



Armstrong Creek Football Netball Club

Junior Football Operations Manual.

SEASON 2025

Table of Contents

.....	1
Club Information.....	3
Purpose of This Document	3
Document Up keep	3
Club Football Philosophy	4
Football Department Roles	4
Football Program Overview	6
Basic Season Date Guide	7
Junior Match Day Guide.....	7
Code Of conduct	7
Behavioral Rectification Process	8
Facilities.....	10
Equipment.....	11
Uniform	12
Registrations	13
Playing Up in Age.....	14
Filling In at a Higher Age Group	15
Team Selection	16
Best & Fairest (U14's and up).....	21
Training	22
Coaching.....	23
Team Manager Policy	26
Individual Player Awards	28
Junior Umpiring.....	28
Team Runner	29
Team Events	29
Football Development and Junior Pathways	30

Club Information

- **Established:** 2019
- **Mascot:** Shark
- **Home Ground:** 73-93 Central Blvd, Armstrong Creek
- **Contact:** admin@armstrongcreek.com.au

Purpose of This Document

This document serves as a comprehensive guide to Armstrong Creek Football Netball Club's (ACFNC) Junior Football operations. Developed internally, it provides clarity on our club's processes relating directly to Junior Football. While aligned with AFL Barwon's Policies and Procedures, this document is unique to ACFNC and will be updated ahead of each season before being shared publicly. Please note this document is football specific and will not provide details around general club governance, netball or Auskick.

The document covers both male and female football, however, some guidelines may be more or less applicable to the male or female programs.

****Whilst the document aims to give everyone an idea of the frame work we seek to adhere to, there may unique situations where certain elements of this document may need to be altered to accommodate unforeseen circumstances.***

Document Up keep

This document will be released prior to each season. Each year, a focus group will;

- Assess what worked vs what needs improvement
- Assess league wide policy/rules changes
- Get feedback from football department members

From this review process, changes can then be made and approved by the football focus group and committee, the manual is then updated and re-released before the start of the next season.

****This document is endorsed by the committee prior to release each year.***

Club Football Philosophy

Founded in 2019, Armstrong Creek Football Netball Club is built on a foundation of **community, inclusivity, and development**. Our junior football program reflects these values by fostering a supportive, family-friendly, and low-pressure environment where players can thrive both on and off the field.

From **Auskick to U12s**, our focus is on building confidence, encouraging participation, and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to grow their skills and have fun.

As our club continues to evolve, we now offer competitive programs for **U14s and U16s**, with plans to expand to **U18s** soon.

Our approach for U14s and beyond is centered on balancing **performance and development**. We strive to:

- Provide opportunity for players to sharpen their skills.
- Promote inclusion and camaraderie within teams.
- Create opportunities to play in premierships while fostering a lifelong love for the game.
- Provide a platform for those with ambition to excel with their football to thrive in a competitive program.

At the core of ACFNC is a commitment to delivering a **welcoming, positive experience** for all participants and their families.

Football Department Roles

Male and Female Junior Coordinators

The Junior Male and Female Football Coordinators oversee the development and operation of the club's junior football programs. Their responsibilities include organising training sessions, practice matches, managing coaches, coordinating game-day logistics, and serving as the primary liaison between coaches, players, and families. Additionally, they facilitate volunteer recruitment, communicate with relevant leagues, drive continuous program improvement, and assist with conflict resolution when necessary. These Coordinators report directly to the President and the committee.

Team Manager Coordinator

The Team Manager Coordinator supports and oversees the team managers across all junior football teams. This role ensures that each team is equipped with the resources and guidance needed for smooth operation. Key tasks include organising volunteer rosters, managing team equipment bags, and maintaining clear communication with parents. Acting as the main point of contact for team managers, the Coordinator provides assistance with any challenges and ensures consistent standards across the club. Their focus is on fostering a well-organised, supportive environment that enhances the experience for players, families, and volunteers. These Coordinators report directly to the President and the Board.

Uniform Coordinator

The Uniform Coordinator manages the distribution, inventory, and ordering of the club's junior football uniforms and apparel. This role ensures all players, coaches, and volunteers are properly equipped for training and match days. Responsibilities include working with suppliers to maintain stock levels, organizing fittings and allocations, and handling special orders or replacements. The Uniform Coordinator reports directly to the President and the Board.

Coaching coordinator

The Junior Coaching Coordinator plays a vital role in overseeing and supporting our junior coaches. They are responsible for ensuring a consistent coaching philosophy across all junior teams, aligning with the club's values goals. This includes mentoring and providing guidance to coaches, facilitating training sessions, and offering feedback to enhance coaching effectiveness. The Junior Coaching Coordinator also plays a key administrative role in organising coaches to do training modules before the season starts. Additionally, they act as a key liaison between coaches, club officials, parents, and players - ensuring an open and collaborative culture.

Coaches

Junior Coaches play a crucial role in developing young players' skills, sportsmanship, and love for Australian Rules Football. They are responsible for planning and leading training sessions in an inclusive, fun, and supportive environment where players of all abilities can thrive. Coaches provide guidance on technical skills, teamwork, and personal development, fostering confidence on and off the field. They also liaise with Junior Coordinators and parents to ensure clear communication regarding player progress, game-day expectations, and overall development. Coaches report to the Junior Football Coordinators.

Team Manager

Team Managers handle the administrative and logistical aspects of junior football teams to ensure smooth operations throughout the season. Responsibilities include managing players/families off feild, organizing game-day rosters, and serving as a communication link between coaches, parents, and the club. On match days, they oversee logistics such as equipment, uniforms, and volunteer roles (e.g., scorers or umpires). Team Managers play a vital role in creating a well-organized and enjoyable environment for players, families, and coaches. They report to the Team Manager Coordinator.

Property Steward

The Property Steward manages and maintains all equipment and supplies essential for the junior football program's success. Duties include organizing and distributing gear to players and coaches, ensuring equipment is in good condition, and tracking inventory. The Property Steward works closely with coaching staff to guarantee that all necessary items are available for training sessions and match days. They are also responsible for maintaining the storeroom and handling repairs or replacements as needed. The Property Steward reports to the Junior Football Coordinators.

General Football Department Member

A General Football Department Member contributes to the club's football operations without a specific defined role. They may assist with various tasks, such as organizing "Come and Try" days, cleaning the storeroom, setting up ovals, serving on the selection committee, or stepping in to cover for a coach when needed. Their versatility and willingness to help are invaluable to the smooth running of the club.

Football Program Overview

ACFNC is a junior football club currently offering male and female football from U9's through to U16's.

Female	Male
U9's – N/A	U9's – Offered with sufficient numbers
U10's Offered with sufficient numbers	U10's Offered with sufficient numbers
U12's Offered with sufficient numbers	U12's Offered with sufficient numbers
U14's Offered with sufficient numbers	U14's Offered with sufficient numbers
U16's Offered with sufficient numbers	U16's Offered with sufficient numbers
U18's N/A	U18's N/A

Basic Season Date Guide

Below is a basic date guide outlining each major milestone in the lead up to the season starting. These dates are indicative and are subject to change.

November 1st - Registrations Open For returning Players

December 1st – General registration open to the public

Early December – Competitive teams start pre-season training

Mid Feb – Coaching/Team Manager call out

Early March 1st – Teams released

Early March – Non-competitive teams start pre-season training

Early March – Coaches announced

Early April – Practice matches commence

Mid-Late April – Jumper presentation/Season Starts

**this schedule is different each year, depending on where easter falls and ALF Barwon start the season.*

Junior Match Day Guide

Below is a link to the AFL Barwon Junior Match guide which outlines all you need to know about the game day aspects of each age level. This includes Team numbers, rules, ground size etc at each age level.

[Link to Junior Match Day Guide](#)

Code Of conduct

We adhere to the AFL Barwon Code of Conduct. This sets the standard for behavior within our football community, ensuring a positive, respectful, and inclusive environment for all participants. This applies on the field, sidelines, or at club activities. At all times we expect all players, coaches, parents, and supporters to uphold values of sportsmanship, fairness, and integrity. This Code serves as a guide to promote enjoyment, safety, and mutual respect, helping us foster a culture where everyone can thrive and contribute to the club's success both on and off the field.

We expect respect to be shown for our volunteer's, players, parents and wider community at all times.

[Link to the AFL Barwon Players Code of Conduct.](#)

[Link to the AFL Barwon Parent And Spectators Code of Conduct](#)

[Link to the AFL Barwon Junior Coaches Code of Conduct](#)

Behavioral Rectification Process

In the event of failure to comply with the above Code of Conduct/s, a parent/player/spectator/volunteer/club official may be put through a process of behavioral rectification for more serious matters. These matters will be referred to the club by witnesses of the incident and or - raised with the club by opposition teams or AFL Barwon.

We acknowledge, in large community groups mistakes will be made, it is how we limit those mistakes and how we respond, that is important.

Incident 1

Action:

- Gather information from all parties involved and determine what occurred.
- Conduct a meeting (phone, online or in person) to discuss the incident and gain an understanding of the incident and the unacceptable behaviors that took place.
- If it is established that the code of conduct was breached, seek assurance that the behavior will not be repeated.
- Provide education or guidance where appropriate.

Outcome:

- No immediate punishment.
- An apology may be issued to affected parties if deemed necessary.
- Expectations are clarified, with a warning issued regarding potential penalties for future non-compliance.

Incident 2

Action:

- Gather information from all parties involved and determine what occurred.
- Conduct a meeting (phone, online or in person) to discuss the incident, emphasising the repeated nature of the behavior and the failure to comply with the initial warning.
- If it is established that the code of conduct was breached, seek assurance that the behavior will not be repeated.
- Provide education or guidance where appropriate.

Outcome:

- A suspension may be issued to the player or parent.
- The length of the suspension will be determined by and is at the discretion of senior members of the football department, with the Club President overseeing the decision.
- The individual is welcomed back after completing the suspension, but they are warned of the possibility of a life ban if further non-compliance occurs.

Incident 3

Action:

- Gather information from all parties involved.
- Conduct a meeting (phone, online or in person) to confirm if the individual has breached the code of conduct.
- If a further breach is confirmed, no further rectification efforts will be undertaken.

Outcome:

- A life ban is issued to the player, parent or club official.
- Such a serious decision will be made by senior members of the football department, with the Club President overseeing the process. Input or guidance from AFL Barwon may also be sought before a decision of this magnitude was handed down.

Important Notes

The above process is indicative. The nature and severity of the incident will always be considered, and adjustments to the process may be made.

For example:

Immediate Life Ban: May be issued for serious incidents, such as physical assault, child safety breaches, racial abuse or criminal matters.

Leniency: May be extended for minor issues if the parties involved are remorseful and demonstrate a willingness to improve their behavior. This process above may be expediated by a formal conversation for minor infringements, not all matters are immediately referred to the Behavioral rectification process.

Appeal Process

Parties involved may appeal decisions by submitting a formal email to the Club President via the admin email at the top of the document. The appeal process will be overseen by the Club President, Vice President, and Committee Members.

During the appeal, all parties will have the opportunity to present their version of events before a final decision is made.

Facilities

As our club continues to grow with an expanding registration base, the demand for quality training and game-day facilities has increased. We are fortunate to have access to several locations that support our training, competitions, and events.

Shark Park – 93 Central Blvd, Armstrong Creek

Shark Park serves as our main hub, where the majority of our home games and training sessions take place. This site features our club rooms, storage facilities, and canteen, ensuring a full range of services for both players and supporters. The venue includes two ovals, one of which is equipped with lighting, providing flexibility for evening training sessions and games.

Sovereign Drive – 81-113 Sovereign Drive, Mount Duneed

Sovereign Drive offers an additional training ground, which is occasionally used for games when necessary. The facility includes access to one oval with lighting on select nights. The Council provides temporary toilets and limited storage facilities at this location, ensuring basic amenities are available for use.

Armstrong Creek School Oval – 100 Central Blvd, Armstrong Creek

The Armstrong Creek School Oval is utilized primarily as an auxiliary training venue, particularly during pre-season. This facility supports our need for additional space during periods of heightened activity, ensuring that our players have ample room to develop and refine their skills.

Oberon High School Oval

The Oberon Highschool Oval is utilized primarily as an auxiliary training venue, particularly during pre-season. This facility supports our need for additional space during periods of heightened activity, ensuring that our players have ample room to develop and refine their skills.

Equipment

Equipment Management

All teams will be provided with the necessary equipment prior to the start of the season. This process is coordinated and overseen by the Club Property Steward and the Junior Male/Female Coordinator.

Coach Responsibilities

Each coach is responsible for the team's football equipment for the duration of the season. Coaches are expected to:

- Keep the equipment with them throughout the year.
- Ensure the equipment is used and maintained appropriately.
- If a coach would prefer to store their teams gear at the club rooms, this can be arranged.
- Return equipment at the end of the year

Standard Team Equipment Allocation

Each team will receive the following standard equipment:

- 12-15 footballs
- 1 football bag
- 1 cone stack
- 12-15 fluro bibs
- 1 set of portable goalposts

If a coach requires additional equipment, such as tackle bags, these can be arranged on a one-off basis through Property Steward.

The list above is indicative, for example, the resource requirements of an U16 team will be different to an U9 team.

Equipment Collection and Return

- **Collection Day:** There will be a designated equipment collection day at the start of the season.
- **Return Day:** A return day will be scheduled at the end of the season.

Both dates will be communicated by the Property Steward and Junior Male/Female Coordinator.

Storage and Maintenance

ACFNC has storage facilities at Shark Park and at Sovereign Drive (shipping container). The Property Steward is responsible for managing and maintaining the tidiness of the equipment storage areas. However, it is a collective effort to keep these communal spaces organized and clean. All members are encouraged to contribute to maintaining a tidy and efficient environment.

Uniform

ACFNC has an agreed uniform for Junior Football, and all teams are required to wear the club strip unless there is a rare exception, such as a team merger.

No variations to the club uniform or merchandise can be created, replicated, or sought without the expressed permission of the committee.

The uniform process is overseen by the Uniform Coordinator, a designated committee role. While the Uniform Coordinator leads this process, ensuring uniforms are distributed to hundreds of players is a team effort. Assistance from Team Managers, Coaches, and Junior Coordinators is essential at the team level.

Uniform Distribution and Responsibilities

- ACFNC provides each player with a jumper at the start of the season, which must be returned at the end of the season in good condition.
- Players are responsible for purchasing their own socks, shorts, training gear, and any additional merchandise.

- Our current supplier for socks and shorts is Loco Sportswear. These items can be purchased through the following link: [Loco Sportswear - Armstrong Creek JFC Collection](#).
- Certain training gear can only be purchased in designated order windows, please keep an eye out on club communications for these windows.

Premiership Team Uniform Policy

If an ACFNC team wins a premiership at any Junior level, special considerations will be made. Players will have the option to purchase their premiership jersey as a keepsake to commemorate the achievement. Pricing, purchasing arrangements, and further details will be communicated directly to the premiership-winning teams. Once that jersey is purchased, it is retired from rotation and can not be worn again in games. There are no other circumstances where a player will be approved to keep their playing jersey.

Coaches, Team Managers Apparel

Coaches, Team Manager, Football Department Volunteers and Committee members will be provided with some basic Club Apparel. The items on offer each year and information around the distribution of these items will be communicated in the lead up to each season.

Player Jersey Numbers

Players can not request specific jersey numbers, additionally, players should not expect to maintain the same jersey number each year. There may be certain situations where this is possible, however, usually a player will be issued a new number at the start of each season.

Registrations

The registration process, including management of PlayHQ and transfers, is overseen by the Registrar and Junior Football Coordinators.

Registrations for Junior Football open annually on November 1st. November is designated as the ACFNC "Returning Players Window." During this period, only players who participated in the previous season can register, and a 10% discount is offered. This window ensures returning players have priority in securing their position before registrations open to the public. From December 1st, registrations are open to the general public and remain open until April 1st, at which point, they close.

If returning players choose not to use the 'returning players window' or to leave their registration until the later stages of the process, they should not expect to be placed on their team of choice or gain a position ahead of a newly registered player.

ACFNC is committed to taking as many junior players as it can, however, growth of our club needs to be balanced against our resources, to ensure we can deliver a quality program. This means, there may be situations where registration numbers may be capped or closed at a particular age group.

Basic Registration Schedule

- **November 1st – November 30th:** Returning player/discount window
- **December 1st – March 31st:** Public Registration Window
- **March 31st – Registrations close** unless teams are short of players

Note: Registrations for specific age groups may close earlier/at any time if numbers reach capacity.

Playing Up in Age

While the club prefers players to compete within their designated age group, ACFNC allows players to play up an age group, within the AFL Barwon age framework.

It is important to note that playing up is not guaranteed and should not be expected by players or their families. The decision is at the sole discretion of the club, and several factors are taken into consideration when evaluating an application for playing up in age:

Considerations for Playing Up in Age:

- Age – how close is the player to the age cut off date?
- School year
- Physical size
- Footballing ability
- Social maturity
- Registration numbers in the higher age group
- Coaches' and Junior Football Coordinators' opinion

Note: If the majority of a team moves up an age group, leaving only a player/a few players in the lower group, it is not guaranteed that those bottom aged players will be allowed to move up/play up with the rest of the team. Players will generally be assigned to their age groups.

How Do We Apply For Our Child To Play Up In Age?

If you are seeking your child to play up in age, you must contact the club via email at the point of registration or, well before teams are released. The club will not automatically know of a player's desire to play up as it is not captured in the registration form.

Situations Where the Club May Consider a Player Playing Up in Age

The club may consider allowing a player to play up in age in the following circumstances:

- A compelling case is presented by the family and coaches, demonstrating that playing up would benefit the player's development.
- A player is the only remaining member of a lower age group, and there is room in the older age group. In this case, all other considerations will still be assessed.
- The club requires players to play up in age in order to field a full team at an older age group.

Example: If there are 28 players in the U14 group and only 14 in the U16 group, some U14 players may be selected/asked to play up to supplement the U16 team, provided they meet the above criteria. In such cases, the approval of the player's parents or guardians is required. Parents or guardians have the right to refuse this request if they wish to keep their child in the lower age group.

****Playing up in age is always strictly at the discretion of the club.***

Filling In at a Higher Age Group

In certain instances, teams may require fill-ins on a week to week basis, and players may be sought from a lower age group.

This process is intended only to address short-term player shortages and may also be used as an opportunity for players to gain exposure to older age groups for development purposes.

The player must be within 12 months of the age cut-off for the group they intend to fill in for.

Process for Filling in at a Higher Age Group:

1. The player's current coach and family must be consulted before approval is given.
2. The player must meet the criteria for 'playing up in age', as outlined above.

3. The needs of the team requesting the fill-ins do not take priority over the team the player is originally registered with.
4. The player's safety and well-being must be always considered. Playing up carries inherent risks, and the player and family must understand these risks.

Note: Like playing up, filling in at a higher age group is not an entitlement. The decision is at the discretion of the club, and the availability of fill-in opportunities may vary based on the club's needs at the time.

Team Selection

At ACFNC we understand the importance of players being happy on their teams. We aim to select teams at all levels that reflect the AFL Barwon mandate, consider competitive vs noncompetitive aspects, nurture friendships, are fair and have kids playing at the correct level.

Assigning hundreds of kids to teams is a complex and challenging process. Balancing fairness, logistics, and individual expectations is no easy task. While we aim to make decisions that benefit everyone, it is impossible to satisfy everyone's individual preferences.

Team selection is at the discretion of the club and is based on several converging factors.

We kindly ask for patience, understanding, and respect when approaching team selection. While parents or guardians may focus on the fairness of team selection for one player, the club and the selection committee must consider the fairness and placement of hundreds of players.

Selection Committee

The responsibility for team selection at all levels does not rest on one person. A selection committee is in place to ensure fairness and consistency throughout the process.

The Selection Committee may comprise:

- Current and former coaches
- Junior football coordinators
- Football department representatives
- Committee members
- Occasionally, external input will be sort as needed

This collective approach ensures decisions are well-considered and ideas are varied, with the best interests of all players in mind always.

Selection committee is not only considering skill level (competitive age groups) but are also looking at Friendship groups, primary schools, considering requests to play up in age and a range of other factors at the non-competitive levels.

The process we intend to use for team selection at each age level (this section of the document) will be communicated via email prior to teams being released to avoid confusion.

Release of Teams

Teams will typically be announced in **early March** before the season begins, this may happen earlier for competitive teams. This timeline ensures the bulk of registrations are finalised, whilst also allowing sufficient time for the selection committee to complete the process.

Age Groups – Selection Process

The guidelines below provide a general framework for team selection, which may be adjusted depending on registration numbers and other factors.

Any significant changes to the framework will be communicated before the new season, as part of this updated document.

These guidelines apply only when there are multiple teams in an age group.

Under 9s (Non-Competitive)

The focus in U9s is on fun, friendship, and learning new skills. Teams are not graded, and competitive factors are not considered during team selection.

- **New U9 Players:** Teams are generally formed based on primary schools to ensure players have familiar faces on their team. Teams may include players from two or more schools (e.g. 9 players from Mirriipoa and 7 players from Armstrong Creek School). Players are not guaranteed to be with every other player from their primary school, we may need to split the grouping, however, there should be at least some familiar faces if possible. Registrations made before team announcements are more likely to reflect these groupings. Late registrations may limit placement flexibility and thus, kids may not be placed with their primary school friends
- **Returning U9 Players:** The core group of returning players are usually kept together where possible the following year (however depending on numbers this

not guaranteed). New top-age U9 players who register will join existing teams, if possible, so some changes should be expected.

Under 10s (Non-Competitive)

The focus in U10s remains on fun, friendship, and skill development, with no grading or competitive focus during team selection.

- **Returning U10 Players:** Teams will primarily consist of last year's top-aged U9s players kept in the previous team groupings. While efforts will be made to keep groups intact, this cannot be guaranteed. Bottom-aged U9s transitioning to U10s are not automatically guaranteed a spot in the older age groups. Priority is given to players within the U10 age bracket.
- **New U10 Players:** New players to the club will be placed with others from their primary school where possible, depending on team availability, however this is not always possible.

Under 12s (Non-Competitive)

The U12s continue their focus on fun and skill-building. Teams are not graded traditionally; opportunities are not merit based and competitive factors are not prioritised in team selection. In U12's - we use a 'bottom and top age team' model. This balances cohesion with teams, a non-graded /noncompetitive formula and prepares top age U12s players for the following U14's (competitive) year, which strikes a suitable balance. **Team Selection Approach:** Top-aged players are grouped together (where possible) to foster connections before entering U14s the following year, which is their first year of competitive football. The way the top age players are grouped may vary year on year, depending on numbers and other factors. Bottom-aged U14s players are then distributed evenly (as possible) across the remaining teams. The bottom aged teams will naturally be graded at a lower level so will not be an overall competitive disadvantage.

- **Returning Players:** Where feasible, the core groups of last year's U10's or U12's bottom aged teams will remain intact, though this is not always guaranteed, depending on the registration pool/team splits etc. Whilst we strive to keep groups together, there may be scenarios where top and bottom age numbers are such, that there will need to be alterations to balance team numbers at the top and bottom age level.
- **Top-Aged Groups Top ups:** In cases where top-aged groups require additional players to top them up or do not have enough players to form a full team, selections will prioritise the more suitable players (see 'playing up' selection

criteria above) to supplement these older teams. Being an older group, these teams are more likely to be graded higher and to play in a higher non-competitive division. Therefore - any bottom aged/top up players in these older groups need to best align with the required developmental stage to enjoy their football at that level. Selection of these players will not be done through 'try outs' and is at the discretion of the selection committee.

*under 12's is a difficult age group to manage. It must be remembered this is a noncompetitive age group where the focus is still on playing with friends and developing their love for the game. Like other non-competitive age groups, it is not a 'merit based system' and several factors are still balanced. Team selection decisions for U12's will be done in the most sensible way available to the selection committee for the registration balance, for the that season.

U14s, U16s, and U18s (Competitive Age Groups)

At these competitive levels where we are playing for premiership points, teams are graded/selected using a merit-based system. Teams will be selected with the view of being grouped suitably for divisions. Depending on the number of teams, there will be an advanced team, an intermediate team and so on and so forth. This is standard practice across the league in competitive age groups.

Selection Factors

The following criteria are considered for team selection:

- Feedback from current and former coaches
- Skill level, attitude, and commitment
- Application and effort to pre-season training
- Performance at tryouts
- Interview with player if required

Try Outs

Try outs will be conducted prior to teams being released. The way in which try outs for competitive groups will be managed will be clearly communicated before each try out session. Whilst all of the above is considered, a specified tryout window will make sure all players get the chance to put their best foot forward in an equitable way.

Relegation/Promotion (Competitive teams)

Adjustments to the graded teams may occur during the season under certain conditions, including:

- Poor attitude or behavior
- Lack of commitment to training or games
- Failure to uphold team standards
- It's deemed a player is more suited to playing in a lower division
- A player may be promoted to a higher division at the discretion of coaches and the selection committee.

If a player is demoted to a lower level, clear feedback will be provided to the player and their family. Similarly, the best-performing player from the intermediate team may be promoted in consultation with coaches and families.

The relegation and promotion mechanism will be clearly communicated prior to and during the season so players and families can adequately manage expectations around this process.

Players moving between teams must always be done in line, with AFL Barwon rules.

Weaker vs. Stronger Teams And Not Being Selected For Your Team Of Preference

In cases where there are perceived differences between team strengths, it's important to note that teams will generally play in appropriate divisions. This ensures players in all teams have a comparable and positive experience. Grouping players at similar levels, in a merit based system, also enables coaches to provide tailored development opportunities at training.

We understand that not being selected for a player's team of choice will be difficult for those with aspirations with their football. This should not be viewed as negative. Those who are on the cusp of the advanced team will play in a lower division and will be given the chance to build confidence with a bigger role on their team at a lower level.

Having players play at the right level should be embraced. A player at an intermediate level will develop faster getting 15 kicks in the intermediate group, as opposed to getting 5 kicks and a lesser role in the advanced group and visa versa, it is ideal that a more developed player, is being being pushed at a higher level.

Players will then be afforded the chance to try out again at the start of each season where they will be reconsidered for their appropriate team selection.

Top and Bottom Age Players In The Merit Based System

Top and bottom age will not determine team placement as it may have in the non competitive age groups, both top and bottom age players will be selected evenly. In the event there is a genuine line ball/split decision with the selection committee, a player being 'top age' may be used as the deciding factor.

Complaints, Appeals, and Grievances relating to Team Selection

We encourage families to respect the team selection process and support the clubs decisions in this area. With so many players involved, individual requests cannot always be accommodated.

If you believe there has been a significant oversight/mistake or have special circumstances you would like us to consider, you may submit an appeal via email to the club's administration email.

We ask that all communication remain respectful and constructive. Emails, appeals or approaches to the club, containing combative or disrespectful language will not be considered.

The selection committee will review appeals and provide a response within seven days.

Best & Fairest (U14's and up)

The Best & Fairest is an important part of our club's junior program. It recognises the players who consistently demonstrate effort, teamwork, sportsmanship, and commitment to our club values across the season. The system is designed to be fair, confidential, and consistent, with input from coaches and parents each week.

How Voting Works

Each game requires three voters: two coaches and one parent representative. Parent voters should rotate weekly and be organised ahead of time. If only one coach is available on the day, the Team Manager becomes the third voter.

All voters use the 5-4-3-2-1 system. After the game, each person independently awards 5 votes to the best player on the ground, then 4, 3, 2, and 1 for the next four standout contributors. Voters should consider overall effort, teamwork, adherence to team structures, positive attitude, and behaviour that reflects the values of the Armstrong Creek Sharks.

Collecting and Storing Votes

After the match, voting slips must be completed individually and returned to the Team Manager. The Team Manager checks they are filled in correctly and places all slips into a labelled envelope that includes the round, opponent, and date. The envelope is then sealed, signed across the flap, and stored securely by the Team Manager until the end of the season. Votes must not be discussed at any point.

End-of-Season Count

The vote count takes place after the final game of the season. It must be conducted by at least two of the following: the Team Manager, the Coach or Assistant Coach, and the Junior Football Coordinator (or their representative). All envelopes are opened, votes are tallied, and the results remain confidential until Presentation Day.

Key Expectations for Team Managers

Consistency and confidentiality are essential. Make sure the voting slips are handed out before the game, collected immediately after, and stored safely throughout the year. If any issues arise or clarification is needed, the Junior Football Coordinator is the first point of contact.

Training

Training will be conducted for all teams at one of the available training grounds (see facilities) through a pre-season period and during the season.

Noncompetitive teams U9, U10, U 12s – training is conducted one night per week, additional skills sessions may be offered.

Competitive teams U14, U16 and U18s - training is conducted 2 nights per week

Training days/times will be communicated by the club in the lead up to the season starting.

Preseason Training

Preseason training will be conducted at all age levels.

Noncompetitive teams; U9, U10, U 12s – Pre-season starts in early March, roughly 6-8 weeks out from season starting.

Competitive teams U14, U16 and U18s – Pre-season starts in December/January roughly 12-16 weeks out from season starting.

Coaching

The Armstrong Creek Football Netball Club (ACFNC) recruits volunteer coaches to nurture players through our junior program, with a strong focus on fun, development, and a growth mindset. Below is an outline of the policies guiding how we manage and support our coaches.

Coach Selection Criteria

Prospective coaches can apply via the club's administration email or in response to a formal 'coaching call-out.' The club's Junior Football Coordinators will then contact applicants and conduct an interview to assess suitability.

Interview questions may include:

- What is your motivation for coaching junior football?
- What is your coaching philosophy for junior football?
- Do you have experience coaching sports?
- Can you commit to training sessions and game days?
- Are you open to constructive feedback and working as part of a team?
- Do you have a valid Working with Children Check?

The selection process is not overly rigorous at the junior level, we encourage anyone interested to apply. If there is a coaching vacancy, we are generally happy to provide opportunities to new coaches so long as there is a suitable fit.

Coaching Levels by Age Group

U9s, U10s, U12s (Non-Competitive)

- Emphasis on fun, confidence-building, and player enjoyment.
- Limited coaching experience required.
- Low levels of feedback and expectations regarding player and team progression.

U14s, U16s, U18s (Competitive)

- Increased focus on skill development, team strategy, and performance outcomes.
- Intermediate coaching experience preferred but not mandatory.

- Greater emphasis on ongoing coaching development and performance outcomes, whilst being supported by the club.

Returning Coaches

Returning coaches are welcome to continue in the same or similar roles without reapplying, provided they have received positive feedback and have met expectations from the previous year.

If a returning coach is not being reappointed due to performance concerns or other reasons, the club will communicate this and, where possible, consider alternative roles.

If a new applicant expresses interest in a position currently held by an incumbent coach—whether through a coaching call-out or direct application—the role will then be subject to an interview process.

Incumbent Coaches are not promised the job next year or ongoing and alternative candidates will be considered if roles are applied for.

All coaching interviews are conducted by the Junior Football Coordinators and Club President.

Coaching Your Own Child

ACFNC welcomes and embraces parent-coaches at all levels.

Special Consideration for Coaches in Team Selection

In some cases, special consideration may be given to a coach's child when forming non competitive teams. For example, if a coach is assigned to a team, and it is impractical for their child to play at a different time or in another team, the child may be placed in that coach's team. This is common practice across the league.

No special consideration for a coaches child will be given once they are in competitive age groups and participating in a merit based system.

Coaching Development

ACFNC is committed to supporting and upskilling coaches through various initiatives, including:

- Ensuring compliance with all **AFL Barwon coaching regulations**.
- Hosting a **pre-season coaching development day**.

- Having coaches create and adhere to a **coaching charter**
- Providing **ongoing coaching support** through the Junior Football Coordinators.
- Organizing **coaching professional development days** throughout the season.

Coaching Charter

At the start of each season, all coaches will come together to establish a **Coaching Charter**. This charter outlines the expectations for coaches across various areas, ensuring alignment with the club's values, fairness, child safety and commitment to player development.

Coaching Feedback, Accountability, and Dispute Resolution

If a coach receives negative feedback or is not meeting the expectations outlined in the **Coaching Charter**, the **President or Junior Football Coordinator** will address the concerns and provide constructive feedback to support improvement.

If a coach fails to adhere to the club's **Code of Conduct**, they will be subject to the **Club's Behavioral Rectification Policy**.

If a coach does not fulfill their responsibilities but it is not as behavioral concern—such as missing training sessions, failing to communicate effectively with parents and players, or demonstrating poor organisation—the club reserves the right to stand the coach down and seek an alternative coaching solution.

Time Limit on Coaching Tenure

There is no set time limit on a coach's tenure. However, coaches are encouraged to consider the benefits of introducing **a fresh voice** if they have been in the same role with a core group of players for several years.

That said, if a coach continues to demonstrate strong leadership, player development, and positive engagement, they may remain in place for an extended tenure. The club values consistency but also recognizes the importance of renewal and new voices when beneficial. This is managed through sensible discussion, ongoing feedback and monitoring of how each individual team is progressing.

Team Manager Policy

The Team Manager (TM) plays a crucial role in managing the off field affairs of the team. They also play a crucial footballing role, in making sure each training session and match day goes smoothly. The TM' is usually sourced from the team's parent group.

Key responsibilities of a TM

- Managing team communications with parents
- Organising team events
- Helping the coach with the everyday function of the team
- Acting as a conduit between families and the coaches

TM Match day duties include

- Organising team sheet
- Meeting and chatting pre-game with opposition TM
- Managing the team bag/first aid kit
- Doing ground report
- Keeping track of players playing time and helping coach with subs
- Managing the parent group from the sidelines
- Keeping track of and helping distribute team awards

Returning TM's

Returning TM's are welcome to continue in the same or similar roles without reapplying, provided they have received positive feedback and have met expectations from the previous year.

If a returning TM is not being reappointed due to performance concerns or other reasons, the club will communicate this and, where possible, consider alternative roles.

If a new applicant expresses interest in a position currently held by an incumbent TM — whether through a TM call-out or direct application—the role will then be subject to an interview process.

TM's are not promised the job next year or ongoing and alternative candidates will be considered if roles are applied for.

All TM interviews are conducted by the Team Manager Coordinator and Club President.

Team Managing Your Own Child

ACFNC welcomes and embraces parent-TM's at all levels.

Special Consideration for TMs in Team Selection

In some cases, special consideration may be given to a TM's child when forming non competitive teams. For example, if a TM is assigned to a team, and it is impractical for their child to play at a different time or in another team, the child may be placed in that TM's team. This is common practice across the league.

No special consideration for a TM's child will be given once they are in competitive age groups and participating in a merit based system.

TM induction and Development

TM's will be under the guidance of the TM coordinator. At the start of the year new a returning TM's will have an induction meeting and information will be provided. Over the first couple of rounds, club representatives are present at games to assist new TM's as they get a handle on their new role.

Team Manager Feedback, Accountability, and Dispute Resolution

If a TM receives negative feedback or is not meeting the expectations of the club, the **President or Team Manager Coordinator** will address the concerns and provide constructive feedback to support improvement.

If a TM fails to adhere to the club's **Code of Conduct**, they will be subject to the **Club's Behavioral Rectification Policy**.

If a TM does not fulfill their responsibilities but it is not as behavioral concern—such as missing games on a regular basis, failing to communicate effectively with parents and players, or demonstrating poor organisational skills—the club reserves the right to stand the TM down and seek an alternative solution.

Time Limit on TM Tenure

There is no set time limit on TM's tenure.

Individual Player Awards

U9s, U10s, U12s (Non-Competitive)

At the **non-competitive** level, all players must be recognized and awarded equally. The club provides a basic awards system (e.g, McDonald's and Bounce vouchers), which must be distributed fairly among all players.

Coaches and teams are welcome to implement additional award systems; however, any extra awards must also be distributed equally across the group to maintain fairness.

In the non-competitive age groups coaches and teams are prohibited from implementing their own merit-based awards that sit outside the club framework.

Example of The Standard Weekly Awards for Non-Competitive Age Groups:

- **Player of the Week** – Receives a club-sanctioned voucher.
- **Weekly Captain** – Celebrated for leadership and effort.
- **Opposition player of the week** – Footy cards provided for a player from the opposing team.
- **Other awards** – Available for distribution at the discretion of the coach or team manager.

U14s, U16s, U18s (Competitive)

At the competitive age groups awards can move to merit based systems. There is a team BNF award that is voted on each week by Coach's and other nominated representatives.

Whilst U14's and up moves to a merit based BNF system, it is encouraged that coaches still find ways to celebrate the contribution of all players where possible.

Junior Umpiring

For **U9s, U10s, and U12s**, umpiring is conducted by a member/s of the parent group. Where possible, to ensure consistency and confidence in officiating, it is recommended that each team identify suitable candidates at the start of the season. In the event no one comes forward to assist with umpiring, it may be added to the weekly parent helper roster.

Ideal Volunteer Umpiring Candidates:

- Individuals with experience in coaching or umpiring junior sports.
- Those with a solid understanding of the game's rules.
- Parents with experience in communicating with and managing children (e.g., teachers).
- People who can take constructive feedback (not from spectators) and handle conflict effectively.
- Individuals who are naturally even-tempered and exercise self-control.

While these attributes are preferred, they are not mandatory. Parents with no prior experience can still take on the role with the right training and support. Umpires will receive guidance from the Junior Coordinator, Coach, and Team Manager, including umpire training, game-day support, and representation in any disputes or challenging situations.

For **U14's, U16, U 18's** umpires are generally provided by AFL Barwon. In the event this does not occur a team should have a suitable parent available to step in. That parent candidate should meet the criteria above at the competitive level.

Team Runner

In competitive age groups (U14, U16, U18) each team requires a runner. The runner is responsible for relaying messages from the coaches to players on the field. It is expected that a member/s of the parent group put their hand up for this role at the start of the season.

Team Events

At ACFNC, we believe that team events are just as important as on-field football. Club and team events foster friendships, strengthen community spirit, and help young players develop social skills while representing the club.

At the junior level, the club is committed to ensuring that all players have a similar experience throughout the season. To support this, the club will provide a structured calendar of events that is equitably distributed across different age groups.

Teams are welcome to organize their own events; however, these must be clearly labelled as *team-organized events* and should not use the club's logo or colours.

For example, if a team decides to hold a movie night, the club supports this as a positive initiative. However, if the event is branded with the club's logo or insignia, other teams may mistakenly believe that the club has organised an event exclusively for one

team, leading to concerns about fairness. Maintaining **equity of experience** is a key club value.

Female Football Events

ACFNC is actively working to promote and grow female participation in football. As part of this initiative, there may be occasions where additional incentives, events, or promotions are provided specifically for female football programs.

These efforts may not always be equally distributed across mixed or male teams. We ask for understanding in this regard, as these initiatives play a crucial role in building and strengthening our emerging female football community.

Football Development and Junior Pathways

Armstrong Creek has long been a participation-focused club. However, with the emergence of more competitive teams across the region, football development is now an area we are looking to strengthen further. While fun and community remain the foundations of junior sport, we are also aware that young players and their families are increasingly ambitious about their child's development.

To support this, we will be evolving our football program in several key ways, including:

- More focused skills training and development sessions
- Pathways events and information evenings
- Connecting players with Rookie Me and other recognised development programs
- Seeking pathway opportunities with the Geelong Cats Academy and the Geelong Falcons
- Developing targeted squads across age groups to support player growth
- Ensuring our competitive teams continue to progress and develop in line with league standards

We understand that not having a senior team at this stage of our evolution presents some challenges. However, we also view it as a strength: it allows us to direct all our energy, resources, and attention into player development and our junior football program.

As we move toward our first U18's team over the next couple of years, we will also seek to partner with other local clubs, to provide pathway opportunities for our players, to give them access to local, senior lists.