

FFA National Curriculum

“Making Australia a World Leader in the World Game”



1

Purpose and Objectives

Research

Analysis

Identified Gaps

FFA Curriculum Rationale

FFA Curriculum Framework

Implementation



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Purpose

The curriculum provides a soundly based, consistent, coordinated ***national*** Talent Development and Identification Program for Football in Australia that, ***if properly implemented*** will achieve a major improvement in the quality and performance of Australia's top players, coaches and teams.



Objectives

ØTo produce the best players (gauged in terms of international competitiveness) primarily for:

- **The Socceroos**
- **The A-League**
- **The Matildas**
- **The W-League**

ØTo become a consistent top 20 team on the men's FIFA ranking system by 2015 (and strive for a position in the top 10 by 2020) and a top 10 team in women's football by 2012.

ØTo create a talented player development program that sustains success for generations to come.

ØTo create a coach development system in Australia that produces quality coaches that are able to bring the content of the Curriculum to life to realise the targets.



Objectives

Ø To create a youth development system in Australia that is fully operational nationwide by 2015 and renowned as one of the world's best.

Ø To organize the 2018 or 2022 men's FIFA World Cup and compete in it on the highest level, striving to win the tournament.

Ø To become a medal winner at the 2019 women's FIFA World Cup and the 2020 Olympic Games.

Ø To achieve this the FFA has determined:

- a set of principles that will guide action;
- a national footballing philosophy and a detailed Curriculum with specific content;

which together will make a REAL, unambiguous difference.



Curriculum Development

Ø The key gaps in Australia's current development of players and coaches have been identified

Ø The Curriculum has been developed to make a big impact on closing the gaps

Ø The development has involved learning from what is done elsewhere, and its results

Ø The Curriculum is factually and analytically based (not a compilation of opinions!)

Ø The FFA has consulted widely to ensure all relevant ideas and thinking considered

Ø The result is an Australian solution

A fundamental transformation of Australian football is needed to achieve the objectives!



Current Status

Ø A structured pathway is in place for the identification and development of Australia's elite players in the 14 to 19 years age group (Men's and Women's).

Ø A uniform nationwide structure has to be put in place for the 8 to 14 years age group.

Ø The **TECHNICAL CONTENT** of this Talented Player Development Program is provided by **THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM**.

Ø IMPLEMENTATION MUST BE NATIONWIDE.

Ø The **MEMBER FEDERATION CHARTER** (and through this Charter the role and quality of the **STATE TECHNICAL DIRECTORS**) is vital for bringing the Curriculum to life.



NATIONAL TALENTED PLAYER PATHWAY: MENS - COMMENCING 2008

AGE GROUP	DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY	COMPETITION PATHWAY	REPRESENTATION PATHWAY
21	A-League Clubs Overseas Clubs	Asian Champions League A-League Overseas Leagues National Futsal Champs.	Socceroos Olyroos (U/23) Futsalroos
18-20	A-League Youth & A-League State League Clubs Overseas Clubs	A-League National Youth League State League (Senior) National Futsal Champs.	Olyroos (U/23) Young Socceroos (U/20)
16-17	AIS or A-League Youth State League Clubs	National Youth League State League (Senior) National Futsal Champs.	Young Socceroos (U/20) AIS
14-15	State Institutes (A-League Link) AIS	State Youth League Institute Challenges National Championships National Futsal Champs.	Joey's (U/17) State Institutes State Teams
12-14	FFA Accredited Clubs, Schools and Academies	State Competition National Championships National Futsal Champs.	State Teams National U/13 – U/14 team
10-12	FFA Accredited Clubs, Schools and Academies	Club or State Competition National Futsal Champs.	
6-10	FFA Accredited Clubs, Schools and Academies	Small Sided Games including Futsal	



NATIONAL TALENTED PLAYER PATHWAY: WOMEN'S - COMMENCING 2008

AGE GROUP	DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY	COMPETITION PATHWAY	REPRESENTATION PATHWAY
21	AIS Overseas Clubs/Universities State League Clubs	W-League Overseas Leagues State League (Senior) National Futsal Champs.	Matildas W-League (Futsal National Team)
19-20	AIS/State Institutes State League Clubs Overseas Clubs/Universities	W-League Institute Challenge State League (Senior) National Futsal Champs.	Matildas Young Matildas (U/20) State Institutes/W League Team
17-18	AIS State Institutes State League Clubs	W-League Institute Challenge State League (Senior) National Championships National Futsal Champs.	Young Matildas (U/20) State Institutes W-League
15-16	State Institutes State League Clubs	W-League State Competition National Championships National Futsal Champs.	National U/17 Team State Institutes State Teams
12-14	FFA Accredited Clubs, Schools and Academies or FFA Centres of Excellence	State Competition National Championships National Futsal Champs.	State Teams National U/13 – U/14 Team
10-12	FFA Accredited Clubs, Schools and Academies	Club or State Competition National Futsal Champs.	
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Conduct of Research

- Ø Review team with diverse expertise
- Ø Review of scientific research
- Ø Research on Australian data
- Ø Visits to a selection of other football federations
- Ø Consultation with other Australian sports bodies
- Ø Submissions from interested parties
- Ø Consultation with local football experts and representatives
- Ø Extensive discussion within review team
- Ø Input by the Technical Director



Research Foundation

- Ø Very extensive body of scientific research about talent development and identification:
 - for sport in general;
 - for football in particular;
 - much of it validated multinationally.
- Ø Distinction between *giftedness* (natural ability) and *talent* (developed ability)
- Ø Limitations on talent prediction:
 - implications for early identification of future talented players.
- Ø Age related development stages.
- Ø Time and effort to develop football mastery;
 - the importance of long term dedication.
- Ø Squandering the talent pool – Relative Age Effect & financial barrier.
- Ø Geographic differences in generating athletes.
- Ø Generally gender neutral.



Implications of research - 1

∅To become an outstanding adult footballer generally takes at least 10 years of sustained, deliberate practice, from a young age:

- the vast majority of development occurs in training / practice – not in competition;
- typically, the bulk of training occurs during personal practice, without professional supervision. This is where 'touch' is developed.

∅This requires not just good coaching and training opportunities but exceptional, enduring, personal commitment.

∅In general, recognizing giftedness is easy, it is much more difficult to identify players that with opportunities associated with the appropriate training environment may become top players.

∅As a consequence, many players with real potential are excluded from development opportunities and drop out of the talent pool. It is also crucial to recognize differences in ability as opposed to simply basing opinions reflecting maturation differences.

∅This is exacerbated when prevailing practices for young players emphasise winning competitions rather than skill development.



Implications of Research - 2

∅There are particular age related stages in the natural development of children when acquisition of certain types of ability is relatively easy. This affects the ideal ages for developing particular football skills and the type of training experiences appropriate at different ages.

∅There is a particular style of play and playing system best suited to the overall development of players.

∅The emphasis on coach education is extremely strong in the most established powerful footballing nations.

∅Large cities are much less effective, per capita, at generating talented athletes than are regional localities.

∅There is likely to be multiple pathways for talent to emerge (late developers), not just a single, prescribed pathway.



Research and Overseas Practices

Ø While similar development considerations apply around the world, the development arrangements that are most practical vary across societies as a consequence of differences in factors such as population, population concentration, climate, affluence, attitudes to sport, overall sporting environment, and government involvement in sport, history, tradition and culture in football.

Ø So, in examining practices of other federations, we saw the combined effect of general youth development dynamics and the specific national conditions.

Ø In learning from those other federations, we have disentangled the components and then identified which practices are likely to be most effective in Australia, given its particular national conditions.

Ø The optimum practices and approach for Australia turn out to be a combination of what was observed in more than one country.



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Analysis

Ø An analysis of Australian football provides an insight into what technical aspects need to be addressed and improved in order to be able to realise the Curriculum objectives.

Ø The fact that many young players leave Australia is a complicating factor for the talented player development program because from that moment on we are no longer in control of the player's development.

Ø This would not be a problem if our top players go to quality clubs / countries (as occurs with our top women's footballers); they will develop into better players, good for the individual and good for our national teams.

Ø However, more and more 2nd category male players are being lured to 2nd category clubs / countries where their development is hindered.

Ø This is also having a detrimental affect on the available quality player pool for the A-League clubs.

Ø This is not an issue for women's football because the top players are being lured to the world's best leagues and then returning to play in the W-League.



Analysis - Strengths

Ø Australian football players are physically strong and competitive

Ø Australian players have a strongly developed winner's mentality

Ø Australian players are in general mature at a young age and have a strong determination to succeed

Ø The Australian football preference is for an attacking, 'open' game which is the characteristic style of the A-League and W-League



Analysis - Weaknesses

Ø Overall technical GAME skills, in particular:

- Individual attacking qualities (creativity);
- First touch under pressure;
- Short passing game;
- Handling speed in tight areas.

Ø Ball possession/positioning play, in particular:

- Playing out from the back;
- Controlling / changing the speed of the game;
- Successful attacking combinations.

Ø Tactical maturity, in particular:

- Tactical awareness, 'reading' the game;
- Leadership; decision making on the pitch;
- Game 'cleverness', being 'street smart'.



Purpose and Approach

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Identified Gaps

- A. Technical skills are deficient in players in elite programs / competitions.
- B. Deficient game skills and game hardness evident in mid teens and later (particularly 15 – 18 age group).
- C. Loss of potential talent due to Relative Age Effect.
- D. Loss of potential talent due to the 'financial barrier'.
- E. Omission of a lot of potential talent from regional Australia.
- F. Abilities of coaches for talented young players and for senior teams.

Gap A: Deficient Technical Skills

Technical skills:

- all skills required when in contact with the ball
 - the ability to treat the ball as a coordinated extension of self
-
- Ø Strong technical skills needed before developing strong game skills;
 - Ø World's best players start developing technical skills at a young age;
 - Ø Australia's top players are seen as very competitive and physically effective footballers but not praised for technical excellence (FIFA technical reports);
 - Ø AIS, NTC and national coaches find the players they receive weak on technical skills;
 - Ø Current Australian football environment does not lead to development of strong technical skills;
 - Ø Australia cannot produce a significant number of world class footballers until it is world class in developing technical skills, that persist under pressure, in its young players (while preserving their current strengths).

Gap B: Deficient Game Skills

Game skills / game hardness:

- neuro-physiological adaptation to playing high intensity football at a high standard with the commitment and ability to get results;
- beyond technical skills but needs them as the foundation;
- comes from extensive, regular, meaningful, high level competition.
- Ø In the most successful football countries, by age 17 or 18, the best young players are competing in professional senior environments (with adult professionals).
- Ø A typical league season in major football countries covers 10 to 11 months.
- Ø Reinforcing cycle:
 - Talented young players who develop game skills and are game hardened earliest, get highest level club competition opportunities before others of same age – further extending their game skills / hardness, continuously increasing their competitive lead.
- Ø For our best young players to mature, in a football sense, in line with top overseas counterparts they require a high level **year round training and competition environment.**

Gap C: Loss of Potential Talent due to RAE

- Ø Individuals born earliest within certain age groups tend to have size, speed, coordination, mental and emotional advantages over those born later in the same age group, even when they have the same innate potential;
- Ø This particularly is the case in the U/14, U/15 and U/16 age groups because of the growth spurt;
- Ø In a competitive environment, those born later within this age cohort tend to be selected out, so in later stages of youth development, and entry into professional ranks, the remaining talent pool is heavily dominated by players born early in the grouping year(s);
- Ø There is very extensive research evidence of this effect for football and other sports throughout the world and also in Australia (particularly for men);
- Ø Education is the key!, it is the expertise of the coach to be able to notice and rule out the negative influence of RAE and to identify the real talented player. In some cases it could be advisable to leave a talented but physically slow developer for a certain period of time with a younger age group; (regulations may need to be modified)
- Ø With the age group selection of the U/17 and U/20 national teams, individuals born in the 'wrong' years get reduced development opportunities. For this reason, commencing 2009 the AIS program intake now comprises 2 age groups. Similar measures are required to be undertaken around the country.

Gap D: Loss of potential talent due to financial barrier

Ø Across the world, football is very easy accessible for every child, rich or poor. This is one of the main reasons why it has become the world's game, you only need a ball, even if it is one made of rags. Traditionally the talented children have often come from this lower socio economic environment.

Ø In Australia however, football is becoming an expensive sport and therefore not affordable for families with low incomes. When a child is identified as being talented and selected for participation in State and National Championships the threshold becomes even higher because of the 'user pays' system.

Ø Sometimes this is exacerbated by distance from the main football centres

Ø Therefore, the assumption is justifiable that this situation causes a substantial loss of potential talent.

It is the (moral) responsibility of the football community to level this barrier and make football accessible for every child



Gap E: Talent from Regional Australia

Ø Across most Australian sports rural locations are much better (per capita) than big cities at generating athletes.

Ø Unlike other football codes in Australia, football has been predominantly a city game (75% of Australian A-League players developed in large cities).

Ø This is consistent with football (soccer) in Australia having been fostered by 20th century European immigrants and their children, who tended to cluster in the capital and industrial cities.

Ø The historical immigration dynamic that has underpinned football in Australia appears to be weakening. This poses a major threat to Australia's future talent pool unless offset by gaining a much greater share of young athletes from rural areas.

Ø Since players need to be inducted into the game at an early age, this would require initiatives that make football much more accessible in rural Australia and, at the same time, would also tend to draw many more indigenous Australians into the game.



Gap F: Ability of Elite Coaches

- Ø On average, Australian coaches available for elite youth development and for State and national competition teams have less relevant experience and consequently less expertise than their counterparts in top football countries.
 - Australia has some good coaches but it can boast few world class coaches comparable to those commonly found in the best football nations.
- Ø There is a 'chicken and egg' dynamic at work:
 - top players and top teams need top coaches;
 - but top coaches emerge over time from extensive experience with top players, top teams and top competitions;
 - since Australia has lacked the latter, it has limited the development of its coaches, despite their potential.
- Ø This constraint has been partially offset by:
 - the very high standards of coaching generally at the AIS and in many other sports where Australia is a leader;
 - the infusion of some high quality coaches from overseas either as migrants or short-term appointments.
- Ø Nonetheless, Australia's capacity to be an internationally competitive football nation will continue to be severely constrained until it can self generate a substantial body of world class development and competition coaches.



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FFA Curriculum Rationale

The following principles guide this Curriculum:

1. Using the experience of the world's best football nations.
2. Adjusting their visions to the specific Australian circumstances.
3. Using the strengths of the Australian sport and football culture.
4. Taking evidence based rational facts into consideration.
5. Therefore, using a practical 'total football' approach with:
 - Ø age related development goals;
 - Ø game related approach as the major focus of training;
 - Ø a pro-active style of play;
 - Ø a uniform system of play (formation).



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FFA Curriculum Rationale

Ø There is a very small number of super talented ('the gifted') who will almost always succeed.

Ø There is a larger group of talented players who do not attract attention at first glance. They can reach top-level if identified (recognised) early and then provided with quality training and coaching in a stimulating and challenging environment.

The Talented Player Development Program focuses on these two groups

Ø There is no 'magic trick' and there are no magicians who can make a superstar from an untalented kid. The vast majority of children do not have the talent to reach the top but they are very important. They are entitled to a stimulating and entertaining environment where they can reach their personal (relative) potential.

For this group there is the Community Player Development Program



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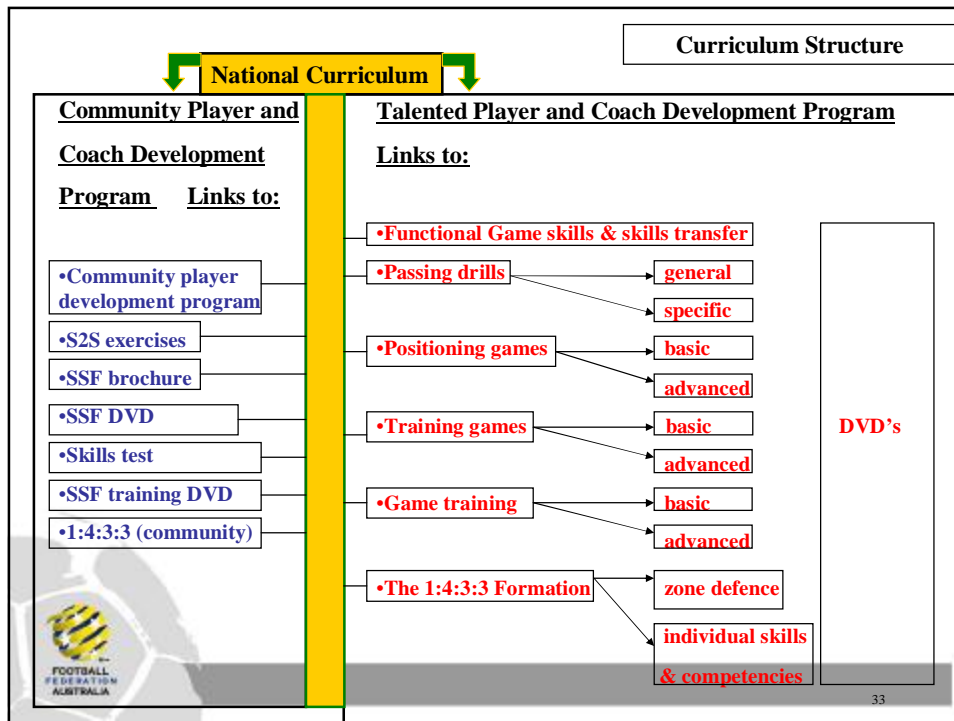


FFA Curriculum Framework

The Curriculum is divided into two streams:

1. Talented Player and Coach Development Program
Providing clear guidelines on how to train Australia's talented players from age 8 to 19, as well as the development of coaches, in order for the players and coaches to appropriately and effectively compete on the world's top-level.
2. Community Player and Coach Development Program
Providing clear guidelines on how to train Australia's community players and coaches to teach, play and learn football in a stimulating and entertaining environment enabling them to reach their personal potential and stay committed to the game for life.





FFA Curriculum Framework


∅ The starting point is a particularly practical approach. As a result the terms that are used are mostly in football-*acting* language instead of clichés and (semi) scientific language without football context.

∅ Theoretical and scientific foundation and backgrounds can, among other publications, be found in:

- 'Het jeugdvoetbal leerproces' (The Youth Football Learning process) by Bert Van Lingen and;
- 'Het periodiseren van voetbal' (The Football Periodization Model) by Raymond Verheijen.
- These books have been edited by KNVB/The Netherlands and FFA intends to edit English versions ASAP

∅ The curriculum works with two year age group blocks where there are specific development objectives related to the mental and physical development phase.

∅ There are competence profiles and assessment forms per position, conveniently connected to methodically ranged training exercises.



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FFA Curriculum Framework

The Curriculum's philosophy is that the most appropriate way for teaching and learning football is to:

Leave the total football structure as much as possible intact and therefore the relation to the game should always be recognisable for players in all training situations and exercises

The game is complex and unpredictable (not one situation or action is the same). Every football action in the game is defined by various factors such as:

- Ø The ball, the rules, opponents and teammates, space, time, direction, score, etc;
- Ø By isolating parts from this total context they lose their significance, in other words, the *football structure* is lost.
- Ø *This is the essence of 'unorganized' street/park football where the foundations of every top player can be found.*



FFA Curriculum Framework

As a result the essence of teaching (training) is to always think of the actual game situation as the starting point and then simplify / modify the game situation for training. This is achieved by reducing the game specific resistances until the obtained training aim can be realised by the players.

Ø Therefore a coach must be able to:

- analyse football;
- define the 'football problems' of the team and/or the individual players in *football-acting* language;
- design exercises to realise the training aims.



FFA Curriculum Framework

In every youth training session the following questions should be answered with YES:

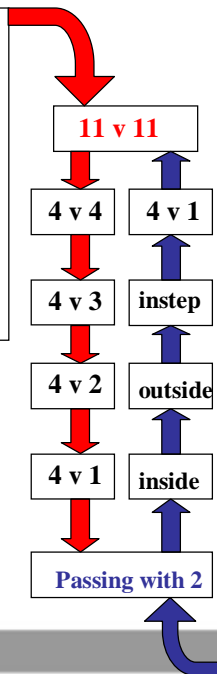
1. Is football being played?
2. Is football being learned (and therefore taught)?
3. Is football being experienced (and enjoyed)?
4. Do the players understand the football purpose of the exercise?
5. Do the players recognize the game related intention?
6. Are the players challenged to improve both individually and as a team?



Game related approach

- **Game = starting point**
- **All football related resistances present**
- **Simplifying the situation**
- **Decrease resistances if necessary**
- **Isolated exercise = last option**

Training of short passing



Isolated approach

- **Isolated exercise = starting point**
- **All football related resistances absent**
- **Resistances added later on**
- **In the end putting together the 'puzzle-pieces' = game**



FFA Curriculum Framework

Ø For the vast majority of children this game related approach is the most enjoyable, logical, scientifically proven, child and sport characteristic way of learning to play football, enabling them to reach their personal potential and stay committed to the game for life.

Ø For the talented players a modification is being made temporarily to this approach in the 8 to 12 age group in order to perfect and accelerate the development of basic skills. This age group is universally acknowledged to be the optimal mental and physical phase in which children are able to learn motor skills.

Ø It is however, vital to focus on functional (game) skills and not confuse these with non game related 'tricks'. Also a permanent and immediate skills transfer into positioning and small sided games is an absolute requirement (whole – part – whole).

Ø The passing exercises are an essential and very specific part of the functional game skills and will therefore be maintained permanently throughout all age groups.



FFA Curriculum Framework

Ø This choice for a temporary modification is strictly limited to functional ball skills. Although versatile moving (general, non football specific coordination) is also important and can be developed quickly at this age, the focus must be on skill development.

Ø In Australia the development of general physical attributes is already strongly emphasised outside of the football environment (school, outdoor life, etc.)

Ø The *credo* therefore is:

“No waste of precious *FOOTBALL* training time!”



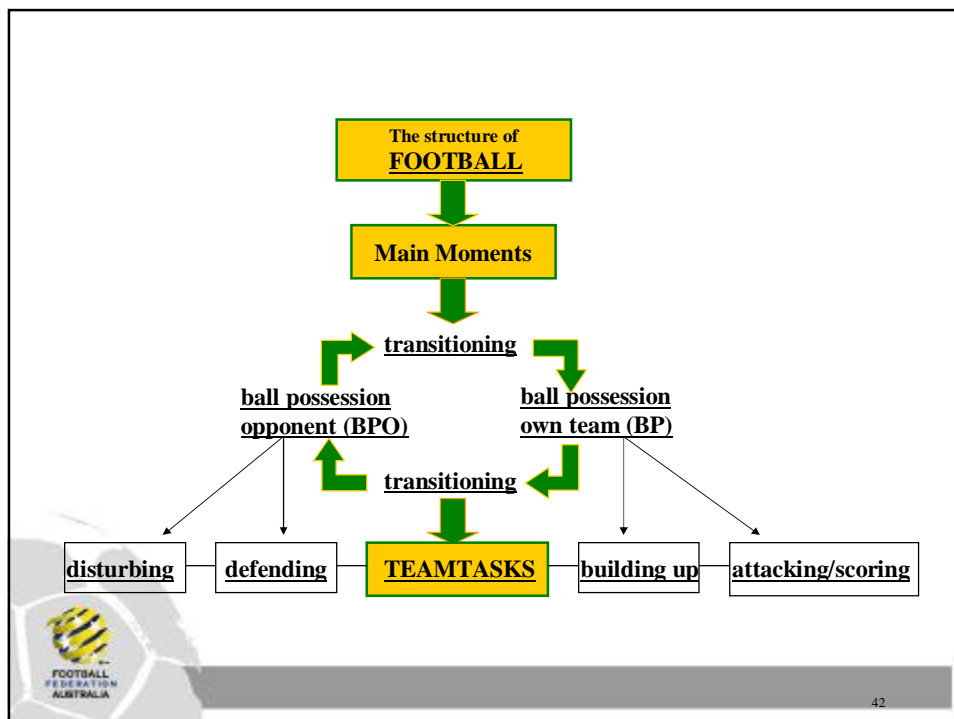
FFA Curriculum Framework

The total STRUCTURE OF FOOTBALL is always the starting point

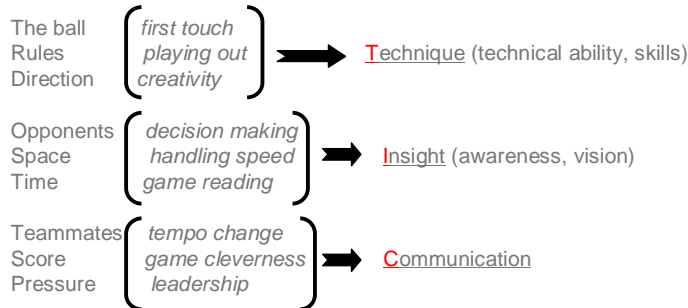
The Main Moments of the game are:

1. Ball possession (BP)
 - ∅ building up, attacking and scoring (team tasks)
2. Transition
 - ∅ BP to BPO (team tasks)
3. Ball possession opponent (BPO)
 - ∅ disturbing and defending (team tasks)
4. Transition
 - ∅ BPO to BP (team tasks)

A game of football is a constant repetition of these 4 main moments, each with its characteristic team tasks.



On the level of the individual player the team tasks lead to *individual skills and competencies** that are position specific and partly depend on the style of play / formation. These are always defined by Technique, Insight and Communication



Technique, Insight and Communication are distinguishable but in football (training) not separable

In the diagrams the size and colour of the 3 characters (**T I C**) indicate which of the 3 aspects is being emphasised (not isolated!) in training during that particular development phase



FFA Curriculum Framework

In order to define the individual tasks / skills in detail and thus provide a concise and structured development pathway, we need to be clear on:

- 1) a style of play;
- 2) a game organisation (formation) suitable to train the style of play from the moment the 11 v 11 game is being played.

In order to tackle the identified shortcomings in Australian football and also opt for a style of play that corresponds with the 'Aussie' mentality / preference, a pro-active style of play using the 1:4:3:3 formation* is the right option.

This will therefore be mandated for all FFA controlled development teams.



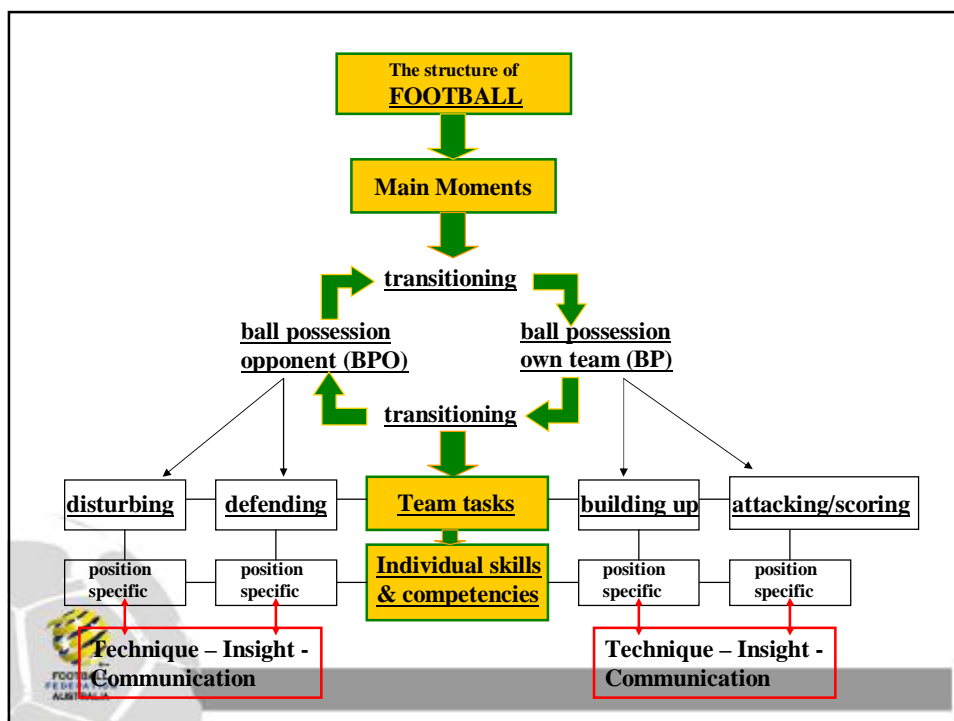
FFA Curriculum Framework

- ∅ In the 1-4-3-3 formation there are 3 lines with a balanced spread of players over the pitch ('triangles' of players) which is an important condition for:
 - 1) 'manicured' positioning play, playing out, combination football;
 - 2) creative and varied attacking play, using the width of the field;
 - 3) early disturbing /pressing after losing possession.

- ∅ For youth players the positions and accompanying basic tasks are logical and recognisable and therefore playing as a team is easier to develop.

- ∅ The 1-4-3-3 formation has several shapes and variations, making it a flexible up-to-date formation.

- ∅ The Small Sided Football (SSF) formats 7 v 7 (1:3:3) and 9 v 9 (1:3:2:3) lead up to the 1:4:3:3 formation in a logical and methodical manner.



FFA Curriculum Framework

As a consequence of the philosophy, physical fitness is also an inseparable (*conditional*) part of football's structure which leads to the proposition:

conditioning is football training.
football training is conditioning.

Analysis of football conditioning by Raymond Verheijen (Ph.D. sports science, creator of "Football Conditioning" and the "Periodisation Model") shows:

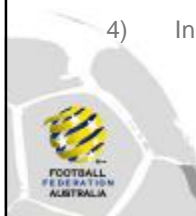
- Ø Football is becoming more and more compact: less space on the pitch / time on the ball;
- Ø Because of this the number of explosive football actions ('football' sprints / duels etc.) in professional football has increased by 40% over the last 8 to 10 years;
- Ø The total running distance is not a decisive factor.

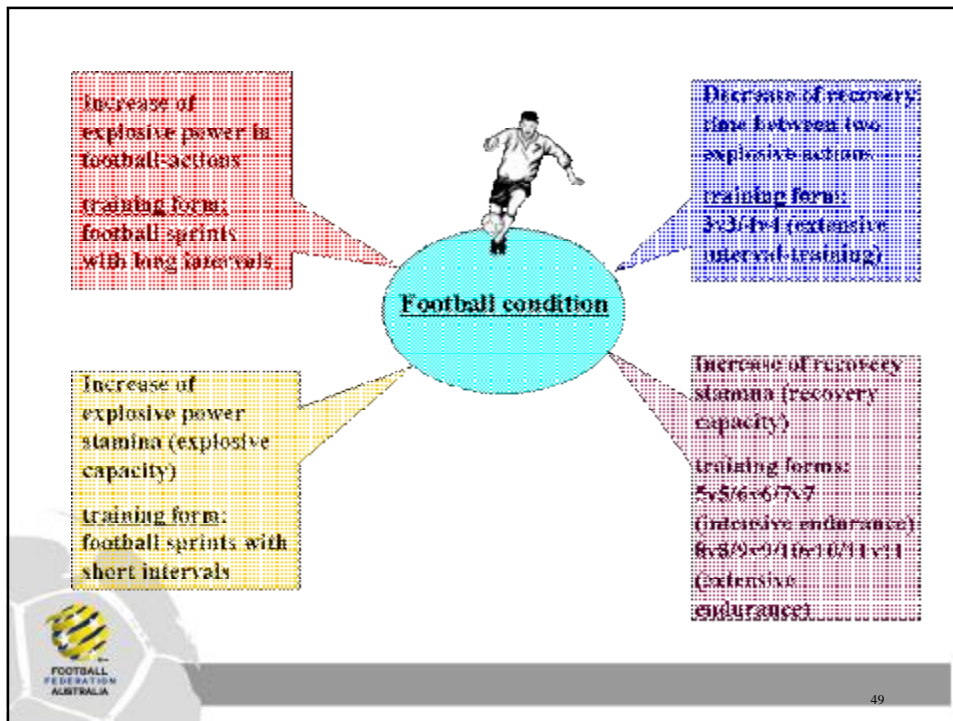


FFA Curriculum Framework

As a result of this, 'Football Conditioning' is all about:

- 1) Increase of explosive power in football actions;
- 2) Increase of explosive power stamina (explosive capacity);
- 3) Decrease of recovery time between two explosive actions;
- 4) Increase of recovery stamina (recovery capacity).





FFA Curriculum Framework

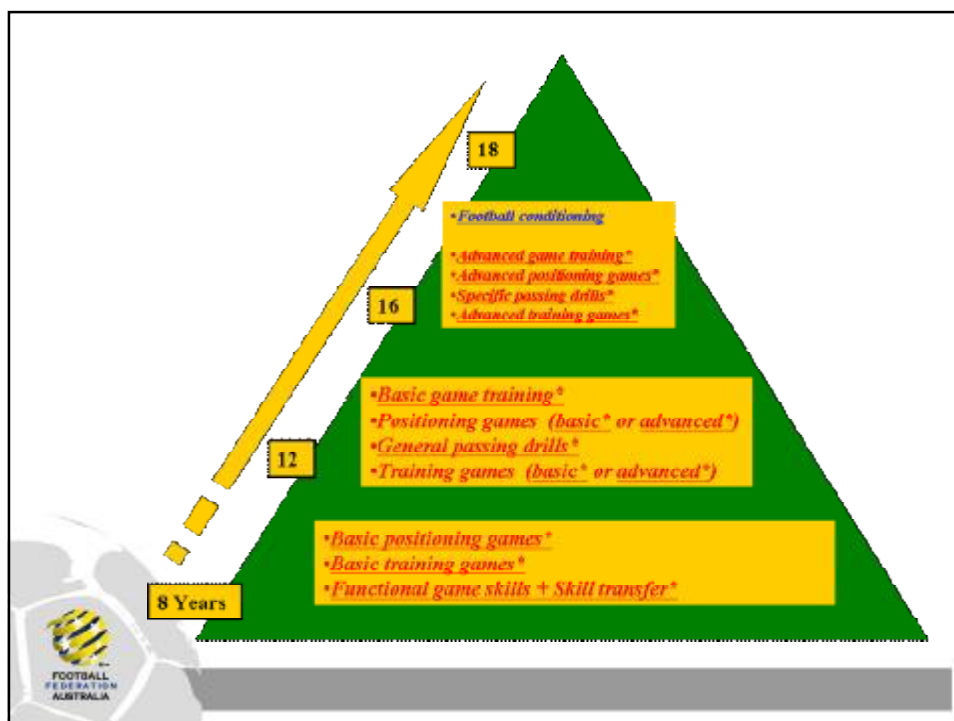
The "Periodisation" model:

- Ø 6 week cycles;
- Ø The 4 key indicators trained in 3 blocks of 2 weeks;
- Ø Overload principle: increasing time / series, decreasing rest / intervals per 6 weeks;
- Ø Only game related football exercises;
- Ø No 'isolated' conditioning, so: *no 'waste' of precious football training time;*
- Ø No condition testing that gives non relevant information for *football* condition;
- Ø Football conditioning continues the whole season;
- Ø Youth: Apart from core stability, no 'football conditioning' (or conditioning whatsoever) until after growth spurt.

FFA Curriculum Framework

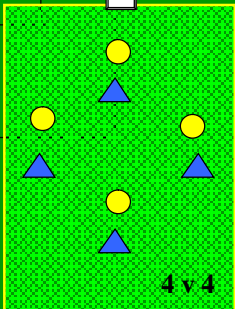
The consequence of this for the actual technical content of the Curriculum:

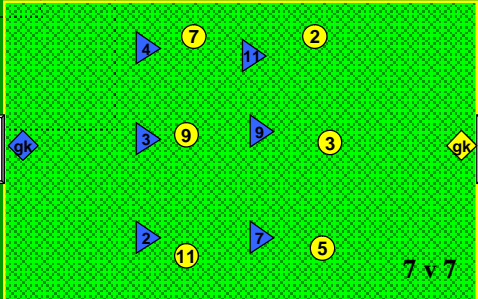
- Ø Skill / technique training is the foundation (8 to 12 years);
- Ø Positioning games and passing exercises are essential daily drills (12 to 19 years);
- Ø In every training session / exercise the relation with the game must be recognizable (12 to 19 years);
- Ø Football training = Conditioning; Conditioning = Football training (15 to 19 years);
- Ø The development of tactical insight ('reading the game'), encouraging of independent problem solving (12 to 19 years) and creative individual play (8 to 19 years) are vital elements.




Development goals:	Age and game format:	Game accents:	Training and coaching objectives:
Learning to master the ball	10-12 / 3v3	No formation/tactics only very general instructions	Getting a "TIC" for football
Learning to act with the ball purposefully	12-14 / 3v3	1:3:3 formation/ basic tactical instructions/ everyone tries <u>all</u> positions	<p>T I C</p> <p>talented player development program</p>
Learning playing together purposefully	14-16 / 4v4	1:3:2:3 formation <i>See next page</i>	
Learning the positions and basic tasks in the 1-4-3-3 formation	16-18 / 4v4	1:4:3:3 formation <i>See next page</i>	
Learning how the basic tasks link together	18-20 / 4v4	1:4:3:3 formation <i>See next page</i>	
Learning how to play as a team	20-22 / 4v4	1:4:3:3 formation <i>See next page</i>	
Performing/winning as a team	22-24 / 4v4	1:4:3:3 formation <i>See next page</i>	

Development goals:	Age & Game format:	Game accents:	Training and coaching objectives	
			Community players:	Talented players :
Learning playing together purposefully	10-12 / 3v3	1:3:2:3 formation/ limited tactical instructions/ talent for specific positions more clear (but still flexible)		T I c
Learning the positions and basic tasks in the 1-4-3-3 formation	14-16 / 4v4	1:4:3:3 formation: extending tactical instruction explaining the positions and basic tasks		T I C
Learning how the basic tasks link together	16-18 / 4v4	1:4:3:3 formation: choice/ specialising for a position + corresponding tactical instruction		T I C
Learning how to play as a team	18-20 / 4v4	1:4:3:3 formation: extending development on one position related to the teams output		T I C E-Conditioning
Performing/winning as a team	20-22 / 4v4	1:4:3:3 formation: perfection per position and as a team: result-oriented team-work		T I C E-Conditioning

<p>Learning to master the ball</p>	<p><u>U/6 - U/7</u> 4 v 4</p>	<p>No formation/tactics, only very general instructions</p>	<p>Getting a "T I C" for football</p>
 <p>4 v 4</p>		<p>Age Group Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short concentration span • Quickly distracted (they notice a 'little of a lot') • They all want to have the ball (even take the ball of a team mate) • No ability yet for team play • Not able to pass/make combinations (do not try to change this!) • Learning through 'trial and error' • Weight of the ball: 290-320 gram (size 4) • <u>Very basic coaching:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ø "Stay inside the field" Ø "Do not use your hands" ØBP: "try to shoot/dribble in <u>that</u> goal" ØBPO: "try to win the ball back, try to stop it going in <u>that</u> goal" Ø "HAVE FUN" 	
<p>Link to: Community Player Development Program*</p>			

<p>Learning to act with the ball purposefully</p>	<p><u>U/8 - U/9</u> 7 v 7</p>	<p>1:3:3 formation/ basic tactical instructions/ everyone tries <u>all</u> positions</p>	<p>T I C</p>	<p>Link to: Community Player Development Program*</p>		
<p>Age Group Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More understanding of the game purpose • Still a lot of individual play but 'feeling' for team play is slowly developing • Preference for a position as attacker or defender starts to show (but let everyone still play on every position regularly!) • Goalkeeping: they want to change by the week (let everyone try it) • Feeling for position, direction and opponent is developing • Weight of the ball 290-320 gram (size 4/5) 		<p>Basic description of positions/tasks</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="815 1357 1046 1935"> <p>BP</p> <p><u>gk</u>: Basic game restarts by throwing, rolling, kicking the ball</p> <p><u>2 & 4</u>: Make field 'big', go wide; pass or dribble forward</p> <p><u>3</u>: Stay in the middle, pass to attackers or dribble forward</p> <p><u>7 & 11</u>: Start wide, give pass (cross) or try to score yourself</p> <p><u>9</u>: Stay in the middle and upfront, get on the ball and try to score</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1062 1357 1268 1935"> <p>BPO</p> <p><u>gk</u>: Prevent goals, stop balls in every possible way</p> <p><u>2 & 4</u>: Prevent goals, mark opponent, take ball from opponent, help team mates</p> <p><u>3</u>: Prevent goals, mark opponent no.9 take ball from him, help team mates</p> <p><u>7, 9 & 11</u>: Stay in your position, make it difficult for opponent to get the ball to the attackers, try to win the ball back.</p> </td> </tr> </table>			<p>BP</p> <p><u>gk</u>: Basic game restarts by throwing, rolling, kicking the ball</p> <p><u>2 & 4</u>: Make field 'big', go wide; pass or dribble forward</p> <p><u>3</u>: Stay in the middle, pass to attackers or dribble forward</p> <p><u>7 & 11</u>: Start wide, give pass (cross) or try to score yourself</p> <p><u>9</u>: Stay in the middle and upfront, get on the ball and try to score</p>	<p>BPO</p> <p><u>gk</u>: Prevent goals, stop balls in every possible way</p> <p><u>2 & 4</u>: Prevent goals, mark opponent, take ball from opponent, help team mates</p> <p><u>3</u>: Prevent goals, mark opponent no.9 take ball from him, help team mates</p> <p><u>7, 9 & 11</u>: Stay in your position, make it difficult for opponent to get the ball to the attackers, try to win the ball back.</p>
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 <p>7 v 7</p>						

<p>Learning playing together purposefully</p>		<p>1:3:2:3 formation/ limited tactical instructions/ talent for specific positions more clear (but still flexible)</p>	<p>T I c</p>
<p><u>General description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More and more understanding and feeling for teamwork • Understanding of individual role in relation to teamwork is developing • Understanding for acting without the ball (running to or off the ball) develops • With 8 outfield players a tighter and more strict task allocation is required • Preference/ability for specific positions becomes more and more clear • Perfect mental and physical ability for developing motor skills 	<p><u>Relevant training content:</u></p> <p><u>BP:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Functional game skills:</u> Passing, receiving, controlling, dribbling, shooting, heading, feinting, etc. 2. <u>Skills transfer:</u> Executing the game skills in corresponding game related situations (1 v 1, 4 v 4, basis positioning games) 3. <u>Training games:</u> Varied (small sided) games to develop BP objectives <p><u>BPO:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Functional game skills:</u> Block tackle, sliding, heading etc 2. <u>Skills transfer:</u> Executing the game skills in corresponding game related situations <p><u>Transitioning:</u> Learning the general principles in training games</p> <p><u>Others:</u> Versatile moving in touch games and coordination A-B-C</p>	<p><u>Remarks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to file Functional Game skills & Skills transfer* • Link to file Basic Positioning games* • Link to file Basic Training games* 	

Characteristics of the game:

- Playing in a position and with a (simple) basic task
- Working together with and without ball, in BP and BPO
- Everybody attacks and defends (in his/her field position)
- Learning the meaning of 'transitioning' in age related football language
- Talents become clear and must be developed (individualist, team player, defender, gk)

Basic tasks and positions:

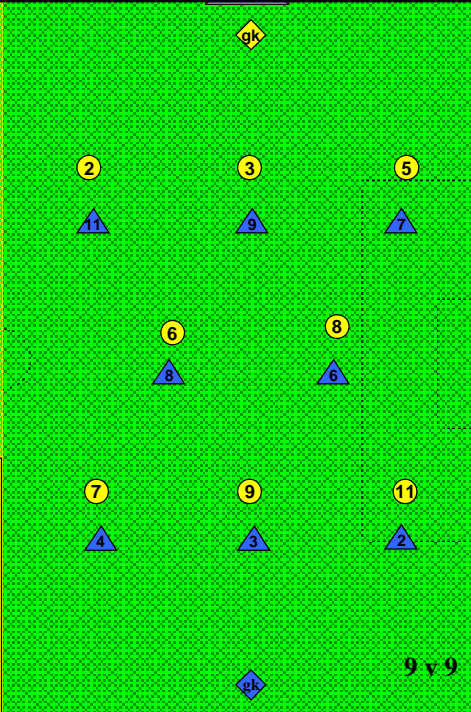
2 midfielders (6 & 8) are new in the team

BP:

- Ask for the ball if in possession of defenders or goalkeeper
- Deliver balls to attackers
- Support attackers by going forward and trying to score

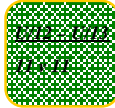
BPO:

- Quick transition and mark opponent
- Drop back and help other team mates
- Do not rush in
- Recover the ball



9 v 9

Learning the positions and basic tasks in the 1:4:3:3 formation



1:4:3:3 formation: extending tactical instruction explaining the positions and basic tasks

T I C

<p><u>General description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal mental and physical conditions in this age group • 1st high point in the learning of motor skills, well built/ideal proportions, good coordination • Socially aware, critical of own performance and that of others • Likes to compete and compare • Imitates idols • The start of playing 11 v 11 on the whole pitch with 'real' game rules demands a big reorientation on almost all aspects that were learned in earlier phases • Focus on learning the positions and basic tasks in playing 11 v 11 in a 1:4:3:3 formation 	<p><u>Relevant training content:</u></p> <p><u>BP:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Functional game skills & skills transfer</u> (special attention for passing drills and heading) 2. <u>Positioning games:</u> the primal forms (basic) 3. <u>Training games</u> 4. <u>1:4:3:3 Game training</u> (basic formation 1a) <p><u>BPO:</u> Functional game skills & skills transfer</p> <p><u>Transitioning:</u> Learning the general principles in training games & 1:4:3:3 Game training</p> <p><u>Others:</u> Versatile moving in touch games and coordination A-B-C</p>	<p><u>Remarks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to file The 1:4:3:3 formation* • Link to file Basic game training* • Link to file Basic positioning games* • Link to file Basic training games* • Link to file General passing drills*
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Learning how the basic tasks link together



1:4:3:3 formation: choice/specialising for a position + corresponding tactical instruction

T I C

<p><u>General description:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-adolescence: obstinate, rebels against authority and provokes conflicts • Self overestimating and self absorbed • Development of other interests and hobbies, re-assesses the place of football in his/her life and sometimes puts it in an other perspective • Sudden big increase in height limits physical capacity (injury prone) • Stagnation or regression of coordination (clumsy) • In the phase the intellectual learning ability is bigger than the physical learning ability 	<p><u>Relevant training content:</u></p> <p><u>BP:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Functional game skills (w-u) & passing drills</u> (basic) 2. <u>Positioning games</u> (basic) 3. <u>Training games</u> (basic) 4. <u>1:4:3:3 Game training</u> (basic) <p><u>BPO:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Positioning games</u> (basic) 2. <u>Training games</u> (basic) 3. <u>1:4:3:3 Game training</u> (basic formation 1a+b) <p><u>Transitioning:</u> In Training games, Positioning games and 1:4:3:3 Game training</p> <p><u>Others:</u> Dynamic stretching and core stability</p>	<p><u>Remarks:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to file The 1:4:3:3 formation* • Link to file Basic Game training* • Link to file Positioning games (basic* or advanced*) • Link to file Training games (basic* or advanced*) • Link to file General Passing drills* • Link to training DVD* • Core stability exercises and explanations: see book Raymond Verheyen
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Learning how to play as a team



**1:4:3:3 formation:
extending development on
one position related to the
teams output**

T I C

F-conditioning

General description:

- Post-adolescence, pre-maturity
- More balanced, more sense of reality, less emotional/aggressive
- **Critical of own performance, able to share responsibilities and to make sacrifices for the team**
- 'Return' of good coordination and technique
- For boys: production of testosterone has begun, conditioning is now possible

Relevant training content:

BP:

1. Positioning games (specific/advanced)
2. Passing drills (specific/advanced)
3. 1:4:3:3 Game training (advanced)

BPO:

1. Positioning games (specific)
2. Training games
3. 1:4:3:3 Game training (all basic formations)

Transitioning: In training games, positioning games and 1:4:3:3 game training

Others: Dynamic stretching and core stability

Football conditioning

Remarks:

- Link to file [The 1:4:3:3 formation*](#)
- Link to file [Advanced Game training*](#)
- Link to file [Advanced Positioning games*](#)
- Link to file [Advanced Training games*](#)
- Link to file [Specific Passing drills*](#)
- Link to [training DVD*](#)
- Core stability exercises and explanations of football conditioning: see book Raymond Verheyen

Performing/winning as a team



**1:4:3:3 formation:
perfection per position and
as a team: result oriented
team work**

T I C

F-conditioning

General description:

- Period of mental stabilization (with exception of incidental fields of tension especially with regards to the balance between group and individual)
- 2nd high point in the learning of motor skills
- Optimal conditions for systematic training
- **Contributing to a team achievement (and being recognized for it) is important**

Relevant training content:

BP:

1. Positioning games (specific)
2. Passing drills (specific)
3. 1:4:3:3 Game training (specific)
4. Individual training

BPO:

1. Positioning games (specific)
2. Training games
3. 1:4:3:3 Game training (all basic formations)
4. Individual training

Transitioning: In training games, positioning games and 1:4:3:3 game training

Others: Dynamic stretching and core stability

Football conditioning

Remarks:

- Link to file [The 1:4:3:3 formation*](#)
- Link to file [Advanced game training*](#)
- Link to file [Advanced positioning games*](#)
- Link to file [Advanced training games*](#)
- Link to file [Specific passing drills*](#)
- Link to [training DVD*](#)
- Core stability exercises and explanations of football conditioning: see book Raymond Verheyen

Purpose and Objectives

Research

Analysis

Identified Gaps

FFA Curriculum Rationale

FFA Curriculum Framework

Implementation



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Broad Principles to Apply - 1

FFA and the State Federations will:

ØEmploy an age related development approach starting at U/6 that:

- initially emphasises fun, building a love of the game, and acquisition of individual technique;
- progresses in the early to mid teens to greatly extend technique, with skill development during this period taking primacy over winning matches;
- introduces talented mid teens into pro-level environments that can hone their competitive and team skills.

ØAchieve a situation where, by age 15, the technique of our best players (say top 30 in age group) places Australia in top 20 countries for men, top 10 for women.



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Broad Principles to Apply - 2

FFA and the State Federations will:

Ø Gradually (at appropriate age) instill in developing players a team oriented attitude and sense of responsibility to the game (*Players Code of Conduct*);

Ø Implement the identified measures to greatly reduce the loss of talented players due to RAE, financial barrier and other effects;

Ø Provide openness for talented players to be recognised and appropriately developed whatever their age or entry age and whatever the path they have followed;

Ø Install a best practice coaching framework that fits the age grade principles;

Ø Develop true international excellence among the coaches who have intensive involvement with the development of talented young players while establishing a *SYSTEM* that allows other coaches / supervisors generally to achieve outstanding results in the specific coaching roles they fill.



Broad Principles to Apply - 3

FFA and the State Federations will:

Ø Provide a **year round** seamless and appropriate competition environment for identified talented players throughout the pathway with due regard for the needs of the wider football community;

Ø Ensure talented young players are identified and drawn into the preferred development pathways for talented players from the age of 8 years;

Ø Create an accreditation system which harnesses the elements of self-interest among players, parents, coaches, clubs and others in order to meet the Curriculum priority objectives;

Ø Apply these principles nationally at all levels. Execution may need to take account of local circumstances;

Ø Instill an approach of continuous improvement.



Achievements and Proposed Initiatives

In recent years a number of important achievements for the development of football have been put in place such as:

The A-League
The National Youth League
The W-League
Small Sided Football
Talented Players Pathways (boys and girls)
Talented Coaches Pathways

We cannot stop here because the rest of the world continues to make rapid progress

All these initiatives need to be constantly evaluated and reviewed and new ones implemented in order to catch up with the rest of the world. This approach will ensure that progress in the development of football in Australia will occur more rapidly.



1: The A-League

- Ø The A-League is moving into its 5th season and expanding to 10 teams (12 in season 2010/2011);
 - Ø Despite this expansion the season is too short. **Year round** football is crucial to develop the necessary game hardness and experience;
 - Ø The games are generally attacking, open and entertaining but the overall technical and tactical quality needs improvement to be on par with international top-level standards;
 - Ø The overall quality and quantity of training in the A-League is still capable of improvement. In top-level football countries the number of training sessions per week is often double compared to the average in the A-League. In those countries there is also a bigger focus on technical and tactical content as opposed to strength and conditioning;
 - Ø Future coach education initiatives include instruction, development opportunities (overseas scholarships) and the obligation for A-League coaches to have Pro-Licence level accreditation; (refer to Initiative 2: Coach Accreditation Schedule)
 - Ø A major threat is the overseas 'exodus' of players at younger ages. This is having a detrimental affect on the quality of the A-League, therefore there will be strict adherence to the FIFA regulations regarding the international transfer of players;
 - Ø The A-League clubs too often look to compensate this by signing expensive (often older) foreign players ('names') who add little to the game, instead of investing in the development of young players;
- Promoting the use of young players in the A-League should be encouraged.



2: The National Youth League

Ø The NYL has been introduced in season 2008/2009 for players aged 17-21 (17-20 next season) that in general:

- are under contract with State League clubs;
- during winter compete in their respective State Premier League competitions;
- during summer are associated with A-League clubs and compete in that framework during the A-League season.

Ø The A-League clubs are encouraged to use the NYL teams more and more as their development squad (this will assist in avoiding the costs of having to sign expensive replacements for injured players);

Ø In future:

- the NYL players may be under contract solely with the A-League clubs;
- State Federations may field the NYL teams in corresponding State Leagues to enable a year round quality training and game program (? Mandated ?).

Ø This would be another step in the direction of a structure that is common in the traditional football countries where talent identification and youth development is undertaken, en masse, by the clubs as a 'cradle to grave' traditional club structure;

Ø The participation of the AIS in the National Youth League in season 2009/2010 is a big step forward for both the AIS program and the NYL.



3: The W-League

The W-League has been introduced in season 2008/2009 with 8 teams and complements the respective State League competitions and NTC / Institute programs. The age range is still very broad and the season is fairly short (10 weeks) but a start has been made which is most important.

Points of interest:

- Ø Similar development requirements for females as males;
- Ø Up to about mid teens most proposed initiatives (**including the technical content of the National Curriculum**) contribute equally to both boys and girls;
- Ø At higher levels from early teens, the opportunities diverge because of strong commercial differences outside FFA control;
- Ø For the National Championships an U/13 team to be added to existing U/15 and U/17 competitions.
- Ø The implementation of a women's AFC Champions League competition will be another positive step in the development pathway.



4: Small Sided Football

- Ø SSF is in the process of being introduced as the standard football format for children under 12 throughout Australia;
- Ø The age related development structure and team sizes are linked to progressively changing capabilities and skill levels of children;
- Ø Continuous emphasis of the purpose of SSF (skill development through fun) is necessary;
- Ø The SSF formats are being actively promoted to produce 100% compliance by 2012;
- Ø **Futsal** is a form of SSF. This form of the game will be more tightly incorporated into the FFA structure and more actively exploited for its development potential;
- Ø In every major football country every child, talented or not, starts with playing SSF, either organized (club) or unorganized (street / park);
- Ø In countries like Brazil and Spain, SSF, in the form of futsal , is underpinning the youth development programs;
- Ø In order to bring the format of SSF in Australia in line with the age related development goals used in the Curriculum, some adjustments of the present format are necessary;
- Ø SSF structures will develop logical progression towards playing 11 v 11 in a 1:4:3:3 formation.



5: Talented Player Pathway

The talented player pathway is in place for the identification and development for Australia's elite players in the 14 to 19 years age group (men's and women's). This is achieved through the;

- Ø respective State Institute / NTC programs;
- Ø AIS Program (residential for U/15 & U/16 boy's - camps based for women's);
- Ø age group National Teams;
- Ø National Youth League (men's);
- Ø W-League.

A uniform nationwide structure will be developed for the 8 to 14 age group. This is a **crucial period** to address one of the major identified player development gaps.



6: Talented Coach Pathway

Ø The Elite Coach Development Scholarship Program has been established:

- Targeted individuals provided with 3 year scholarships;
- Intended for roles working with talented players in the fields of:
 - o player development;
 - o coaching of high performance teams in competition;
 - o specialty coaching.

Ø Selected coaches are being:

- individually case managed, with;
- intensive investment;
- to provide experience and training as good as top overseas coaches.

Ø Arrangements have been made for substantial amount of experience in overseas coaching assignments;

Ø FFA will:

- actively promote and take action to increase the number of full time coach positions in Australia;
- require minimum licence levels for the main coaching positions in Australia.



Implementation Initiatives

The Curriculum will be mandated for all programs which are part of the National Pathway – national teams, AIS, NTCs etc. Furthermore, all States will appoint a Technical Director who will work under the direction of the National Technical Director to assist in the implementation of the following;

1. It is proposed that by 2010 Skill Acquisition Trainers will be appointed in each State and Territory to identify talented players for specialised skill development programs
2. Progressively Coaches for the main coaching positions will be required to have a specific Coaching Licence
3. There are adjustments that will be proposed to the Advanced Pathway Coaching Courses
4. Clubs, Schools and Academies will be accredited by FFA and Member Federations if in compliance with the Curriculum
5. Comprehensive national skills testing program will be introduced within the Community Development Pathway to emphasise the development of skills from ages 8 to 12

Additional material will be progressively added to the Curriculum to make it the complete tool for all coaches and clubs.



Initiative 1: Skill Acquisition Trainers

FFA and State Federations will (by 2010) appoint one (or more) **skill acquisition trainer(s)** in every State / Territory to perfect and accelerate the skill development of identified talented players at the critical ages of 8 to 12 by:

1. organising *trials on location (zones)* in order to identify talented players starting at age 8;
2. organising and conducting *training sessions on location (zones)* for the selected players;
3. educating other trainers and coaches.



Initiative 1: Skill Acquisition Trainers

- Ø The trials and training sessions will be **free of costs** for the participants;
- Ø The locations to be within a reasonable travelling distance for participants;
- Ø A skill acquisition trainers course to be organised by FFA (**minimum requirement: B Licence**);
- Ø Project to commence ASAP (preferably 2010);
- Ø A new group of 8 year olds to commence the program annually;
- Ø This 5 year technical development program should lead the players into the U/13 and U/14 Territory and State teams;
- Ø From these development squads identified players move into the respective National U/13 – U/14 teams;
- Ø The players then progress to NTC / Institute programs **technically well equipped**.



Initiative 2: Coach Accreditation Timeline

- All **future** coaching appointments must have the following **minimum** accreditation.
- **Incumbents** to have obtained the appropriate licence by the timeline below.

Coaching Position	Coaching Licence	Incumbents timeline
National Team Coaches (from Joeys up)	Pro Licence	2010
Asst. National Coaches*	A Licence	2011
A-League Head Coach	A Licence	2011
A-League Asst. Coach	A Licence	2012
Youth League Head Coach	B Licence	2010
W-League Head Coach	A Licence	2012
AIS Head Coach	A Licence	2010

- Ø By the start of season 2015/16 all A-League Coaches to have Pro-Licence Accreditation.
 - Ø By the start of season 2012/13 all Youth League Head Coaches to have A Licence Accreditation.
- * Socceroos Asst. Coaches: Pro Licence

Initiative 2: Coach Accreditation Timeline

- All **future** coaching appointments must have the following **minimum** accreditation.
- **Incumbents** to have obtained the appropriate licence by the timeline below.

Coaching Position	Coaching Licence	Incumbents timeline
AIS Senior Asst. Coach	A Licence	2012
AIS Asst. Coach	B Licence	2010
State Technical Directors	A Licence	2012
NTC Head Coach	A Licence	2012
NTC Asst. Coach	B Licence	2010
Junior State Team Coach	B Licence	2010
Skills Acquisition Trainer	B Licence + Skills Acq. Trainer Licence	

Initiative 3: Restructure of Coaching Courses

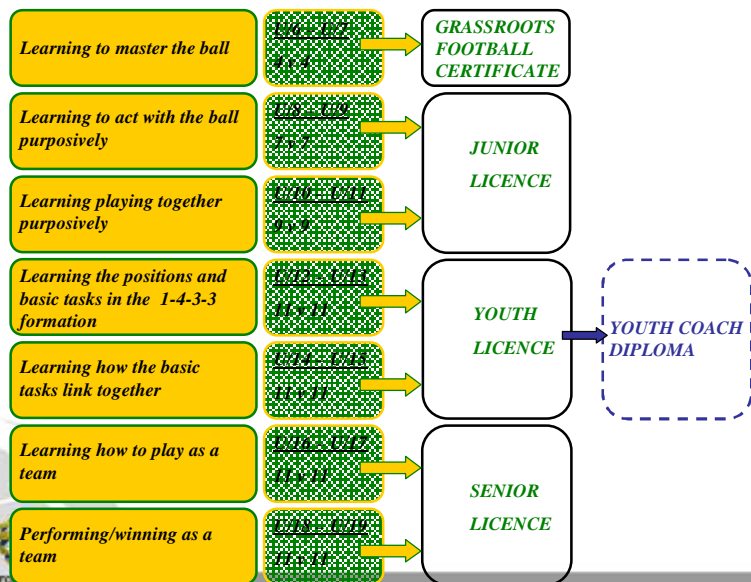
The Curriculum pre-supposes a network of talented coaches who understand and accept the principles and philosophy of the Curriculum and have the ability to implement the program for the benefit of the players.

FFA will:

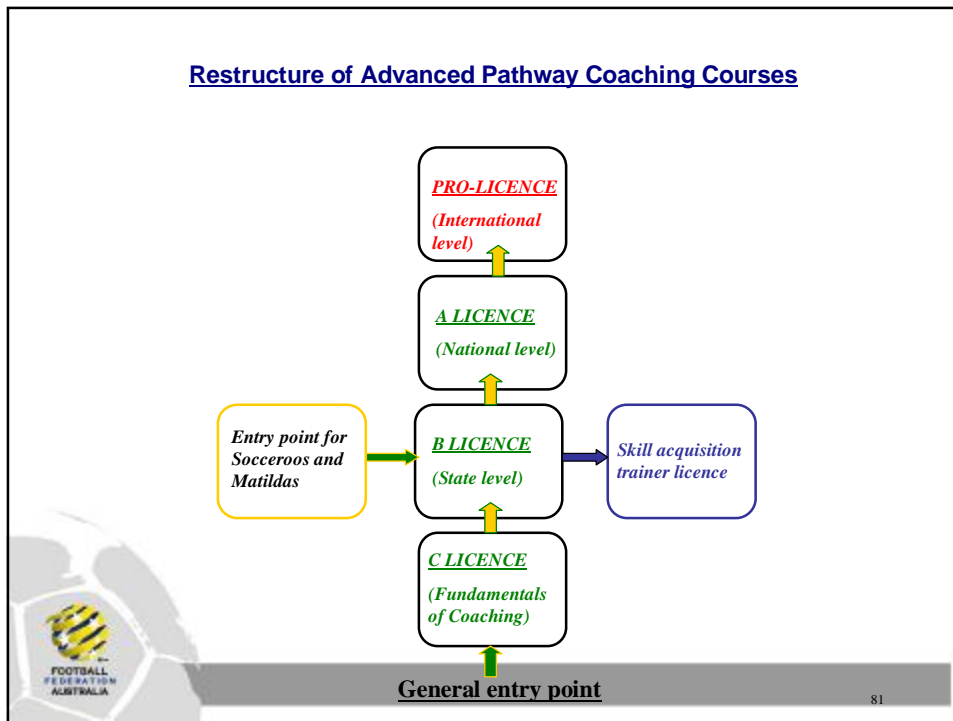
- Ø Organise / restructure coaching courses in order to develop highly qualified trainers and coaches;
- Ø Work together with the Member Federations, to create more employment opportunities for specialised advanced level trainers and coaches;



Restructure of Community Pathway Coaching Courses



Restructure of Advanced Pathway Coaching Courses



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Initiative 4: Accreditation and Rating

Ø Multiple entities (eg clubs, association, schools, and private academies) are involved in the development of talented players, we expect that to continue.

Ø These entities can differ dramatically in the contribution they make to talent development – but currently the differences are often not readily apparent in advance, to potentially talented young players and their parents.

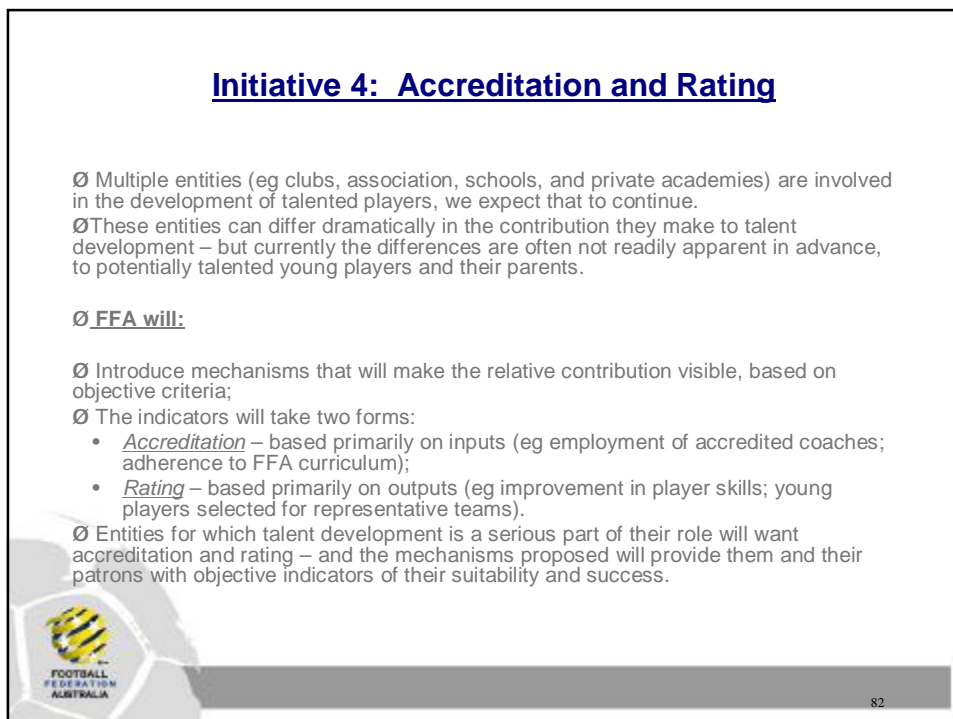
Ø FFA will:

Ø Introduce mechanisms that will make the relative contribution visible, based on objective criteria;

Ø The indicators will take two forms:

- *Accreditation* – based primarily on inputs (eg employment of accredited coaches; adherence to FFA curriculum);
- *Rating* – based primarily on outputs (eg improvement in player skills; young players selected for representative teams).

Ø Entities for which talent development is a serious part of their role will want accreditation and rating – and the mechanisms proposed will provide them and their patrons with objective indicators of their suitability and success.



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Initiative 5: Comprehensive Skills Testing

FFA and State Federations will:

Ø In the Community Pathway, introduce and promote a framework for skills testing for boys and girls from 8 to 12, its purpose being:

- widely promote awareness of importance of skill development;
- focus attention on relevant skills and standards for various age groups;
- provide feedback to individuals and coaches, to aid learning; and
- provide visibility about development performance for coaches, clubs, etc.

Ø Including provision of a (web-based) system for capturing the data, maintaining individual records over time, providing age-based norms and advising players, coaches and their clubs about suitable development given their scores.

Ø Ensure maximum accessibility and supportiveness for all players especially in regional Australia.

Ø Introduce awards based on skill tests to reinforce attention to skill development.

