



**Capital
Football**



JUNIOR GUIDELINES
HOW TO PUT INTO PRACTICE AT YOUR CLUB



HOW TEAMS ARE FORMED

WHAT THE GUIDELINES SAY:

To ensure players can play with their friends and that the focus for players is enjoyment and development over winning the following guidelines should be followed:

- No selection of any junior teams from U6-U10
- No selection of a single 'top team' for U11-U12
- No trials are held in any junior age groups.

HOW IT LOOKS IN PRACTICE :

- Teams for U6-U10 are allocated based on friendships and parent requests (carpooling etc.). A player can list friends or school mates on registration and be assured they will be with at least one of their listed friends.
- In U11-U12 Grades, look to have at least two "top teams" that are evenly spread. I.E 40 club players in a grade would mean 2 "A" teams of even ability and two "B teams" of even ability.
- Avoid the concept of a "trial", but instead look at running a week or two of your regular training programme and then form teams based off of how well they work together, previous teammates and friendships as opposed to performance or size of players. This avoids the pressure of "selection" for young players, and instead simply offers them a further development opportunity.





APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF PLAY

WHAT THE GUIDELINES SAY:

Teams should be continually regraded throughout the season to provide the appropriate ongoing challenge for all. This will help negate the possibility of lop-sided scores.

HOW IT LOOKS IN PRACTICE :

Capital Football will frequently regrade junior leagues to ensure there are as close to even games as possible. In between these regrades, we encourage teams to follow best practice when scores do begin to look lop sided. This includes:

- Allowing for one team to play with extra players.
- Swapping players across teams.
- Encouraging behaviours such as “10 passes before scoring” for the winning team.





FAIR PLAYING TIME

WHAT THE GUIDELINES SAY:

All junior players should receive fair playing time during training and games, allowing all players fair opportunities during play.

HOW IT LOOKS IN PRACTICE :

At trainings, avoid any time a player is either a substitute, or standing to the side. A “neutral” player, or uneven teams is better than a child missing playing opportunities at practice.

For game days, rotate substitutes evenly. Work off timings such as quarters to roll substitutes. Where possible, make sure every player has the same amount of time on and off the field. If there is any reason this cannot be achieved, look to balance this out the following game day. A simple ‘log’ of substitutions can help you as a coach keep things even and under control.





ENJOYMENT

WHAT THE GUIDELINES SAY:

A focus on enjoyment and development over winning will encourage players to stay playing our game for longer. This focus will ultimately have a positive effect on player motivation, and physical and mental well-being.

HOW IT LOOKS IN PRACTICE :

Keep messaging to players positive and ensure feedback/tactics are related to what was learnt at training rather than the score of the game. Continue to check in on the kids having fun, by asking them regularly. Try get this message across to parents also, so side-line behaviour reflects enjoyment and learning as the priority.





A VARIETY OF SPORTS

WHAT THE GUIDELINES SAY:

Identifying, selecting, and specialising players in a particular sport early can be detrimental to long term development. We recommend young people experience many different sports and physical activity.

HOW IT LOOKS IN PRACTICE :

In your training sessions, look to introduce general movement activities that do not always look like football or football movements. For example, games like tag, netball etc.

As a junior coach, never encourage specialisation and be open to children playing multiple sports.

