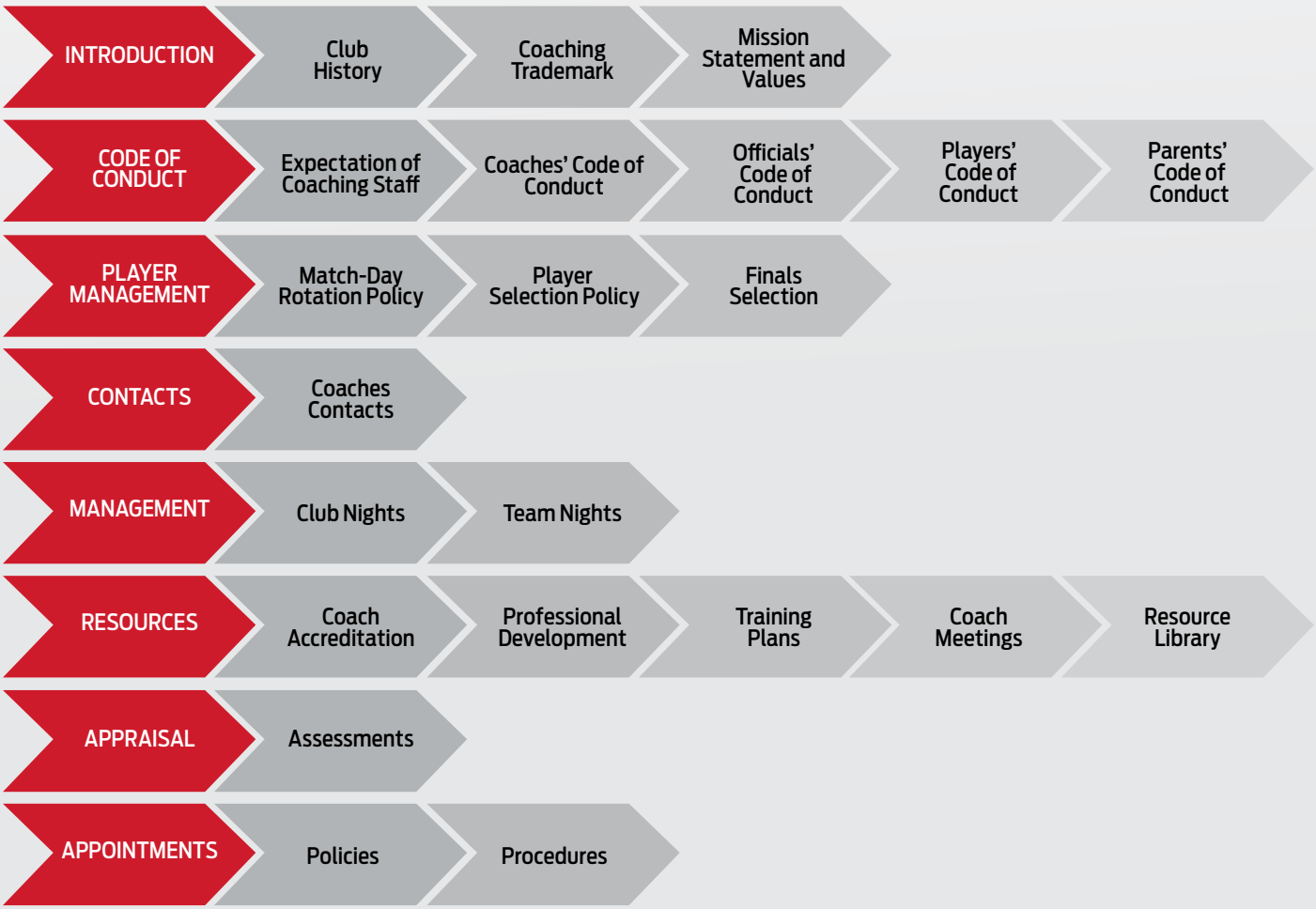
1. *Revisit the club's purpose statement.*
2. *Identify the skills, qualities and attributes that will be required of potential coaches and the requirements for each coaching position.*
3. *Determine the nature of the coaching philosophy and the competencies the club is looking for in the prospective coaches at each age level. Suggestions to assist you in this process are provided in Appendix 1 of this Handbook.*
4. *Write a coaching position statement (job description) outlining the club's purpose statement, values of the club, the coaching trademark, selection criteria and role description.*
5. *Advertise or identify potential coaches who are capable and qualified to take on a coaching role.*
6. *Develop a matrix of names of potential coaches against skills, qualities and attributes.*
7. *Write interview questions appropriate for each coaching position. An example of a set of interview questions relevant to each age group is provided on the previous pages and Appendix 2.*
8. *Screen and interview the appropriate potential coaches.*
9. *Select the appropriate coach and sit with that decision for a period of time.*
10. *Then if satisfied with the decision approach the selected coach.*

Additional resources are found on the AFL community club website *aflcommunityclub.com.au*.

3. Develop a club coaching handbook including the purpose/mission statement, codes of conduct, policies and procedures.

This is an important first step in the role as a Club Coaching Coordinator. This club coaching handbook will provide your coaches with a resource that will include information on club background, club codes of conduct, relevant club contacts, club policies, procedures, club expectations and general coaching resources. When new information in this area becomes available, it will be updated on the *aflcommunityclub.com.au* website.

Below is a conceptual outline for the Club Coaching Coordinator to create a comprehensive club coaching handbook:



Following is a sample contents page of a typical club coaching coordinator manual:

POTENTIAL CLUB COACHING HANDBOOK CONTENTS

Contents

1. Introduction to (club name) Junior Football Club
   - **a.** Mission Statement
2. Club Codes of Conduct
   - **a.** Expectations of (name of club) coaches
   - **b.** Coaches' Code of Conduct
   - **c.** Officials' Code of Conduct
   - **d.** Players' Code of Conduct
   - **e.** Spectators'/Parents' Code of Conduct
3. Club Policies and Procedures
   - **a.** Player Selection and Rotation
   - **b.** Finals Selection
   - **c.** Attendance at training
4. Club Committee and Contacts
   - **a.** Committee Contacts
   - **b.** Junior Football Operation – Sub-committee Contacts
   - **c.** Coaches' Contacts
   - **d.** Team Managers' contacts
5. Club and Team Functions
   - **a.** Club Nights
   - **b.** Team Nights
   - **c.** Presentation Nights
   - **d.** Allocation of Funds to Teams
   - **e.** Individual Team Sponsorships
   - **f.** Team Photographs
6. Training Arrangements
   - **a.** Sharing of Grounds and Timing of Training
   - **b.** Use of Lights
   - **c.** Access to Change Rooms
7. Awards
   - **a.** Voting Procedure
   - **b.** Awards to be Given
   - **c.** Counting of Votes
8. Emergency Contact Procedure
   - **a.** Telephone Numbers
   - **b.** Treatment of Injured Players
9. Coach Resources and Coach Development
   - **a.** Coach Accreditation
   - **b.** Seminar Nights
   - **c.** Coach Meetings
   - **d.** Resource Library
10. Coach Appraisal
11. Draft Procedure for Reported Players
    - **a.** Management of Reported Players
12. League Rules
13. Grievance Procedures
14. Parental Involvement
    - **a.** Match-Day Officials
    - **b.** Official Positions that Need to be Club Appointments
15. Junior Development Coordination
16. Property Management
17. Club and Team Mentoring Program
18. Match-Day Procedure
19. Calendar of Events
20. Forms Used Throughout the Season
21. Voting Cards
22. Match Details Form
23. Fixture

AN APPROACH

The Club Coaching Coordinator should be responsible for coordinating the development of content for a club coaching handbook.

Suggestions for the content of a club coaching handbook are presented above. An example of a Club Coaching Handbook is found on the Club Coaching Coordinator section of the aflcomunityclub.com.au website.

A copy of The AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct is found in Appendix 4 of this Handbook. Signing this code is a requirement of AFL coach accreditation and reaccreditation. As part of their own procedures, clubs may wish to go through the code and refresh it (re-sign) with their coaches every season.

4. Conduct club coaching meetings to cover areas of support, coach development and evaluation.

Meetings offer the opportunity for appropriate people in the club to be involved in a transparent decision-making process. Meetings increase communication by sharing information, determine people's thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs and attitudes and, importantly, develop relationships. The basis of an effective meeting is planning. In the planning phase determine whether or not a meeting is required. If a meeting is to be conducted, determine its purpose and have an idea of the "desired" outcomes.

There are a number of key coaching-related meetings that might be held throughout the season that should be driven by the Club Coaching Coordinator. These include pre-season meetings, mid-season review meetings and end-of-season evaluation meetings.

Pre-season coaches' meeting

A pre-season meeting with the entire coaching team will provide the opportunity to bring your club's coaches together and provide a forum for discussion of the season ahead. Important areas to address in this meeting include explaining your role as Club Coaching Coordinator and what you aim to achieve, establishing/reviewing a purpose statement for the coaching portfolio, provide coaches with a club coaching handbook and develop a club coaching trademark.

A coaching trademark will provide the foundation for a whole club approach to coaching which results in a unified and effective coaching team. All of your club's coaches should be involved in the development of this coaching trademark. Doing so, will enable all coaches to work together to deliver quality and consistent coaching across all age groups

COACHING TRADEMARK OVERVIEW

TRADEMARK
(coaching trademark)

Mission Statement and Values

BEHAVIOURS
How do you want to be seen as a team of coaches?

Two or three words. Eg. Positive, Inclusive, Organised, Professional, Committed, Approachable etc.

ACTIONS
How will that look in action?

Think about things you should:
STOP
START
KEEP

PRE-SEASON MEETING WITH COACHES – SAMPLE AGENDA

1. **Introduction – Self and background**
   - Coaching Coordinator Role
   - Calendar
   - Explanation of Coaching Support Program
2. **The Nature of Coaching: Group Activity**
3. **Coaches Brainstorming Session: break up coaches into like or varied groups**
   - Assessment of the Club – where are we at?
   - Setting Expectations/Standards – where do we want to be?
4. **Develop Club Coaching Trademarks**
   - Needs Analysis – how are we going to get there?
5. **Observation Program**
   - Feedback Provided Throughout Season
6. **Development Program**
   - Coordinated Player Progression
   - Coach Development
7. **Support Program**
   - Coaching Coordinator
   - Mentoring – Team Coaching
   - Resources (Diary, Specific articles, Videos, Other)
   - Role of Parents
8. **Seminar Day – Planned Date**
   - Decide topics
9. **General Feedback**
10. **Coordination of Club Coaches:**
    - Ground use for training
    - Parental support

Individual coach action plans

Following this initial group meeting, individual coach meetings will provide the basis for the individual coach's season plan. To aid this planning process, action plans for both the coach and the team coached will be prepared.

As the first step in preparing action plans for the season, it is recommended that club coaches and their assistants meet with the Club Coaching Coordinator before the season starts to clarify the focus for the age group, coaching needs and personal development opportunities as part of an action plan to aid the future development of players and coaches.

The individual coach action plan will enable the Club Coaching Coordinator to support the coach in a program for self-improvement and provide ongoing assistance to the team of players throughout the season.

To complement the individual coach action plans, it is recommended the coach also complete a team action plan. This will aid coaches in formulating a plan focusing on important developmental areas for their team. Not only will the coach use the age group coaching curriculum to guide their action plan, completed player assessment forms can also be used to help highlight specific areas for improvement that will be individualised to their team.

INDIVIDUAL COACH ACTION PLAN

Name of Coach:	**Age Group:**
Goals for the season:	
1. **2.** **3.**	
Action What three actions will you now take to meet your goals?	
1. **2.** **3.**	
Commitment How likely are you to achieve above goals?	
Time When will you start these actions? When do you expect to have achieved them?	
Involve Who do you need to involve, to assist and support you, in achieving your goals?	
Obstructions What might prevent you in achieving those goals? How will you overcome them?	
Know How will you know you have achieved your goals?	
Coach Signature:	
Club Coaching Coordinator Signature:	
Date:	

Pre-season meeting

A coach and parents pre-season meeting is also imperative for the communication process. **Many coaches find that the most challenging issue to manage is their relationship with the parents of their players.** The reality is that a coach's relationship with the parents is just as important as their relationship with the players. The coaches at your football club will likely experience a range of parental behaviour both positive and negative toward both the coach and the players and this will have major implications for you.

A pre-season meeting is a good way to meet parents and to discuss philosophies and housekeeping matters. Give plenty of notice of the date and time of the meeting through either a short letter, email or a phone call. If parents find they disagree with the coach's approach, they then have the opportunity to raise their concerns with the coach and also the Club Coaching Coordinator.

Ensure all parents are able to attend as this meeting will provide the basis for a positive coach-parent relationship throughout the season.

To further aid in developing a positive coach-parent relationship, the expectations placed upon coaches by parents need to be understood. The difficulty is that often what coaches think parents value and expect differs from what parents actually value and expect. Most parents desire a coach who is:

- fair and honest in dealing with players.
- committed to having players enjoy the experience.
- committed to developing sportsmanship.

Interestingly, in specific research, parents ranked the following three characteristics as least important:

- commitment to winning.
- a coach's personal experience as a player.
- improving a player's chances of playing at a higher level.

These can provide the coach with a base understanding of parental expectations that can be further developed during the coach-parent pre-season meeting.

PRE-SEASON MEETING WITH PARENTS – SAMPLE AGENDA

1. **Introduction and welcome**
   - Introduce yourself and assistants.
   - Briefly outline your coaching experience and qualifications.
2. **Aims of junior sport**
   - Discuss some of the research findings as to why children play sport.
   - Ask parents to think about why their child wants to play.
3. **Your coaching philosophy**
   - Briefly explain your philosophy, attitude and coaching style.
   - Explain what it is that you wish to accomplish over the season and how you intend to go about achieving your goals.
   - Talk about your feelings on player rotation, half games and so on.
4. **Cover 'housekeeping' matters**
   - Training times and venue.
   - How cancellations to training will be communicated.
   - Equipment and uniform requirements.
   - Registrations and medical forms.
5. **Seek assistance with as many jobs as possible**
   - These may include scorer, team manager, uniform officer, boundary umpires, anything that might involve parents more.
6. **Team rules**
   - Give a broad outline of your rules and expectations (participants may have an input into team rules at an early training session, especially as they relate to lateness, correct uniform).
   - Cover what you expect concerning behaviour and how you intend to enforce the rules.
7. **Parents' roles**
   - Point out the value of parents taking an active interest in their child's sport, including attending as many games as possible.
   - Discuss how you expect parents and spectators to act at games. Provide a parent's code of conduct.
   - Voting systems and weekly awards; two coaches and one parent vote.
   - Recognising milestones i.e. 50/100 games.
8. **Captain and other leadership roles**
   - How is this achieved? Players to vote 3-2-1?
9. **Question time**
   - Allow ample time for general questions.

Mid-season review

A mid-season review meeting of the entire coaching team should be used to evaluate the club's progress through the first half of the year. It will allow any concerns or issues that have arisen since the pre-season meetings to be addressed.

Similarly a mid-season review of individual coaches should occur which would be used to evaluate each coach's progress towards achieving their individual coaching action plan and also in assessing the team action plan.

COACH MID-SEASON REVIEW – ENTIRE COACHING TEAM/INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS (SAMPLE AGENDA)

1. **Review pre-season individual action plan and team action plan with the coach**

2. **Assess progress in terms of each action plan and where further improvement is possible**

3. **Feedback**

- Coach's performance
- Other coaches' performance
- Club Coaching Coordinator's performance

End-of-season Evaluation

The end of season evaluation of the entire coaching team and individual coaches can be used to assess the recently completed season. Constructive feedback should be provided by the Club Coaching Coordinator to the coaches and conversely feedback from the coaches can be greatly beneficial to improving the football club.

In preparation for the meetings with individual coaches, the Club Coaching Coordinator should have completed a coaching feedback form. Feedback to your coaches is an important aspect in their development and will greatly benefit your club for the future. A coach feedback template follows. It is recommended that these evaluations are completed once a season to provide coaches with effective feedback to aid in their development.

COACHES' POST-SEASON EVALUATION MEETING (SAMPLE AGENDA)

1. **Wrap-up of Program**

- Resources
  - Videos
  - Coaching manuals
    - AFL Auskick and CD ROM
  - Coaching Courses
  - Coaching Diary
  - Club In-service
- Feedback and Observations
  - Training
  - Pre Event/Post Event
  - Game
- Direct Support and Mentoring: Evaluate how these worked for all coaches
  - Group Sharing
  - One-on-One Support
  - Other coaches
  - Coaching coordinator
  - Current Programs
  - Mentoring
  - Developing Assistants

2. **Evaluating Your Season**

- Training Sessions
- Match-Day
- Games
- End of Season
- Player Assessment Profiles
- Against objectives set pre-season

3. **General Discussion**

- Commitments for the following season
- Plan for the following season's pre-season meeting
- Setting objectives for next season
- Evaluating your performance based on outcomes of objectives set

There is also the option to complete the more comprehensive training and evaluation feedback forms which form part of the accreditation process at Levels 1 and 2 in the AFL National Coaching Accreditation Scheme. The coach should also be made aware that player assessment profiles should also be completed before attending this meeting.

To aid in the ongoing development of all junior players within your club, it is important for each coach to complete an individual player assessment profile at the completion of each season to provide a reference for the following season. The player assessment profiles are important because they will help to provide the basis for the team action plans as set out by the coaches and club coaching coordinator for the coming season.

In addition, player feedback can be completed by coaches and provided to each player. The feedback will highlight strengths of the player and also contain constructive feedback on any areas of potential improvement. Feedback should be provided at the completion of each season and should then be followed up before the start of the new season.

AN APPROACH

Once the purpose of any meeting is decided :

1. *Establish an agenda. Personally gather as much information as possible on each item so that you are fully aware of the direction that the discussion may take in the meeting.*
2. *Distribute the agenda.*
3. *Conduct the meeting following the agenda. Keep the discussion focussed and discussion should only add new information. Appoint someone to take notes and record who is responsible for each action item.*
4. *Distribute the notes from the meeting as soon as possible and follow up on the action items.*
5. *Include these action items on the agenda for the next meeting.*

An agenda for a pre-season meeting with club coaches is provided in Appendix 5.1. of this Handbook. It is a starting point for the Club Coaching Coordinator to develop thoughts about how the coaching group might function for the coming season.

Developing the Coaching Trademark addresses the following questions:

1. *How does your coaching team wish to be seen as a team of coaches? Short list two or three key words. Examples above.*
2. *How will those key words look in action? Be sure to be as specific as possible.*
3. *From these behaviours, think about what you need to STOP doing, START doing and KEEP doing as a team of coaches. Record two or three points under each and constantly review these points throughout the season.*

A template of a Coach Action Plan is provided in Appendix 5.2 of this Handbook and enables the coach and Club Coaching Coordinator to record their focus areas and goals for the season. Once this action plan has been completed, it will be used as a guide to the season.

Combining this action plan with a club-wide coaching policy provides clear indications to the coach about the areas in which they should endeavour to gain competence, in order to improve as a coach.

A template of a team action plan is provided in Appendix 5.3 of this Handbook and should be completed in conjunction with the individual coach action plan.

A suggested agenda for a pre-season parent meeting can be found in Appendix 5.4 of this Handbook. This is provided to enable the Club Coaching Coordinator to think about the role and nature of the involvement of parents. It is viewed as a crucial step in the communication between the coach and the parents.

Sample agendas for both a mid-season review of the entire coaching team and a mid-season review of individual coaches is found in Appendix 5.5 of this Handbook.

Sample agendas for post-season evaluation meetings of the entire coaching team and individual coaches are found in Appendix 5.6 of this Handbook. A form to be considered for use by the Club Coaching Coordinator to evaluate individual coaches in preparation of the end of season meeting is found in Appendix 5.7 of this Handbook.

Player assessment profiles can be found in Appendix 5.8 of this Handbook for the consideration of the Club Coaching Coordinator.

Player assessment ratings may also be determined by using the key performance areas as outlined in AFL Youth Coaching Manual, Ch 12 – Talent Identification and Development

Similarly, a player feedback form can be found in Appendix 5.9 of this Handbook.

5. Nominate suitable coaches for regional coach of the year awards.

It is important to widely recognise the significant contribution that coaches make to the conduct and promotion of Australian Football. It is also important to acknowledge the professional commitment and effort that coaches have put into their coaching role. The extent to which coaches work towards fulfilling the purpose statement of the club and growing players requires to be acknowledged as the majority of club/school coaches are volunteers. Rewarding coaches as volunteers enhances their self-esteem and retention within the club and ultimately their retention in the sport.

Performance evaluation of the coach should be a transparent and on-going process whereby constructive feedback and coaching effectiveness is enhanced.

AN APPROACH

Establish with the coach the nature of the evaluation process.

Establish an evaluation/review document that affords the opportunity for objective evaluation of the coach.

The evaluation document might be based on mutually agreed goals that the club/school and the coach has for each age group.

For further information please refer to

1. *The Australian Sports Commission. Volunteer Management Program. Retaining Volunteers.*
2. *Refer to Appendix 6 for information relating to Coach of the Year Awards, its purpose, broad guidelines and criteria for each level of participation.*

6. Maintain accurate records of accreditation status of coaches.

Effective accurate record keeping of the accreditation status of coaches enables the club to recruit, retain and develop coaches to be the most qualified and up-to-date coaches. This in turn has an enormous impact on the credibility and the status of the club in the community.

Total commitment by each coach to ensure an accurate record of their accreditation status is vital.

AN APPROACH

Using a computerised system quickly facilitates the input, update and an appreciation of the status of each coach.

The data required is accessed through the AFL Coaches' Database on Footyweb.

7. Assist coaches with their re-accreditation needs and processes.

AFL coaching accreditation is valid for four years from the year in which one gained the most recent accreditation.

AN APPROACH

Check the records of each coach and inform them of the re-accreditation process. Discuss with each coach the re-accreditation process in the light of the policy contained in the AFL of National Coaching Accreditation Scheme information brochure. This may be found on the aflcomunityclub.com.au website.

ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PRACTICE
THE EDUCATIVE ROLE

1. Assist coaches to develop and constantly review their coaching philosophy.

A coaching philosophy is a set of beliefs, principles and values that are held which enables a coach to make decisions and guide actions so that they are consistent.

A coaching philosophy is developed from a background of wisdom and experiences that coaches have experienced throughout their playing and coaching careers, through observing and talking with other coaches and reading about the lives of admired coaches and other significant people. It is also a reflection on the beliefs, values and standards of behaviour that the coach has developed over time.

A coaching philosophy is essential in providing guidelines in the following aspects of coaching:

- Determining the coach's role in the club.
- Determining a coaching style.
- Underpinning coaching principles.
- Planning for all aspects of the football experience in the club communication style, including the resolution of conflicts and influencing others.
- Communicating with players, parents, other coaches and officials.
- Establishing a style of play for the club.

> *A coaching philosophy is a set of beliefs, principles and values that are held which enables a coach to make decisions and guide actions so that they are consistent.*

AN APPROACH

Invite coaches to begin to write or modify their coaching philosophy through the following suggested procedure:

Start by answering the following questions:

- Why coach?
- What is your personal mission statement?
- What is meant by being an effective/successful coach?
- How you want to be remembered as a coach?

Next consider the needs of the players by answering the following:

- What are their reasons for playing?
- What are their expectations for the season?
- What are the personal qualities they wish to see in a coach?
- What is their preferred coaching style?
- What are their values and standards of behaviour?

Consider the club culture by answering the following:

- How is the club perceived within the competition?
- How does the club wish to be perceived within the competition?
- What values need to be maintained or developed?
- What is my role in maintaining or developing those perceptions and values?

By honestly addressing these questions, a coaching philosophy is starting to evolve. Continue to review these issues on a regular basis.

2. Develop a positive club coaching culture.

The club's way of doing things, its values, the behaviours of individuals and the covert rules has a significant impact on an individual's enjoyment, morale, satisfaction levels, personal commitment and on-field success. People are attracted to a club that exhibits a positive club coaching culture: a club where people want to belong and contribute. Developing a positive club coaching culture is largely under the leadership of the Club Coaching Coordinator.

AN APPROACH

- *Appoint coaches with a positive orientation to coaching to act as role models.*
- *Appoint volunteers with a positive orientation to assisting people and serving to the best of their ability.*
- *Be proactive in promoting a positive orientation when dealing with people.*
- *Use praise and positive reinforcement in a 5-to-1 ratio to negative reinforcement.*
- *Assist coaches in the change process.*
- *Observe coaches and provide individual feedback on becoming a more positive coach.*

3. Ensure the coaches have access to and complete Level 1 or Level 2 coach accreditation requirements.

All states and territories support the AFL's mandatory accreditation policy where coaches MUST have completed an approved AFL coaching accreditation course if they are appointed to a coaching position. This is critical for those coaching children.

Types of AFL coaching courses

- AFL Level 1 (Junior)
- AFL Level 1 (Youth) Club and school coaches of teenagers
- AFL Level 1 (Senior) Coaches of adults (open age)
- AFL Level 2 (Youth/Senior)
- AFL Level 3 (High Performance)

Completing the next level of accreditation in The National Coaching Accreditation Scheme has many advantages for the coach as well as for the club:

- Keeping up to date with new information relating to sport science, coaching methods and practices.
- Expanding the network of contacts.
- Earning the respect and trust of others.

AN APPROACH

Being aware of the dates of various AFL Level 1, Level 2 or High Performance (Level 3) courses through the state affiliate or regional offices.

Contact details of the AFL state affiliate offices can be found on the AFL Community website.

4. Provide necessary and up-to-date information and technical knowledge on coaching trends and practices to all coaches.

Maintaining currency on coaching trends and practices enables coaches to maintain their professionalism, maintain their respect, ensure quality coaching and improve coaching relationships. The ever-changing nature of the game and the evolution of coaching methods demand that coaches keep current in the areas which underpin the game.

The issue for coaches is to be committed to staying current in terms of coaching trends and practices and devote time in their schedule to remain current. The discipline of making this commitment is a quality which often separates effective coaches from less effective coaches.

AN APPROACH

There are a number of means available for coaches to maintain their currency in terms of technical knowledge, coaching trends and practices:

- *Undertake the next level of accreditation.*
- *Attend The AFL National Coaching Conference.*
- *Enrol in specialised workshops, programs and seminars.*
- *Obtain and interact with a mentor.*
- *Read relevant journals, books and magazines.*
- *Use internet coaching sites.*
- *Personal observations and experiences.*
- *Establish contacts within universities.*
- *Network with other coaches.*
- *Participate on Facebook, Twitter and other useful social media.*
- *Conduct club coach workshops.*
- *Attend high-level coaching sessions.*

5. Evaluate coaching performance at training/match-day.

Evaluating coaching performance at training and on match-day is critical in the growth of individual coaches and the ultimate effectiveness of the coaching process.

Using the evaluation forms developed for the various levels within the coach accreditation scheme is a useful starting point.

Individual coaches may have specific issues which need observing and require evaluating. These issues may be identified by the coach themselves or by the Club Coaching Coordinator.

The connection between coaching at training and coaching on match-day is vital. Feedback during the game to individuals or to the team should be given on the adherence to the style of play the team has adopted and/or the team plan that has been practised throughout the week. That is, there is consistency between what has been practised during the week and what is required on match-day.

AN APPROACH

Often it is an appropriate starting point to ask individual coaches how they are going in their coaching performance. Reflective coaches will identify their strengths and areas where they need attention. The communication between the Club Coaching Coordinator and the individual coach needs to be honest, confidential and supportive on the issue of self-improvement in terms of the "how" to coach. These conversations may create the opportunity of observing the coach in action and providing assistance on particular coaching issues especially related to coaching methods.

Providing encouraging supportive feedback to coaches from observing them at practice or on match-days is crucial. If you identify an issue of concern, immediately raise it with the individual coach in a positive and constructive manner. In all situations, observing the actual behaviour and providing evidence-based feedback is crucial. Feed back what is observed and alter the observable behaviour.

A number of coach evaluation forms for practice sessions and match-day are available on the aflcomunityclub.com.au website.

To ensure consistency between the style of play, the team plan and the feedback message on match-day clearly identify, practise and reinforce the style of play and the team plan during the practice sessions so that the players fully understand those aspects for match-day. On match-day, it is the coaches' responsibility to evaluate and provide feedback on the basis of the extent to which those aspects are adhered to.

6. Develop a support/mentoring program at the club.

The commitment to the attitude of continuous improvement as a coach is of paramount importance. Adopting a mentor or critical friend is one method a coach can take to assist in terms of continual growth. The benefits of adopting a mentor include:

- The coach becomes more enlightened.
- The coach becomes more empowered.
- The coach learns new skills and knowledge.
- The coach becomes more self-confident.

The AFL supports the ongoing education of a coach through a sequence of formal courses under the auspices of The National Coaching Accreditation Scheme. Coaches are encouraged to follow that pathway for the benefit of the players and for the development of the game.

Another means of improving the coaching process of individuals is through mentoring. This mentoring relationship at all levels of coaching is highly recommended.

AN APPROACH

Once the coach has made the commitment to seek a mentor, the following factors should be considered in selecting the mentor:

- *Their experience in Australian Football.*
- *Their understanding of coaching pedagogy (i.e. how to teach people to coach).*
- *Their ability to communicate one on one.*
- *Their willingness to be involved – they must be motivated to help the coach to improve.*
- *Their ability to commit sufficient time to the relationship – to develop an effective ongoing mentoring relationship, mentors need to set aside some dedicated time to observe and communicate on a regular basis.*

Details of the courses under the auspices of The National Coaching Accreditation Scheme, outlining the course aims, time requirements and the content are found on the AFL Community website – coaches > accreditation.

7. Promote and apply a sequential Australian Football curriculum for all age groups with respect to the AFL's Stages of Development.

The AFL's Stages of Development is a player-centred approach to achieving a player's full potential throughout their involvement in Australian Football. The AFL's Stages of Development is focused on developing performance over the long term rather than winning as a short-term objective.

Learning Australian Football skills is a long-term investment where players progressively develop their skills under the guidance of an accredited coach. The short-term approach with an over emphasis on results in terms of winning is discouraged. Match-day is viewed as an opportunity for players to demonstrate their learning in a performance environment.

The AFL's Stages of Development is divided into a seven-stage progression and have been developed to ensure a clear understanding of the objectives and focus at each stage of a young player's development. It begins with the Fundamental Stage (AFL Junior) and culminates in the Maintenance Stage (Senior Players). See Appendix 7.

A sequential Australian Football curriculum enables coaches to teach/coach the most appropriate skills at each age level. These planned teaching/coaching experiences permit players at all levels to receive coaching experiences that contribute towards their understanding of the game, their successful participation and enjoyment of their skill development in Australian Football.

Relative age effect

An important consideration that coaches need to take into account when considering applying a sequential Australian Football curriculum with respect to the AFL's Stages of Development is the concept of relative age effect. Relative age refers to the chronological age differences between individuals within annually age-grouped teams. For example, with the cut-off date of January 1 for the junior age groups in Australian Football, a child born in January when compared to one born in December of the same year can have the advantage of close to an extra year's worth of cognitive and physical development, even though they are both placed into the same age group. During the developmental years of adolescence, these differences in cognitive and physical development can become quite pronounced.

For coaches at all junior age groups, this relative age effect cannot be ignored. Research has shown that players born in the first half of the year are over represented in talent programs and those born in the second half of the year are over-represented among drop-outs from competitive sport, indicating that those born in the first half are given more opportunities and advantages due to greater cognitive and physical development.

Therefore, coaches must be aware and sensitive to the differing rates of development among their players within the same age group. The AFL promotes equal participation for all junior players, but coaches should also ensure players are given equal opportunities in all positions.

Key positions and midfield roles are invariably played by those players with the greatest physical capabilities and more often than not those players are born in the first half of the year. An emphasis on the technical and tactical aspects of football within your club will hopefully help to improve the continued participation of less physically developed players.

AN APPROACH

The AFL's Stages of Development is found in Appendix 7 and on the AFL Community website – club coaching coordinator section, and should be considered when developing a sequential Australian Football curriculum. A group of coaches within the club may develop a sequential Australian Football curriculum adhering to the following guidelines in curriculum development:

- Identify the needs and physical and emotional characteristics of the players at each age level.
- Determine the goals of the program at each age level. These goals will basically determine which skills/tactics to teach and when to teach them.
- Decide on which skills to teach at each age level and the coaching methodology.
- Implement your program and importantly continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the sequential Australian Football curriculum.

Alternatively, the club may wish to adopt/modify an established sequential Australian Football curriculum found in Appendix 9 and on the AFL Community website – club coaching coordinator section. Coaches are encouraged to use this resource to aid in the development of their season plans. Using the coaching curriculum will ensure key skill and developmental areas are focused on by coaches.

Strategies to combat the relative age effect for coaches can include:

- *Rotating all players through key position and midfield roles regardless of physical capabilities.*
- *Coaching focused on developing the technical and tactical aspects of football.*
- *Find a balance between achieving short-term success (e.g. winning) and the long-term development and retention of all players.*
- *Educate those children who may lack the physical capabilities of their peers that this deficit is only temporary and will disappear when they grow and mature.*
- *Conversely, educate those more physically developed children in the importance of developing their technical and tactical skills, as their advantage will disappear.*

ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PRACTICE POTENTIAL ROLES

1. Develop and implement player profiles for succession planning.

Game-plans are often developed around the coach's philosophy of how the game should be played and often around the strengths of the playing group. Either way there are a number of significant roles in the team structure that underpin the game-plan. To maintain the credibility of the game-plan, planning needs to occur that ensures that there are players always capable of filling those roles. The coach and the club must be prepared to take an intentional and structured approach to filling these critical roles within the team structure to maintain the success of the game-plan.

Succession planning is more evident in senior clubs. In under-age competitions, the emphasis is on providing learning opportunities where positional play, tactics and teamwork is emphasised. At the senior level, line coach or tactical roles are often fostered which often demands succession planning.

Developing a player profile in association with the role in the team structure to fulfil is a factor in moving forward. The profile would consist of skill components, physical attributes, physiological elements, psychological characteristics as well as the ability to understand and follow the coach's instructions.

AN APPROACH

Coaches, including assistant coaches and support staff, are in an excellent position to profile players' characteristics with respect to the role that is required of them in the context of the team structure.

Once there is a realisation that a succession plan is necessary, this group of coaches and support personnel can begin the process of identifying players and develop them to fill the appropriate role. The succession plan can begin at any stage of the season so that the player becomes coached to fill that role.

2. Investigate insurance cover for coaches and other related risk management issues.

It is crucial that the club protects all coaches with adequate insurance cover. There are many types of insurance available and include: professional indemnity, public liability, worker's compensation and voluntary workers' insurance.

Insurance for Coaches

Members, including accredited coaches, of clubs which are affiliated with the AFL and its state bodies are covered under the Australian Football National Risk Protection Program.

In general, all football activities are covered, including matches, training, functions and meetings anywhere in Australia.

The cover includes public liability (general and products; and errors and omissions) and personal injury, which will provide the crucial elements of cover for coaches involved in the game in affiliated clubs, leagues and associations. There are four levels of cover from the automatic base (bronze) level and clubs have the option of upgrading to higher levels of cover.

Details about the Australian Football National Risk Protection Program are available at *jltsport.com.au.*

"Risk management is about assessing what might go wrong and acting to prevent possible accidents and undesirable events. The law requires people with a duty of care over others – as coaches have a duty of care to players – to take reasonable steps to avoid risk of harm or injury to those in their charge. Generally, the younger the person in care, the greater the duty of care that is owed."

Risk management and having a duty of care applies to coaching at all levels.

Reducing high-risk activities and adequate planning of training sessions and match-day situations greatly reduces the incidence of injury or accidents.

AN APPROACH

Check with the club and the AFL state affiliate to determine the nature of the insurance cover that is afforded coaches whether they are accredited or not.

You should also consult the Australian Football National Risk Protection Programme (afl.jltsport.com.au).

Completing a risk management analysis of the activities that coaches will be involved in is a useful starting point. Each coach must take into account a risk management plan as outlined at each level of the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme. To assist you in developing a risk management plan, you are referred to The AFL Club Management Program: Junior Development For Football Clubs (page 39) and The AFL Club Management Program: Risk Management For Football Clubs.

3. Develop links with primary and secondary schools and AFL Auskick programs to implement transition programs for all age groups – from AFL Auskick to junior club through to junior players moving into senior football.

Determining the needs of children/youth and finding out why this age group participate in sport is important.

Making the connection with school Physical Educators and AFL Auskick programs in the immediate geographical location of the club is important.

"To maximise the transition of participants from one level of the participation pathway to the next, it is vital that linkages between levels are established. Fostering links between school and club environments and other elements of participation will help to educate, recruit and retain players and their parents (volunteers) as they progress through the pathway."

AFL Auskick is the first step in the player participation pathway. In terms of the retention of children and their parents, it is vital that this step is a quality and enjoyable one. Clubs cannot assume that parents of children participating in the AFL Auskick program understand the next level of participation (junior club football) and how to find and access their closest club.

AN APPROACH

Determining the extent of the drop-out rate and having an understanding of the basic issues underlying this situation is a useful starting point. Providing an inclusive, fun, player development, challenging coaching environment which has a player-centred focus is a useful starting point for retaining players in the club. Having an emphasis on game-sense activities associated with individual skill improvement and catering for individual differences will maximise the fun and enjoyment element in coaching/learning. The players should leave practice looking forward to the next practice!

Making the link between clubs and schools is vital. The Australian Council for Health Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) in each state should be able to provide a list of names of physical education teachers in schools near your club. A visit to the local school will prove invaluable in forging those links.

To maximise the transfer of children (players) and their parents (potential volunteers) from the AFL Auskick program to junior club football, clubs must ensure that there is a linkage to the surrounding AFL Auskick centres.

The first step in developing a linkage is to contact your regional development manager to obtain a list of centres and contact details so you can send letters of introduction and offers of assistance.

An excellent resource to assist in developing links with primary and secondary schools and AFL Auskick centres is found in The AFL Club Management Program: Junior Development for Football Clubs. Section 6 Community Links (pages 26-30).

4. Arrange the conduct of an Orientation/ Introduction to Coaching Course at the club for assistant coaches/parents/volunteers.

At all levels of Australian Football, the coach has generally significantly more influence on players than any other official or person connected with football. As such, all coaches need to be appropriately accredited.

Coaches are the primary reason why players either stay in or leave football. There is nothing more directly linked to drop-out than an abusive, angry, bad-tempered or too serious coach.

Offering an Orientation to Coaching Course is the initial entry into coaching accreditation. It is the first step in becoming a nationally accredited coach through the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme and coaches need to be encouraged to begin this journey.

AN APPROACH

Once the commitment has been made to arrange and conduct an Orientation to Coaching Course there are a number of questions/steps that have to be addressed. These include:

- *What are the course objectives? What content will reflect those objectives? How will the objectives be met? How will the objectives be assessed at the end of the course? How long will the course run for?*
- *What is the course content? What is the duration of each topic area?*
- *What are the budget considerations?*
- *When will the course be conducted?*
- *Where will the course be held?*
- *Who will be invited? How will the participants be invited? How will the participants register? How will the course be advertised and promoted?*
- *Who are the course presenters? What are the IT requirements for each presenter? What type of space do they need to present their information?*
- *What is the preferred method of presenting the material: lecture, workshops, small group discussions, practical?*
- *What course materials are required? Who is responsible for producing this course material?*
- *Is there a need to provide food or refreshments?*
- *How is the course evaluated?*
- *If there is assessment, what are the procedures?*

5. Use expertise to work with groups of players across age groups and utilise outside resources.

Working across age groups requires coaches with a passion for coaching and a commitment to helping players improve. This requires the coach to understand the physical, psychological, emotional and social attributes of the age group. Understanding the reasons why individual players play the game and what their expectations are and in turn coaching to demonstrate that those reasons are considered and instilled into coaching behaviours is more likely to produce a motivated group of players. A more motivated group of players is more likely to stay in the game longer, derive greater satisfaction, support the cultural climate of the club and react positively.

Often the club will benefit by bringing in outside expertise on occasions. This person will have a different set of skills, a different way of getting the message across, different coaching methods and different experiences to share with the group.

AN APPROACH

- *Learn the physical, psychological, emotional and social characteristics of the age group that you are coaching at the time.*
- *Determine the expectations of the group and meet those expectations.*
- *Have empathy by thinking (understanding) how the age group thinks.*
- *Use your network to invite the appropriate outside personnel. Select the correct timing. Understand your motives/goals for the invitation.*

6. Promote online learning opportunities.

Online learning is a means of providing personal development in coaches by means of a computer using the internet.

An attitude and a commitment to continuous learning is a quality that is common to all outstanding, highly respected and successful coaches. There are a number of learning opportunities available to coaches. Online learning addresses the issue of why there is a need to learn. It enables the coach to make the choices about their learning: when they wish to learn, the circumstances under which they wish to learn and what component of their coaching they need to develop. A balance between online learning and attending courses is recommended.

AN APPROACH

There are many options available to learn online and using a web browser on the internet is a good start. Simply open up your web browser and type in an area of interest and the world of online learning will be revealed!

State and territory associations have online learning opportunities. The AFL Community website also has other opportunities.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Coaching Philosophies and Competencies

Outlined below are the philosophies and competencies that are most relevant to each age bracket. In your search for coaches, these should be used as a guide for assessing and selecting appropriate coaching candidates for your club.

Age Group	Philosophy	Competencies
U/8-U/12	Self-esteem – inherent success for all involved	Ability to teach the four main possession skills: (kicking/marking/handballing/ball-handling)
	Fun-focussed, individual skill development	Ability to implement varied, organised and effective training sessions
	Awareness of being a team member and playing various positions	Understand the rules of the game and respect for officialdom
	Introduction to the game and good sportsmanship	Understand the variety of personalities and abilities of the group
	We've got it (offensive), they've got it (defensive) awareness	Ability to communicate with parents, players and officials of the club
	Participation is an over-riding priority	Ability to plan relevant, age and skill-specific programs for match and training situations
	Individual skill development and defensive skills	Ability to evaluate the program and own coaching
		Ability to coach falling, bracing, bumping and landing
		Ability to teach defensive skills of: (tackling/shepherding/spoiling/smothering)
		Ability to coach players to read the play and make decisions (game-sense)
		Ability to coach players to read the play and make decisions (game-sense)
		Understand what to do when a. team has possession b. opposition has possession c. ball is neutral
		Understand youth player perceptual motor abilities and individual differences
U/13-U/15	Fun and self-esteem	Ability to teach the four main possession skills: (kicking/marking/handballing/ball-handling)
	Role in the team and different positions	Ability to implement varied, organised and effective training sessions
	We've got it (offensive), they've got it (defensive) and neither team has it (ball in dispute)	Understand the rules of the game and respect for officialdom
	Sportsmanship and its role in the team	Understand individual differences in personalities within the group

Age Group	Philosophy	Competencies
U/13-U/15	Insure the previous competencies have been learned and reinforced	Ability to communicate with parents, players and officials of the club
	An introduction to the basic tactical components of the game	Ability to plan relevant, age and skill-specific programs for match and training situations
	Awareness of player management and welfare	Ability to evaluate the program and own coaching
	Individual skill development and defensive skills	Understanding of modern tactics and game styles
		Ability to teach advanced contact skills: (front-on and side-on tackling/drop tackles/high mark and landing/effective body use/fending)
		Ability to coach players to read the play and make decisions (game-sense)
		Ability to coach players position specific skills
		Ability to identify, remediate and correct minor flaws in skill execution
		Understanding of the youth player and youth issues
U/16-U/18	Fun and self esteem	Ability to read the play and make decisions (game-sense)
	Role in the team and different positions	Ability to teach the four main possession skills at game pressure: (kicking/marking/handballing/ball-handling)
	We've got it (offensive), they've got it (defensive) and neither team has it (ball in dispute)	Ability to implement varied, organised and effective training sessions
	Sportsmanship and the player's role in the team	Understand the rules of the game and respect for officialdom
	Understanding of the responsibility of "consequences of actions"	Understand the variety of personalities and abilities of the group
	An introduction to the basic and extended (set plays) tactical components of the game	Ability to communicate with parents, players and officials of the club
	Awareness of player management and welfare	Ability to plan a relevant, age and skill-specific programs for match and training situations
		Ability to evaluate the program and own coaching
		Understand modern tactics and game styles
		Ability to teach advanced contact skills at game pressure: (impact tackling/drop tackles/high mark and landing/effective body use/fending)
		Ability to coach position-specific skills
		Ability to identify, remediate and correct minor flaws in skill execution
		Understand the physical demands of the game and implement specific conditioning programs
		Understand and utilise rehabilitation/recovery programs or tools

Appendix 2 Coach Interview Questions

U/8-U/12 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Experience

What is your previous coaching experience, in particular, with this age group?

Philosophy

1. What do you see as the most important reason children want to play football?
2. What elements of the game do you believe you can develop in the players at this age group?
3. How important is winning to you? Why?
4. What are your thoughts on modified rules for children this age?
5. What are your thoughts on a selection policy for finals matches?

Role Modeling

6. A player in your team has abused a teammate. As a coach, what would you do? OR
7. A player in your team has abused an umpire and then his parents continue to vocalise their discontent at the umpire(s). As a coach, what would you do?
8. How should you present yourself and act at training/game-day?
9. What do you see as your responsibilities as a coach of 9/10/11-year-olds?

Player Management

10. Do you have a solution on how you can make every player's involvement at training enjoyable and beneficial?
11. How would you manage players playing time and playing experience throughout the year?
12. What resources could you use to assist you in your role?
13. What policy would you implement to allow all players to have equal opportunity to display their skills?

Skill Knowledge and Development

14. Explain to the panel how you would introduce or teach kicking to players in your team?
15. You have 10 footballs and 10 cones in your coaching kit. You are in charge of 30 players. How would you conduct training to maximise all equipment and player involvement?
16. What needs do you see the club being able to fulfil to assist you in your coaching?
17. Are there any other questions or queries you (the coach) have of the panel?

U/13-U/15 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Experience

What is your previous coaching experience, in particular, with this age group?

Philosophy

1. What do you see as the most important reason teenagers want to play football at this football club?
2. What elements of the game do you believe you can develop in the players at this age group?
3. Do you believe in "tagging"? Why?
4. What are your thoughts on the importance of tactics and introducing them to this age group?

Role Modeling

5. A player in your team has abused a teammate/umpire. As a coach, what would you do?
6. How should you present yourself and act at training/game-day?
7. Do you have any ideas on how to reduce or eliminate "ugly parent" behaviour?
8. Do you have a role in this?

Player Management

9. What are your thoughts on rotating players in different positions and ground/game-time with this age group?
10. How would you communicate and implement your game-plan to your players so that all could understand it?
11. What resources could you use to assist you in your role?
12. What is your opinion on player "burn-out" – both physical and psychological?

Skill Knowledge and Development

13. Explain to the panel how you would improve the "tackling" ability of the "less-physical" players in your team?
14. You have 10 footballs and 10 cones in your coaching kit. You are in charge of 30 players. How would you conduct training to maximise all equipment and player involvement?
15. What needs do you see the club being able to fulfil to assist you in your coaching?
16. Are there any other questions or queries you (the coach) have of the panel?

U/16-U/18 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Experience

Why do you want to coach this team and how is your coaching experience relevant to coaching the team?

Philosophy

1. What style of play would you aim for in coaching this team?
2. Which activities would you use to assist players with game-paced skills and decision-making?
3. What do you perceive to be the success indicators of a youth coach?
4. Briefly describe some of the match strategies you will use to maximise the performance of the team and the development of the players?
5. What is your overall role as the coach of the youth team?
6. What are your thoughts on coaches using "run withs", "taggers", extra players in the backline, "flooding" the opposition forward line?

Player Management

7. What processes will you put in place to keep players and parents "in the picture"?
8. How would you utilise the support staff?
9. Do you believe youth players have characteristics and circumstances that require special communication and attention at this age group?
10. Explain how have you kept up to date with current coaching methodologies and tactics?
11. How would you combat a 3-4-5 zone on your team's kick-outs?
12. If one of your players is consistently "hooking the ball" when kicking, what do you believe needs to be done to reduce this?

Role Modeling

13. A player in your team has abused a teammate/umpire. As a coach, what would you do?
14. How should you present yourself and act at training/game-day?
15. What needs do you see the club being able to fulfil to assist you in your coaching?
16. Are there any other questions or queries the coach has?

Appendix 3 Potential Club Coaching Handbook Contents

Contents

1. Introduction to (club name) Junior Football Club
   - **a.** Mission Statement
2. Club Codes of Conduct
   - **a.** Expectations of (name of club) coaches
   - **b.** Coaches' Code of Conduct
   - **c.** Officials' Code of Conduct
   - **d.** Players' Code of Conduct
   - **e.** Spectators'/Parents' Code of Conduct
3. Club Policies and Procedures
   - **a.** Player Selection and Rotation
   - **b.** Finals Selection
   - **c.** Attendance at training
4. Club Committee and Contacts
   - **a.** Committee Contacts
   - **b.** Junior Football Operation – Sub-committee Contacts
   - **c.** Coaches' Contacts
   - **d.** Team Managers' Contacts
5. Club and Team Functions
   - **a.** Club Nights
   - **b.** Team Nights
   - **c.** Presentation Nights
   - **d.** Allocation of Funds to Teams
   - **e.** Individual Team Sponsorships
   - **f.** Team Photographs
6. Training Arrangements
   - **a.** Sharing of Grounds and Timing of Training
   - **b.** Use of Lights
   - **c.** Access to Change Rooms
7. Awards
   - **a.** Voting Procedure
   - **b.** Awards to be Given
   - **c.** Counting of Votes
8. Emergency Contact Procedure
   - **a.** Telephone Numbers
   - **b.** Treatment of Injured Players
9. Coach Resources and Coach Development
   - **a.** Coach Accreditation
   - **b.** Seminar Nights
   - **c.** Coach Meetings
   - **d.** Resource Library
10. Coach Appraisal
11. Draft Procedure for the Reported Player
    - **a.** Management of Reported Players
12. League Rules
13. Grievance Procedures
14. Parental Involvement
    - **a.** Match-Day Officials
    - **b.** Official Positions that Need to be Club Appointments
15. Junior Development Coordination
16. Property Management
17. Club and Team Mentoring Program
18. Match-Day Procedure
19. Calendar of Events
20. Forms Used Throughout the Season
21. Voting Cards
22. Match Details Form
23. Fixture

Appendix 4 AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct

I, ...of .....Postcode .....

hereby commit, to the best of my ability, to uphold the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct.

I understand that as an integral component of my accreditation, I must maintain a standard of behaviour and conduct in the best interests of the game and the players/staff in my care.

In representing myself in an honest manner, and without bringing the coaching profession or the game into disrepute, I will endeavour to uphold the following to the best of my ability:

1. I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of all individuals within the context of my involvement in Australian Football, by refraining from any discriminatory practices including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, ethnic background, special ability/disability or sexual orientation, preference or identity.
2. I will abide by and teach the AFL Laws of the Game and the Rules of my Club and League/Association.
3. I will be reasonable in the demands I make on the time commitments of the players in my care, having due consideration for their health and well-being.
4. I will be supportive at all times and I will refrain from any form of personal or physical abuse or unnecessary physical contact with the players in my care.
5. I will have due consideration for varying maturity and ability levels of my players when designing practice schedules, practice activities and involvement in competition.
6. Where I am responsible for players in the 5-18-year-old age group, I will strive to ensure that all players gain equal playing time. I will avoid overplaying the talented players aiming to maximise participation, learning and enjoyment for all players regardless of ability.
7. I will stress and monitor safety always.
8. In recognising the significance of injury and sickness, I will seek and follow the physician's advice concerning the return of injured or ill players to training.
9. I will endeavour to keep informed regarding sound principles of coaching and skill development, and of factors relating to the welfare of my players.
10. I will at all times display and teach appropriate sporting behaviour, ensuring that players understand and practise fair play.
11. I will display and foster respect for umpires, opponents, coaches, administrators, other officials, parents and spectators.
12. I will ensure that players are involved in a positive environment where skill learning and development are priorities and are not overshadowed by a desire to win.
13. I reject the use of performance-enhancing substances in sport and will abide by the guidelines set forth in the AFL Anti-Doping and Illicit Drugs policies.

I AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING TERMS;

1. I agree to abide by the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct.
2. I acknowledge that the AFL, or a body affiliated with the AFL, may take disciplinary action against me if I breach the code of conduct. I understand that the AFL, or a body affiliated with the AFL, is required to implement a complaints-handling procedure in accordance with the principles of natural justice, in the event of an allegation against me.
3. I acknowledge that disciplinary action against me may include de-registration from the AFL National Coaching Accreditation Scheme.

Note: This "Coaches' Code of Conduct" is to be signed and conformed to as part of the accreditation requirements of the AFL. Coaches should be aware that, in addition to this Code, they may be obliged to sign a further Code of Conduct/Ethics with their Club and/or League.

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

WITNESS SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

(To be signed by club president, AFL Auskick District Manager or school principal – whichever applies).

Appendix 5 Meeting Agendas and Evaluation Tools

Appendix 5.1 Pre-Season Meeting with Coaches

1. Introduction – Self and background
   - Coaching Coordinator Role
   - Calendar
   - Explanation of Coaching Support Program
2. The Nature of Coaching: Group Activity
3. Coaches Brainstorming Session: break up coaches into like or varied groups
   - Assessment of the Club (where are we at)
   - Setting Expectations/Standards (where do we want to be)
4. Develop Club Coaching Trademarks
   - Needs Analysis – how are we going to get there?
5. Observation Program
   - Feedback Provided Throughout Season
6. Development Program
   - Coordinated Player Progression
   - Coach Development
7. Support Program
   - Coaching Coordinator
   - Mentoring – Team Coaching
   - Resources (Diary, Specific Articles, Videos, Other)
   - Role of Parents
8. Seminar Day – Planned Date
   - Decide topics
9. General Feedback
10. Coordination of Club Coaches:
    - Ground use for training
    - Parental support

Appendix 5.2 Individual Coach Action Plan

Name of Coach: ..... **Age Group:** .....

Goals for the season: **1.** .....
2. .....

Action What three actions will you now take to meet your goals?	
Commitment How likely are you to achieve above goals?	
Time When will you start these actions? When do you expect to have achieved them?	
Involve Who do you need to involve, to assist and support you, in achieving your goals?	
Obstructions What might prevent you in achieving those goals? How will you overcome them?	
Know How will you know you have achieved your goals?	
Coach Signature:	
Club Coaching Coordinator Signature:	
Date:	

Appendix 5.3 Team Action Plan

Name of Coach: ..... **Age Group:** .....

General Actions What are the areas of focus for this age group? Use coaching curriculum season plans to help guide you.	
Specific Actions What are the specific areas of focus for this team, e.g. technical, social, physical, conditioning? Use previous player assessment profiles to help guide you.	
Commitment How much time will be spent on achieving these actions (training/matches)?	
Involve Who (and what) will you need to assist you for the season?	
Obstructions What things may prevent you from delivering these action plans? How will you overcome them?	
Measures Review at intervals throughout the season, e.g. review at round two, round 10 and end of season.	
Coach Signature:	
Club Coaching Coordinator Signature:	
Date:	

Appendix 5.4 Pre-Season Meeting with Parents

1. Introduction and welcome
   - Introduce yourself and assistants.
   - Briefly outline your coaching experience and qualifications.
2. Aims of junior sport
   - Discuss some of the research findings as to why children play sport.
   - Ask parents to think about why their child wants to play.
3. Your Coaching Philosophy?
   - Briefly explain your philosophy, attitude and coaching style.
   - Explain what it is that you wish to accomplish over the season and how you intend to go about achieving your goals.
   - Talk about your feelings on player rotation, half games and so on.
4. Cover 'housekeeping' matters
   - Training times and venue.
   - How cancellations to training will be communicated.
   - Equipment and uniform requirements.
   - Registrations and medical forms.
   - Seek assistance with as many jobs as possible.
   - These may include scorer, team manager, uniform officer, boundary umpires, anything that might involve parents more.
5. Team rules
   - Give a broad outline of your rules and expectations (participants may have an input into team rules at an early training session, especially as they relate to lateness, correct uniform).
   - Cover what you expect concerning behaviour and how you intend to enforce the rules.
6. Parents' roles
   - Point out the value of parents taking an active interest in their child's sport, including attending as many games as possible.
   - Discuss how you expect parents and spectators to act at games. Provide a parent's code of conduct.
7. Parents' roles
   - Point out the value of parents taking an active interest in their child's sport, including attending as many games as possible.
   - Discuss how you expect parents and spectators to act at games. Provide a parents' code of conduct.
   - Voting systems and weekly awards; two coaches and one parent vote.
   - Recognising milestones, i.e. 50/100 games.
8. Captain and other leadership roles
   - How is this achieved? Players to vote 3-2-1?
9. Question time
   - Allow ample time for general questions.

Appendix 5.5 Coach Mid-Season Review – Entire Coaching Team/Individual Meetings

1. Review pre-season individual action plan and team action plan with the coach.
2. Assess progress in terms of each action plan and where further improvement is possible.
3. Feedback
   - Coach's performance.
   - Other coaches' performance.
   - Club Coaching Coordinator's performance.

Appendix 5.6 Coaches Post-Season Evaluation Meeting

1. Wrap-up of Program
   - Resources
   - Videos
   - Coaching manuals – AFL Junior and AFL Auskick CD ROM
   - Coaching Courses
   - Coaching Diary
   - Club In-service
   - Feedback and Observations
   - Training
   - Pre Event/Post Event
   - Game
   - Direct Support and Mentoring: Evaluate how these worked for all coaches
   - Group Sharing
   - One-on-One Support
   - Other coaches
   - Coaching coordinator
   - Current Programs
   - Mentoring
   - Developing Assistants
2. Evaluating Your Season
   - Training Sessions
   - Match-Day
   - Games
   - End of Season
   - Player Assessment Profiles
   - Against objectives set pre-season
3. General Discussion
   - Commitments for the following season
   - Plan for the following season's pre-season meeting
   - Setting objectives for the following season
   - Evaluating your performance based on outcomes of objectives set

Appendix 5.7 Coach Feedback Form

Coach Name: ..... **Age Group:** ..... **Years as Coach:** .....

Rating Scale: 1 (low) – 5 (high)

	CCC: RATING	COMMENTS
CLUB TRADEMARK AND VALUES		
1.		
2.		
3.		
CLUB POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		
Player and position rotation, respect for umpires and opposition, adheres to all policies and procedures		
PLANNING – TRAINING SESSIONS		
Session Plan Evident		
Set Up Early		
Appropriately Dressed		
Adequate Equipment		
Use of helpers/assistants		
EFFECTIVE TRAINING SESSIONS		
Effective Warm-Up		
Game-Sense Activities/Drills Used		
Maximum Player Participation		
COMMUNICATION		
Clear instruction		
Positive and Enthusiastic		
Provides Feedback		
Facilitates discussion among players as best learning tool		
MATCH DAY		
Pre-game organisation		
Communication (before, during and after game)		
Enthusiasm and Support		
Maximum Player Involvement		

Appendix 5.8 Player Assessment Profile (Beyond age 12)

Name: ..... **Age Group:** .....

Position: ..... **Date of Birth:** .....

Score on a scale of 1-5: **1** – Very Poor, **2** – Poor, **3** – Average, **4** – Good, **5** – Excellent

PHYSICAL QUALITIES	NOTES FOR GUIDANCE
1. Speed	Does the player have speed off the mark – pure speed?
2. Speed Endurance	Is the player quick over distance? Able to sprint repeatedly?
3. Strength/Power	Does the player compete physically? Have presence?
4. Agility/Balance	Can the player leap? Avoid tackles, perform well in motion?
5. Endurance	Can the player last the game? General fitness?
TECHNICAL QUALITIES	
6. Receiving/Marking	Can the player cope technically with the demands of the position?
7. Passing (Kicking/Handballing)	Is technical performance constant?
8. Running with the ball	Does the player have clean hands?
9. Changing Direction	Does the player have a range of passes? Is passing accurate?
10. Defensive qualities	Can the player run powerfully with the ball?
11. Goalkicking	Does the player turn well in different circumstances? Can the player effectively spoil/smother/shepherd/tackle? Is the player prepared to kick for goal? Set shots/On the run?
UNDERSTANDING ATTACK	
12. Support	Does the player affect the game?
13. Movement to create/exploit space	Does the player support behind and in front?
14. Selection and decision-making	Does the player lead and run to the right areas?
15. Observation	Is the player a good decision-maker: when, what, where? Can the player read the game? Anticipate?
UNDERSTANDING DEFENCE	
16. Pressure	Does the player sense danger?
17. Support and cover	Does the player apply pressure correctly?
18. Tackling and contesting	Does the player work hard to assist teammates?
19. Challenging for the ball	Does the player tackle and contest?
20. Communication	Does the player compete? Are the techniques good? Is the player a talker and organiser?
MENTAL QUALITIES	
21. Coping with physical pressure	Is the player brave? Does the player compete?
22. Coping with mental pressure	Does the player focus and concentrate?

Comments: .....

.....

.....

.....

Name of Coach: .....

Signed: ..... **Date:** .....

Appendix 5.9 Player Feedback Form

XXXX JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB
UNDER XX
INDIVIDUAL PLAYER FEEDBACK FORM

Name: .....

Games Played: .....

Training Attendance: .....

Positions Played: .....

Strengths/ Positives:

1. .....

2. .....

3. .....

Areas for Improvement:

1. .....

2. .....

3. .....

Coach Comments:

.....

.....

Questions/points for two-way discussion with player:

.....

.....

Coach Name: .....

Date: .....

Appendix 6 Coach of the Year Awards

Clubs and leagues or regions are encouraged to offer Coach of the Year awards.

The purpose of the award is to:

- To recognise the significant contribution of coaches to the conduct and development of Australian Football.
- To recognise the achievements of coaches who give quality service to the game in that they:
  - Display strength of character in the role of coaching.
  - Foster enthusiasm for, interest in, and an excellent attitude to participation in football.
  - Give quality value to the goals and purposes of the club and Australian Football.
  - Promote the healthy mental and physical development of players.

Broad Guidelines for Each Level:

Auskick Pre-club, 5-8 years. Introduce beginner footballers to the game, concentrating on skill development and enjoyment to ensure continuing interest and involvement in the game and promote the healthy mental and physical development of players.

Junior Primary school-aged children, 8-12 years. Introduce beginner footballers, develop team concepts, promote the healthy mental and physical development of players and emphasise skill development through training and games.

Youth Secondary school-aged children, 13-19 years. Develop player potential, enhance team skills, foster competitive spirit, and promote the healthy mental and physical development of players and desirable attitudes through training and match play.

Senior Open-age competition. Optimise the available individual and team potential while projecting sound attitudes concerning the welfare of football in general.

Female Highlight the role modelling of the coach in increasing the involvement of males or females from AFL Auskick to senior football. With an emphasis placed on skill development, team play, healthy physical and mental attitudes through training and match play.

Umpire Demonstrate active involvement in the AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program Performance of leadership roles within the program.

Coach of the Year Award selection criteria

1. **Demonstrated Knowledge and Aptitude for Role**
   - Knowledge of football and ability to use it in coaching.
   - Knowledge of coaching technique.
   - Is aware of player availability and adjusts training accordingly.
   - Displays the abilities required of a sound coach.
2. **Types of Learning and Communication Skills Used – Comment on Perceived Improvement**
   - Keeps administration and support staff informed.
   - Holds frequent team meetings – listens to players.
   - Leaves the "door open" for discussion.
   - Refrains from embarrassing players publicly.
   - Communicates regularly with other coaches and the coaches association.
   - Uses a variety of learning/teaching techniques in coaching.
   - Ability to plan and implement planning.
3. **Approach to Skill Development**
   - Knowledge of skill teaching and game fundamentals.
   - Teaching skills.
   - Variety of teaching approaches.
   - Individuality of skill development.
4. **Demonstrated Team Style Development**
   - Development of team style in conjunction with player availability and skill level.
   - Demonstrates basic training routines and their relevance to team style.
   - Established and reinforced team rules.
5. **Tactical Knowledge/Management Style**
   Develops strategies to cope with a variety of opposition and conditional challenges.
   - Utilises various management styles dependent upon situations and groups.
   - Representative of the club and its value system.
6. **Respect of Players/Officials/Parents**
   - Is stable, honest and straight forward.
   - Good listening and motivational skills.
   - Thinks clearly in pressure situations.
   - Shows concern for and promotes physical and mental well-being of players.
   - Seeks to improve. Attends seminars, courses and supports accreditation.
   - Assists and mentors the development of assistants.

Coaching Achievements (this year and/or prior) can also be put forward as part of the nomination

Appendix 7 AFL Stages of Development

The following descriptions have been developed to ensure a clear understanding of the objectives and focus at each stage of a young player's development. It begins with the Fundamental Stage (AFL Junior), which includes all participants in the game and culminates in the Maintenance Stage (senior players). The transition stage, following a high-performance career, generally refers to retirement from the game and is dependent on the individual's circumstances and is not considered to be a core stage, nor a focus of this document. All stages should be characterised by the provision of continuous learning opportunities for all players.

THE STAGES

Fundamental Stage (5-11 years): Junior (including AFL Auskick)

Objective: Participation and learning of fundamental movement and game skills.

Program is well structured and fun. The emphasis is on the overall development of the participant's fundamental motor skills and physical capacities using game-related skill development activities. This is a critical period for motor skill development. Correct running, jumping and basic game skills should be taught, with a specific focus on establishing effective kicking mechanics. Participation in a range of sports is encouraged for all-round physical and game-sense development. Simple rules and ethics are introduced.

Sampling Stage (12-14 years): Junior/Youth

Objective: Learning all the fundamental skills of the game and developing basic physical capacities, while continuing to develop all-round sports skills.

Players learn how to train and consolidate the basic skills of the game. They are introduced to technical and tactical skills, including position-specific and basic performance techniques - e.g. warm-up, cool-down, nutrition, hydration, recovery, goal-setting, etc. This is a critical period for physical and skill development. The focus of training is on learning rather than competing and a balance between training and playing is struck. Participants should continue to play a range of sports for all-round development. This includes initial identification for regional development squads.

Identification Stage (15-16 years): Youth

Objective: Developing higher level skills of the game and physical capacities.

Optimise development of fitness capacities, individual, positional and team skills. Develop higher level skills and provide appropriate competition to enhance learning and the opportunity to be identified for talent pathway programs.

At this stage, initial selection into state talent development programs, including the AFL Academies, is introduced.

Specialising Stage (17-18 years)

Objective: Developing higher-level skills of the game and physical capacities

Optimise the development of fitness capacities, individual, positional, team and competition skills.

For talented players, selection into state and national development programs, including the AFL Academies, continues. This includes the provision of an optimum competition program for player development that also provides opportunities to be assessed to be drafted to the AFL e.g. TAC Cup, state leagues and national championships.

Investment Stage (19-22 years)

Objective: Completion of development of all higher-level skills and capacities required for optimum performance.

This is the final stage of development, where the focus of training is on completing a player's development and optimising performance. For talented players, the refinement of physical, technical, tactical, mental and ancillary capacities is completed in the professional club environment.

Maintenance Stage (23-30+ years)

Objective: Maintaining and maximising performance.

The players' physical, technical, tactical, mental and ancillary capacities are fully developed (individual players may still be developing and continuing to learn). The program is focussed on competition and the training is aimed at optimising performance. Training is characterised by high intensity and relatively high volume and includes regular preventative breaks.

Retirement & Transition Stage (Individual)

Objective: Successful transition from the professional player role to another productive life role, including opportunities to remain in the sport.

This is the end of the high-performance competition stage – players retire permanently and transition to other levels of competition or to other roles, or out of football altogether. Continued physical activity is encouraged.

Appendix 8 AFL Club Coaching Curriculum

COACHING CURRICULUM UNDER 8-12

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
KICKING Type of Kick	Drop punt both feet	In these age groups, players should be introduced to accuracy in their kicking, paying special attention to the teaching of the drop punt for passing and goalkicking.
	Torpedo preferred foot	Highlight the importance and relevance of the torpedo punt kick in the game. The coach should emphasise the value of this kick in gaining territory.
	Banana (checkside)	Highlight the importance and relevance of the banana (checkside) kick in the game and give time to experiment with this kick for goal.
	Quick kick/snap	Players should be given time to experiment with these improvised kicks for goal and to clear the ball from defence or a dangerous position.
KICKING Accuracy	Stationary target	Special attention needs to be given to the teaching of the drop punt for passing and goalkicking.
	To a lead	Kick to a point/area on the ground to allow player to run on to the ball.
	On the run	Acceleration and balance are critical in teaching players to kick accurately on the run.
	For goal – set shot	Determine distance players can kick ball for success. Balance and a straight run-up are important ingredients to an accurate kick.
	For goal – running shot	Determine distance players can kick ball for success.
	For goal – snap shot	Players should be given time to experiment with these improvised kicks for goal.
HANDBALL Type of Handball	Rocket	Players in the age group should be introduced to the mechanics of handballing the ball from an open palm.
	Both hands	Players should be well established in the mechanics of the handball and should be able to fist the ball clear of the open hand.
HANDBALL Use	From ground	Players need to be made aware to give the ball off accurately with a handball at ground level or when going to ground.
	Hit/knock on	Use of hand/fist to keep the ball in motion or to knock it to the advantage of a teammate.
	Follow up	Drills that require players to follow their disposal should be introduced, especially after handballing to a teammate. Ability to get the ball back in a drill is good incentive for players to follow up and encourages them to help their teammate who may be under pressure.
MARKING Type of Mark/ Technique	Overhead – standing	Continue to observe players in this scenario to ensure that the correct techniques are used when players are attempting an overhead mark.
	Overhead/chest – pack mark	Players should be introduced to some token pressure when practising marking on the chest. This will enable them to avoid physical distractions when attempting a mark and assist them in using their body position for an advantage.
	Overhead – jumping, both legs	The coach should continue to encourage players to leap and extend their body to take overhead marks.
	Chest	Concentrate on developing players' abilities to gather a chest mark in low/diving positions.
	In front – hand mark	The difficulty of this skill cannot be understated. Players in this age group have a small hand size relative to ball size and their lack of accurate ball tracking ability means this skill should be introduced gradually and in a controlled environment.
	Body use	The coach can use partnered or pack mark activities to teach players how to use their bodies to contest for marks.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
PICKING UP THE BALL	Stationary ball	Develop these skills using the different scenarios.
	Ball approaching	
	Ball going away	
	Ball running across path	
BOUNCING BALL	Touching on ground	The player should be placed under token pressure when doing this activity, either in a relay race, someone shadowing or as a requirement in a modified game.
BOUNCING BALL	Preferred/ non-preferred hand	Players should be placed under token pressure when doing this activity, either in a relay race, someone shadowing or as a requirement in a modified game.
TAP-OUT	Preferred/ non-preferred hand	Start development of skill to a stationary target. Emphasise the correct position of hand, palm, then fist. From stationary target, progress to moving tap-out and to moving target.
PLAY ON *depending on local rules	Selecting when*	Players need to be made aware of the importance of playing on when the opportunity arises and not stall the movement of the ball when they take a mark, receive a free kick etc.
CHANGING DIRECTION	Baulk/side-step/ dummy/spin	Emphasise correct techniques. Work through from walking to running.
	Fending	A player's ability to ward off or 'fend' a tackle can be advantageous in a game situation. The coach must allow the players time to work on this skill, especially if local leagues allow tackling at this age group.
	Blind turn	Although this skill is generally discouraged by most coaches, players should be given the opportunity to practise this skill and given licence to use it in special circumstances in the game.
RUNNING TO	Technique	Poor straight-line running technique with or without the ball reduces a player's efficiency to cover ground quickly and accelerate out of congested situations.
	Receive	Players need to be continually reminded that their chances of obtaining more possessions or being involved more in the game will come with their ability to run to receiving positions instead of standing around and spectating after the ball has left their immediate area.
	Back up	This skill is similar to following a possession to assist a teammate receiving the ball. This skill also introduces the players to cover their teammate when they are attempting to gather or receive the ball.
	Man up (accountability)	Players should be aware of their immediate opponent and understand the responsibility for their immediate opponent. Activities at training that reinforce this are important at this age group. The coach should allow players offensive flair and not overly stress the defensive side of their game at this age.
	Running into space	Continue to assist players in identifying where space is on the ground and how to create and exploit space created.
	Running into vision	Players have a far better chance of receiving a disposal from their teammate if their teammate can see them in their immediate line of vision. Coaches need to encourage players to run to where a teammate is looking before that teammate delivers the ball.
TACKLING *depending on local rules	*Side	Emphasise correct technique and safety in executing the skill.
	*Front-falling	Players should be introduced to tackling from in front, given the techniques whereby harm and fear is reduced.
SPOILING	Preferred side	Players need to understand the value of a spoil, especially when caught behind an opponent in aerial/marking contests. Introduce the ability to track and punch the ball or spoil an attempt to mark the ball by an opponent within the laws of the game.
	Rear	As per above, but having the player practise and attempt spoiling from behind their opponent.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
SMOTHERING	Side	This skill needs to be introduced to players in a sequential and controlled manner so that young players can gain the confidence and expertise to execute a smother from the side in a game situation without hesitation.
SHEPHERDING	Arm use	The coach should assist players to develop effective protection for their teammates by introducing the 'brace position' and tensing the arms to shepherd opposition players fairly.
ON THE MARK *depending on local rules	Standing the mark	Educate players to effectively guard or stand the mark to discourage the opposition from playing on or gaining an advantage. Arms high and a sideways jumping motion can assist in this process.
BUMPING	Technique	The correct bumping technique needs to be introduced to players in these age groups. Use bump bags and other soft materials to begin with and discourage players from jumping off the ground.
	One-on-one tussle	Players should be encouraged to develop ways in which they can stand their ground and experiment using their own strength and maintaining balance.
CHASING	Chase	Understanding of when to chase in relation to game situations.
ROLLING	Forward – shoulder roll	The forward shoulder roll should be reinforced to this age group.
	Forward recover	The extension of the forward shoulder role is the ability to perform the shoulder role once sent off balance and then recovering to one's feet as quickly as possible to remain in the contest.
LANDING	Two feet	The two-foot landing or the 'motorbike' landing should be reinforced to this age group.
	One foot	Extend the players by reinforcing the two-foot landing and then the one-foot landing.
	Various positions and forces	Vary the direction players are put off balance to enable them to improve their ability to fall effectively and safely.
RECOVERY	Second and third efforts	Players need to be introduced to the concept of continuing to be involved in a contest beyond a single effort to tackle, mark, shepherd, chase etc.
	Maintaining ground	The coach can use partnered or pack mark activities to teach players how to use their bodies to maintain their ground to contest for marks and the loose ball.
	Keeping feet	Players at the younger age groups fall to ground too regularly and, if not countered, develop this habitually.

Tactic	Component	Recommendation
DEFENCE	Backline play	Manning up, accountability and 'matching up' with an opponent should be introduced at this age but not to the detriment of encouraging players to win the football and using their skills.
	Attacking	Players introduced to the concept of assisting in a forward build-up from defence.
FORWARD	Forward-line play	Creating, running into and finding space, leading and accountability for an opponent.
	Leading	Leading and the ability to get a 'start' on your immediate opponent should be introduced.
	Defending	Manning up on kick-outs and matching up on the immediate defender when the opposition has the ball will assist the defensive part of forward-line play. This practice should be tempered and the players' abilities to win the football and dispose of it creatively should not be suppressed for the sake of being overly opponent-conscious.
MIDFIELD	Defending	Manning up and being accountable for your own 'match up' should be coached to players who play in midfield/on-ball roles. This practice should be tempered and the players' abilities to win the football and dispose of it creatively should not be suppressed for the sake of being overly opponent-conscious.
POSITIONAL PLAY *rotate around as many zones as possible in early years	Zone specific	All players in this age group need to be aware and practise playing in the three zones of the ground (forward, midfield, back).
	Line specific	Players should start developing insights into the specific requirements to play in different 'lines' of the ground.
TEAMWORK	Sharing the ball	This pivotal concept in all team sports needs to be continually emphasised to this age group.
	Protecting teammate	See shepherding/bumping
	Constructive talk	Calling for the ball, deciding who should go for the ball, encouraging words and other forms of constructive communications are important to start introducing. Negative self talk and negative comments should be negated as soon as they appear or prevented by setting team rules and basic "codes" of playing behaviour.
SET PLAYS	Centre square, boundary throw-ins, around-the-ground set-ups	Understand what areas should be covered – back, side and front – and where the ball is to be hit should be covered.
	Opposition kick-outs	Match up and man up should be the only opposition kick-out plans developed and practised at this age group.

Miscellaneous	Component	Recommendation
CONDITIONING	Aerobic – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Muscular – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Anaerobic – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Speed/agility – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Flexibility	Stretching program used at training and on match-days.
NUTRITION	Healthy choices	Advice on healthy eating is advisable at this age group. Also identification of energy-rich foods and pre-game meals.
WELFARE		Interests of the child – social, emotional, development. Coach to develop self-esteem and inherent success or sense of worth in all activities.
SOCIAL SKILLING	"How do others see me?"	More 'we' orientated rather than 'me' orientated. Feedback becomes vitally important to get a sense of how they are seen by others. Peer acceptance becoming more important. Sensitive to negative comparisons with other children.
INJURY MANAGEMENT		Introduction to correct injury management techniques – RICER, warm up, cool down, stretching.

COACHING CURRICULUM UNDER 13-15

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
KICKING Type of Kick	Drop punt both feet	Players need to be aware of the mechanical actions of the kick, including leg-hip flexibility, leg swing, arm arch, pointed toe, stable support leg.
	Torpedo punt	Players should be able to demonstrate the grip and approach to kick a torpedo punt.
	Banana (check-side)	Players need to be aware of the grip and approach of the banana kick and its relevance in a game.
	Quick kick	The quick kick needs to be practised at game-paced situations and players need to understand the relevance of this kick.
	Off the ground	The coach must introduce the relevance of the kick off the ground, similar to the quick kick, and demonstrate kicking off the ground with pointed toe and using the side of the foot as in soccer.
	Angle kicking – 'snap'	Encourage players to experiment and have fun with different kicking angles.
KICKING Accuracy	To a lead	Players should understand how to correct their body position and weight their kick to a leading player. Players should also be aware of the ability to kick the ball to a leading player's advantage or 'space' the ball.
	On the run	Players need to understand and practise preparing their body while running to kick to a target – being aware of body positioning, deceleration of stride and follow through with kicking leg.
	For goal – set-shot	Players should be able to develop a routine to enable them to comfortably kick at goal from a stationary set situation 20m out.
	For goal – running shot	Players need to understand and practise preparing their body while running to kick for goal – being aware of body positioning, deceleration of stride and follow through with kicking leg.
	For goal – snap shot	Encourage players to experiment and have fun with different kicking angles at goal once players have mastered the ability to guide the ball to their foot.
HANDBALL Type of handball	Rocket	The player should be able to correctly backspin the handball with the ability to be accurate over distance.
	Bounce (overspin)	The player needs to understand how to execute a bounce handball and its relevance in a game situation.
HANDBALL Use	Both hands	A player needs to be extended so that they can handball accurately to a teammate with both hands.
	Quick disposal	A player needs to understand the relevance of disposing the ball by hand quickly, irrespective of the form it shows in the air, under game situations.
	Front and centre handball	Introduce the concept of handballing the ball to a teammate within a 45-degree arc in front of the handballer.
	From ground	Players need to practise handballing the ball from low positions after trapping and collecting the ball.
	Hit/knock on	The concept of 'keeping the ball alive' by knocking it on or hitting it on should be introduced.
	Follow up	To promote running to support, players should be encouraged to follow up their handball to the target to 'assist'.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
MARKING Type of Mark/ Technique	Overhead – standing	Players in this age group should have confidence and success in standing their ground and marking overhead with correct technique without any external pressure.
	Pack marking – overhead/chest	Players should be encouraged to contest for marks in pack situations to enable greater surety under external pressure.
	Overhead – leaping, both legs	Players should be encouraged to reach their highest point when taking overhead marks.
	Chest mark/diving	Increase the level of difficulty with external contesting or lowering the level the ball approaches.
	In front – hand mark	Players need to be encouraged to mark the ball with the correct hand marking technique.
	Body positioning	Players need to be able to brace their bodies to assume an advantageous position to mark.
	Landing/rolling	Players need to be shown how to land and/or roll effectively and safely after making an attempt.
PICKING UP THE BALL	Stationary ball	Players should, at this stage have the ability to collect a stationary or moving ball off the ground running at game speed.
	Ball approaching	
	Ball moving away	
	Ball running across path	
BOUNCING THE BALL	Touching the ground	Players should at this stage have the ability to touch the ball on the ground, running at game speed.
	Bouncing the ball – both hands	Players should at this stage have the ability to bounce the ball on the ground, running at game speed.
TAP-OUT	Both hands	Players at this stage should be encouraged to continue to palm and tap the ball at various angles with both hands.
	Leap	Special emphasis at this age group should be to allow the players an opportunity to co-ordinate their leaps.
PLAY ON	Selecting when	The coach needs to include drills and activities that challenge and present players opportunities to play on.
	Use of peripheral vision/scanning	Players need to be shown the art of scanning their head left and right when in possession of the ball to enable a greater field of vision.
LEADING	Timing your lead	Players at this age group should be introduced to the art of leading in the forward area against an opponent.
	Area to lead to	Players need to co-ordinate their lead to allow as much space as possible to lead into.
	Gaining an advantage before leading	Body positioning before the lead and wrong footing an opponent should be introduced to this age group.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
CRUMBING	The crumbing funnel – front and centre	The concept of crumbing front and centre of a marking pack should be introduced at this age. Players need to learn the value of crumbing the ball in front of a marking pack.
CHANGING DIRECTION	Baulk/side-step/ dummy	Players should be aware of the opportunity to wrong foot an opponent or get around an opponent.
	Spin	The spin should be reinforced to players at this stage.
	Fending	Players should be drilled in the abilities to avoid being tackled, including the fend from a would - be tackler, emphasising ball protection and correct technique.
	Blind turn	Players should be encouraged to develop more advanced evasive skills such as the blind turn.
RUNNING	Technique	Many running styles reduce a player's ability to efficiently move around the ground.
	To receive	Players should continue to be encouraged to run when they haven't got the ball to increase their chances of getting it.
	To back up/ numbers at the ball	Players should continue to be encouraged to run when they haven't got the ball in order to increase their chances of getting it or assisting a teammate.
	Man up (accountability)	Players at this age need to be aware of their defensive responsibilities when their team is not in possession of the ball.
	Running into space	Players need to be aware of and discover spaces that are created in a game of football.
	Running into ball carrier's vision	The coach must make players aware of moving to the right field of vision when receiving or leading for the ball.
TACKLING	Front falling	Players should be introduced to the front falling tackle to enable the smallest to the biggest players to tackle in a game.
	Front drive	Players should be introduced to the front drive tackle taking into account their welfare and their readiness for this skill.
	Front (drop tackle)	To minimise the likelihood of injury or awarding a free kick to the opposition, this tackle should be encouraged.
	Rear (drop tackle)	
	Side (drop tackle)	
SPOILING	Preferred/ non-preferred side	Coaches need to reinforce the need to spoil in marking situations when a player's chances of marking the ball are minimal.
	Rear (overhead mark)	
	Side (chest mark)	
SMOTHERING	Side	The coach needs to reinforce the technique of spoiling the ball from the side.
	Front	This form of smother should be introduced to this age group.
SHEPHERDING	Technique	The coach needs to reinforce to players the need to support a teammate with the ball by legal and effective shepherding.
ON THE MARK	Standing the mark	This age group should understand the value of actively standing the mark to create confusion or a possible turnover. Aim to cover the most dangerous part of the ground.
BUMPING	Technique	Players should be fully aware of the ability to bump and absorb a bump.
	One-on-one tussle	Players need to be given activities against their peers to help demonstrate and discover ways to maintain their position.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
ROLLING	Forward	Players should be able to demonstrate a forward roll without injury with and without the ball in their possession.
	Forward recover	Players at this age group need to be able to recover to their feet quickly after rolling to the ground.
	Backward	This advanced form of rolling needs to be introduced to players in this age group.
LANDING	Two feet	Players should be well versed with the simple 'motor-bike' landing on two feet.
	One foot	Players need to be set activities and drills which enable them to refine landing on one foot.
	Variety of positions and forces	Develop and conduct activities which will assist players to land on one and two feet.
RUCKWORK	Craft	Players should be taught the subtleties of ruck-work, including palming and knocking on.
RECOVERY	Second and third efforts	The coach needs to develop a player's awareness to stay in a contest for the ball.
	Maintaining ground	Players need to be given activities against their peers to help demonstrate and discover ways to maintain their position.
	Keeping feet	Players should be encouraged to avoid 'going to ground'.
DEFENCE	Backline play	The essence of backline play needs to be reinforced at this age group with manning up, movement of the ball away from the corridor and spoiling from behind emphasised.
	Restricting space	Players who play in the backline must be made aware of playing their opponent on the side/area that precludes that player from running to goal.
	Attacking	Defenders should continually be encouraged to become playmakers and be part of a forward build-up and not just defensively oriented.
FORWARD	Forward-line play	Players should be encouraged to continue leading to the kicker and playing in front of their opponent.
	Creating space	Players need to be introduced to the ability to identify space to lead into that is created by player movements in the forward line and need to be encouraged to avoid congesting the most effective scoring area – the 'hot spot'.
	Leading	Continually practise leading drills and activities to reinforce timing and direction of leads in the forward area.
	Defending	Players at this age group need to be aware of their responsibilities as a defender when the opposition has the ball. Their ability to 'keep the ball in their area' needs to be reinforced.
	Forward-line set-ups	Basic forward line set-ups at centre bounces and dead-ball situations should be encouraged.
MIDFIELD	Defending	Manning up and being accountable for your own 'match up' should be coached to players who play in midfield/on-ball roles. This practice should be tempered and the players' abilities to win the football and dispose of it creatively should not be suppressed for the sake of being overly opponent-conscious.
POSITIONAL PLAY	Line specific	Players should be introduced to certain unique demands of their specific 'line' i.e. full-forward line, half-forward line, centreline, half-back line, full-back line, on-ballers.
	Position specific	Players should receive specific information and feedback on how to play their specific position and should be encouraged to play in as many positions as possible during their season to meet the demands of the modern game.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
TEAMWORK	Sharing the ball	Players should be well aware of their responsibility as a member of a team to deliver the ball to teammates in a better position or for the team to maintain possession.
	Protecting teammate	Players should be well aware of their responsibility as a member of a team to protect their teammate who has the ball or is about to gather.
	Constructive talk	At this age group, the coach needs to introduce and drill effective communication between teammates.
	Cover	At under-15 level and beyond, when players have become aware and drilled in effective on ground talk, the coach should introduce 'cover' concepts to the team. 'Covering' assists players who are out of position to have their immediate opponent accounted for by another teammate.
SET PLAYS	Centre square set-ups	At this age group, the basic roles and set-ups available to players playing in the centre square should be introduced. The coach should introduce the ruck, 'blocker', 'sweeper' and rover roles and develop 'ruck area zoning' concepts with all players in the team.
	Boundary throw-ins	The rucks should be introduced to areas around the boundary throw-ins where they should attempt to knock or palm the ball depending if the throw-in is in the forward area, backline area or midfield.
	Field ball-ups	The rucks should be introduced to areas around the field ball-ups where they should attempt to knock or palm the ball depending if the ball-up is in the forward area, backline area or midfield.
	Opposition kick-outs	Players should be made aware of their roles in a 'zone' or when an opposing team forms a huddle on their kick-in. The importance of 'man-on-man' cover when the opposition kicks the ball in should also be practised.
	Own kick-outs	The coach should vary the roles players are given and also give most players the opportunity to be the 'designated kicker'.
TRANSITIONAL PLAY	Switch	Players need to be introduced to 'switching' the ball from one side of the ground to the other to increase the chances of a more fluent forward move.
	Running from back half	Encourage players to be involved in attacking moves when they are playing in backline positions.

Miscellaneous	Component	Recommendation
CONDITIONING	Aerobic – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Muscular – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Anaerobic – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Speed/agility – natural	Incorporated in training activities – drills, warm-up activities.
	Flexibility	Stretching program used at training and on match-days
NUTRITION	Healthy choices	Advice on healthy eating is advisable at this age group.
	Game-focused habits	Identification of energy-rich foods and pre-game meals.
RECOVERY/BODY MANAGEMENT	Techniques	Players at the level where the physicality of the game increases the incidence of injury should start to be introduced to responsible injury treatment and recovery practices. Strategies such as recovery stretching, hot/cold showers, optimal rest and sleep, correct recovery and pre-game diet should be introduced.
WELFARE		Interests of the child – social, emotional, development. Coach to develop self-esteem and inherent success or sense of worth in all activities.
SOCIAL SKILLING	"How do others see me?"	More 'we' orientated rather than 'me' orientated. Feedback becomes vitally important to get a sense of how they are seen by others. Peer acceptance becoming more important. Sensitive to negative comparisons with other children.
INJURY MANAGEMENT		Introduction to correct injury management techniques – RICER, warm up, cool down, stretching.

COACHING CURRICULUM
UNDER 16-18

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
KICKING Type of Kick	Drop punt both feet – to a lead	Use correct grip. Learn appropriateness of power of kick related to ball hang time. Learn where to aim body to leads at various distances.
	Drop punt both feet – on the run	Use correct grip. Learn to 'balance up' before disposal. Uses of leg follow through. Learn correct landing depending on whether a 'long-only' kick or a 'target' kick.
	Drop punt preferred foot – for goal – set shot	Use correct grip. Learn to set 'target' behind the goal. Prepare 'run-up' routine for player to be balanced at the point of kick. Use of 'man on the mark' to simulate game situation.
	Drop punt preferred foot – for goal – running shot	Use correct grip. Prepare player to be balanced at the point of kick.
	Snap shot kick both feet – for goal	Continue to experiment with holding the ball at different angles towards the goal. Practise kicking across the body at different angles.
	Torpedo – preferred foot	Use correct grip. Experience the fundamentals of this kick, individually and collectively.
	Banana (checkside) preferred foot	Continue to experiment with holding the ball at different angles. Follow through.
	Quick kick both feet	Experiment with getting foot to ball quickly. Develop target/space kicking – use of peripheral vision.
KICKING Accuracy	Stationary target	Players should develop a routine that enables them to comfortably kick from a stationary set situation 20m or more with a player on the mark.
	To a lead	Players should understand how to correct their body position and weight their kick to a leading player.
	On the run	Players need to understand and practise preparing their body while running to kick to a target – being aware of body positioning, deceleration of stride and follow through with kicking leg.
	For goal – set shot	Players should develop a routine that enables them to comfortably kick at goal from a stationary set situation 20m or more with a player on the mark.
	For goal – running shot	Players need to understand and practise preparing their body while running to kick to a target – being aware of body positioning, deceleration of stride and follow through with kicking leg.
	For goal – snap shot	Encourage players to experiment and have fun with different kicking angles at goal once players have mastered the ability to guide the ball to their foot.
HANDBALL Type of Handball	Rocket – both hands	Continue with understanding the fundamentals. Vary distances. Simulate situations for use of this handball.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
HANDBALL Use	Quick hands – both hands	'Grab and hit'. Experience improving speed handball to front and either side (right to left/left to right).
	Front and centre – both hands	Concentrate on using handball within vision and body protection (i.e. up to about 45º from perpendicular each side) to front and either side.
	Off ground – both hands	Concentrate on ground ball handball. Emphasis on picking up ball with hands and handballing before straightening.
	Backwards – both hands	Develop concept of player moving away from goal, first option to handball to player running towards goal.
	Hit/knock-on – both hands	Develop knowledge when to hit stationary ball and/or moving ball. Practise hitting ball with either open hand or fist.
	Follow up	Develop concept of assisting teammate after handballing.
MARKING Type of Mark/ Technique	Overhead – both legs	Continue understanding the fundamentals of overhead marking. Concentrate on slightly bent arms (about 120º).
	Chest	Continue understanding the fundamentals of chest marking. Concentrate on the tuck of the body.
	Body use	Practise use of arms and/or use of body.
	Pack mark – overhead and chest	Using the fundamentals learnt, experience group situations.
	In front – hand mark	Continue understanding the fundamentals of marking with the hands. Concentrate on slightly bent arms (about 120º).
PICKING UP BALL	Stationary ball	Continue understanding the fundamentals of picking up the ball.
	Ball approaching	
	Ball going away	
	Ball running across path	
BOUNCING BALL	Preferred hand	Continue experiencing bouncing ball – walking, jogging and running at different speeds.
	Touching on ground – both sides	Continue experiencing touching ball on ground – walking, jogging and running at different speeds.
TAP-OUT	Both hands	Develop skills to hit to various positions. Use of a ruck bag. Use of thrown ball, bounced ball, kicked ball.
PLAY ON	Selecting when	Practise technique of playing on without or with opposition. Introduce game-type situations to gain further experience, including use of umpires.
	Use of peripheral vision – scanning	Extend experience of playing on by introducing other receiving players to develop decision-making.

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
LEADING	Timing	Develop the ability to time lead.
	Area to lead – finding space	Use of scanning ('periscope eyes'). Need to use/develop game-sense drills so player can gain experience in decision-making.
	Gaining an advantage	Set up game-type situations where players will learn: (a) How to fend off opponents at the right time; (b) How to dummy lead; (c) how to bump opponents at the right time.
CRUMBING	Use of crumbing line – front and centre	Further develop the concept of running to the crumbing line.
CHANGING DIRECTION **EVASIVE SKILLS**	Side step	Continue to practise this skill following the basic fundamentals.
	Baulk/dummy	
	Spin	
	Blind turn	
	Fending	Make sure players understand that they must keep their hand nearest the opponent free at all times.
RUNNING	Technique	Continue specialised activities to develop speed, e.g. drills – high knees, bum kicks, lunges, skips.
	To receive	Game-sense drills that give players experience at when and where to run to receive.
	To back up	Game-sense drills that give players experience at running to support.
	To man up (accountability)	Game-sense drills that give players experience at changing from offensive mode to defensive mode.
	To chase	Game-sense drills that give players experience at 'hard' chasing an opponent.
	To cover	Game-sense drills that give players experience at making decisions whether to cover for a teammate or not.
	To carry ball	Game-sense drills that give players experience at carrying the ball while sprinting.
	Dummy lead – creating space	Game-sense drills that give players experience making a lead to open up space for a teammate to lead to.
	Running into space	Game-sense drills that give players experience at finding space to lead into.
	Running into vision	Game-sense drills that give players experience at running into the vision of the player with the ball and about to dispose.
TACKLING	Side	Continue understanding of the fundamentals. Use of tackling bags and opponent.
	Rear	
	Front falling	
	Front dive	Encourage players with strong and effective tackling tendencies to develop this type of tackle to retard forward movement of the ball.
SPOILING	Rear – preferred/ non-preferred	Continue understanding of the fundamentals. Emphasis on use of arm, where to spoil, whether to spoil ball, use of opposite leg to jump, positioning of body.
	Side	

Skill	Extension	Recommendation
SMOTHERING	Side	Continue understanding of the fundamentals. Emphasis on bent elbows, hand positioning, watching ball.
	Front	
SHEPHERDING	Arm use	Continue to practise the changing of the line of opponent by use of the arm.
	Side push – ball carrier off balance	Continue to practise side pushing of opponent when about to dispose and can't reach or are near the boundary line.
ON THE MARK	Standing the mark	Continue to practise standing the mark. Emphasis on use of forward arms, being a moving mark.
	Slowing play	Set up game-sense drills that give players experience at covering an opponent from playing on or disposing quickly.
BUMPING	Technique	Continue understanding of the fundamentals. Use of bumping bag before opponent.
	One-on-one tussle	Continue understanding of the fundamentals.
CHASING	When to – as per running	Set up game-sense drills that give players experience at 'hard' chasing an opponent.
ROLLING	Forward	Continue understanding of fundamentals. Emphasis on correct technique.
	Forward recover	
	Shoulder	
	Backward	
LANDING	Two feet	Continue understanding of fundamentals. Correct technique, including feet shoulder width apart; hips, knees and ankles flexed; straight back.
	One foot	Continue understanding of fundamentals. Emphasis on correct technique and balance.
	Various positions/ forces	Introduce landing from various positions when player is disoriented in flight.
RUCKWORK	Craft	Set up game-sense drills that give players experience at using body to gain advantage over opponent.
RECOVERY	Second and third efforts	Set up game-sense drills that give players experience at maintaining effort until ball is obtained.
	Maintaining ground	Set up game-sense drills that give players experience at keeping ground. Emphasis on broad base of support, using strength of body appropriately.
	Keeping feet – non-contact	Set up game-sense drills that give players experience at keeping feet, especially when turning, dodging or weaving.
	Keeping feet – contact	Set up game-sense drills that give players experience at keeping feet after contact.

Tactic	Extension	Recommendation
DEFENCE	Backline play	The essence of backline play needs to be reinforced at this age group with manning up, movement of the ball away from the corridor and spoiling from behind emphasised.
	Restricting space	Players who play in the backline must be made aware of playing their opponent on the side/area that precludes that player from running to goal.
	Attacking	Defenders should continually be encouraged to become playmakers and be part of a forward build-up and not just defensively oriented.
FORWARD PLAY	Forward-line play	Players should be encouraged to continue leading to the kicker and playing in front of their opponent.
	Creating space	Players need to be introduced to the ability to identify space to lead into that is created by player movements in the forward line and need to be encouraged to avoid congestion.
	Leading	Continually practise leading drills and activities to reinforce timing and direction of leads in the forward area.
	Defending	Players at this age group need to be aware of their responsibilities as a defender when the opposition has the ball.
	Forward-line set-ups	Introducing players at this age with basic forward-line set-ups at centre bounces and dead-ball situations should be encouraged.
POSITIONAL PLAY	Line specific	Players should be introduced to certain unique demands of their specific 'line'.
	Position specific	Players should receive specific information and feedback on how to play their specific position.
TEAMWORK	Sharing the ball	Players should be well aware of their responsibility as a member of a team to deliver the ball to teammates in a better position or for the team to maintain possession.
	Protecting teammate	Players should be well aware of their responsibility as a member of a team to protect their teammate who has the ball or is about to gather it.
	Constructive talk	At this age group, the coach needs to introduce and drill effective communication between teammates.
	Cover	The coach should introduce 'cover' concepts to the team. 'Covering' assists players who are out of position to have their immediate opponent accounted for by another teammate.
SET PLAYS	Centre square set-ups	At this age group, the basic roles and set-ups available to players playing in the centre square should be introduced. The coach should introduce the ruck, 'blocker', 'sweeper' and rover roles and develop a 'ruck area zoning' concept with **all** players in the team.
	Boundary throw-ins	At this age group, the basic roles and set-ups available to players playing around a boundary throw-in should be introduced. The coach should introduce the ruck, 'blocker', 'sweeper' and rover roles and develop a 'ruck area zoning' concept with **all** players in the team. The rucks should be introduced to areas around the boundary throw-in where they should attempt to knock or palm the ball.
	Field ball-ups	At this age group, the basic roles and set-ups available to players playing around a field ball-up should be introduced. The coach should introduce the ruck, 'blocker', 'sweeper' and rover roles and develop a 'ruck area zoning' concept with **all** players in the team.
	Opposition kick-outs	Players should be made aware of their roles in a 'zone' or when an opposing team forms a huddle on their kick-in. The importance of 'man-on-man' cover when the opposition kicks the ball in should also be practised.
	Own kick-outs	Set plays involving players with specific roles when the team is kicking in should be introduced and continually rehearsed using various players, not just a set few. The coach should vary the roles players are given and also give most players the opportunity to be the 'designated kicker'.
TRANSITIONAL PLAY	Switch	'Switching' the ball from one side of the ground to the other to increase the chances of a more fluent forward move.
	Running from back half	The coach needs to continue encouraging players to be involved in attacking moves when they are playing in backline positions.

Miscellaneous	Component	Recommendation
CONDITIONING It is recommended that coaches seek qualified advice from conditioning experts before recommending these activities to their players. Note: coaches should be encouraged to incorporate programmed conditioning into ball drills as much as possible.	Aerobic – programmed	Conditioning programs related to developing greater aerobic (endurance) fitness need to be slowly introduced to this age group.
	Muscular – programmed	At under-16, players should be introduced to body weight exercises to develop joint stability and muscular strength. At under-17 and under-18, the physical endowment of the players will determine the extent to which weight training should be encouraged.
	Anaerobic – programmed	A player's ability to contest for the ball at multiple efforts will be dependent on their anaerobic fitness.
	Speed/agility – programmed	Speed can be improved, especially the ability of a player to accelerate to their top speed. Special conditioning programs are available to improve this area of the game.
	Flexibility – programmed	Stretching programs used at training and on match-days.
	Balance	Specific programs to improve balance and body orientations can be introduced to players.
NUTRITION		Identification of energy-rich foods and pre-game meals. Foods that assist in recovery should be introduced at this age group.
RECOVERY/BODY MANAGEMENT	Techniques	The ability to improve recovery from training and games should be introduced. Strategies such as recovery stretching, hot/cold showers, optimal rest and sleep, correct recovery and pre-game diet should all be introduced. The number of games players at this level are subjected to should be monitored and appropriate rest should be a priority.
WELFARE		Coach to develop self-esteem and inherent success or sense of worth in all activities. Responsible drinking practices and social and performance-enhancing drugs should be addressed and a structure through which a player or parent can seek support from the club should be investigated.
SOCIAL SKILLING	"How do others see me?"	More 'we' orientated rather than 'me' orientated. Feedback becomes vitally important to get a sense of how players are seen by others.
INJURY MANAGEMENT		Introduction to correct injury management techniques – RICER, warm up, cool down. Rehabilitation programs should be investigated via the club physiotherapist, head trainer or doctor.

Appendix 9 Contacts

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COACHING COORDINATOR HANDBOOK

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