



AFL SYDNEY Club Pathway Policy Explanatory Note

AFL (NSW/ACT) agrees in principle that it is important that talented youngsters stay within their local area and play under 18/senior football with the Senior Club aligned to their local area. There is currently a set of geographical boundaries that loosely aligns Junior Clubs to Senior Clubs. There is an imbalance as to the number of Junior Clubs associated to each Senior Club. This is due to the historical origins of clubs as AFL (NSW/ACT) has avoided a formal zoning policy.

Consequently, some level of control or management of development of growth in our club market which is demographically distorted is required, at least in the short to medium term. The demographic distortion, if allowed unchecked, could see the competition being “cannibalised”. This would be, in the short term only, to the benefit of only a few clubs in our competition and, in the long term, to the benefit of none.

Accordingly, AFL Sydney introduced and remains committed to the Pathway Policy (**the Pathway Policy**).

As the junior market continues to develop to reduce that distortion, the need for pathways may evaporate in due course. Accordingly, AFL (NSW/ACT) intends to continue to monitor the operation of the Pathway Policy. In this regard, and in following this commitment, some of the suggested changes put forward by the Clubs in 2011 have been adopted and the Pathway Policy from 2010 has consequently been amended.

The Pathway Policy for the period 30 September 2011 onwards is **attached**.

The Pathway Policy

The primary benefits of maintaining the Pathway Policy in our market are that the Pathway Policy:

- provides some form of control or management of player movements across the market to support a fragile youth pathway;
- recognises and protects the efforts of Senior Clubs in providing development support to the Junior Clubs in their pathway;
- enhances competition quality;
- provides more effective links between the Clubs in their respective pathways;
- ensures that Senior Clubs continue to actively and enthusiastically assist, support and work with the Junior Clubs in their pathway by ensuring that a Senior Club does not have an automatic right for a junior player to join their club, such that the principles outlined in Player Transition – Youth Football to Senior Football continue to be implemented and developed.

The principle of establishing pathways by its very nature will draw criticism, primarily from those that the proposition is engaged to manage. Some level of control or management of development of growth in our club market which is demographically distorted is required, at least in the short to medium term.

Ultimately, it is important to the process that it is capable of recognising, in some cases, exceptions to the rule. The necessary provision is included within the Pathway Policy.

How will the Pathway Policy work?

The Pathway Policy will work in accordance with the **attached** formal Pathway Policy.

The **attached** formal Pathway Policy is to commence on 1 September 2011, such that the Named List are to be provided by 30 September 2011, with the previous season being the 2011 Season, and supersedes the existing pathway policy from 1 September 2011.

In summary form, and whilst not overriding the words used in the attached Pathway Policy, the structure is:

- Each junior player registered in AFL GSJ, excluding Central Coast & Newcastle, is identified as part of a pathway.
- The pathway is based around the junior player's Junior Club being aligned to the Senior Clubs, being premier division clubs and, possibly, lower division clubs.

The management of junior players coming through the pathway will necessitate Senior Clubs identifying and having a better knowledge of junior players in their area. The cornerstone of the Pathway Policy process requires Senior Clubs, on an annual basis, to assess the potential market of junior players. The process will broadly work as follows:

- A player playing for a Junior Club is bound to the Senior Club along the pathway for the period they are eligible for under 18's football. This is provided for in the definition of "Player", the operation of the Named List and clause 12 of the Pathway Policy.
- Each AFL Sydney club, expecting to have under 18's team will, at the designated time (September 30), nominate one list of 30 players (the named list). This list will include players from both their existing list of under 18's players and known under 16's players coming out (i.e. players that were born in 1995) of the junior football system from Junior Clubs designated to their pathway. This is provided for in clauses 3 to 7 of the Pathway Policy.
- Any player 15 years of age (i.e. born in 1996) or younger is not to be included on the named list, rather they are to play in their pathway. This is provided for in clause 8 of the Pathway Policy.
- Any existing under 18's player who has played 5 or more games in the previous season for a Senior Club is automatically included on a Senior Club's named list. This is provided for in clauses 6.b and 6.c of the Pathway Policy.
- If the Senior Club has more than one under 18's team only players who have played 5 or more games in the Premier Cup team in the previous season will automatically be included on the named list. This is provided for in clause 6.c of the Pathway Policy.
- The lists essentially become the Senior Clubs' pathway lists. With multiple Senior Clubs in a pathway some players may appear on more than one list. This is provided for in clause 13 of the Pathway Policy.
- Players coming out of the junior system must have played at least 5 games in the previous season with that Junior Club in the pathway of the Senior Club in order to become bound to the Senior Club in the pathway. This is provided for in clause 7 of the Pathway Policy.
- After these named lists are signed off by all Senior Clubs and AFL Sydney any existing under 18's players not named can register to play with any club of the player's choice. This is provided for in clause 11 of the Pathway Policy.

- On this basis a Senior Club may then build a base beyond the original 30. This is provided for in clause 11 of the Pathway Policy.
- The principle is that under 18's players will not be able to move outside their designated pathway unless agreed to by the Senior Club(s) having named that player on its list. That said there may be some circumstances where that principle should be reviewed. This is provided for in clause 15 of the Pathway Policy.
- An appeal process to the AFL Administration Committee for players looking for an exception to sign with a club outside of their pathway will be provided. This is provided for in clause 15 of the Pathway Policy. Any decision of that committee is final. This is provided for in clause 22 of the Pathway Policy. This is provided for in clause 17 to 18 of the Pathway Policy.
- The table at the end outlines the pathways applied to the 2012 season.



AFL SYDNEY Club Pathway Policy

Overall Purpose of the Pathway Policy

1. The overall purpose of this Pathway Policy is to ensure that a Player plays for and remains with the Junior Club with whom they are registered and plays under 18's/senior football with the Senior Club that is in the same Pathway as the Junior Club.

Who does the Pathway Policy apply to?

2. The Pathway Policy applies to all Players registered in AFL GSJ, excluding Central Coast and Newcastle.

Definitions

Junior Clubs: means any club which is affiliated within AFL Greater Sydney Juniors Incorporated other than the clubs that participate in Central Coast and Newcastle competitions.

Named List: has the meaning set out in clause 3 below.

Player: means a player registered in AFL GSJ, excluding Central Coast and Newcastle.

Pathway: means the pathway that exists between the Junior Clubs and the Senior Clubs shown in the **attached** table.

Senior Club: means any club affiliated within AFL Sydney with a team in the Premier Division or the Lower Division competitions.

Provision of the Named List

3. By 5pm on 30 September each year a Senior Club expecting to have an under 18's team in the following year is to provide a list of names of Players (**the Named List**) to the Senior Football Operations Manager, AFL Sydney.
4. For the purpose of clause 3, each Senior Club is taken to be "*expecting*" to have an under 18's team in the following year if that Senior Club had an under 18's team in the season immediately completed by AFL Sydney as at 30 September.

Who is to be on the Named List?

5. In the Named List, each Senior Club is to set out the names of no more than thirty Players it wishes to include as a player within its club for the coming AFL Sydney season.
6. The Senior Club may include in the Named List a Player that falls within the description of clause 5 and:
 - a. that is a known under 16's Player coming out of a Junior Club; or
 - b. that has played 5 or more games for the Senior Club in the season immediately completed by AFL Sydney as at 30 September; or

- c. where the Senior Club has more than one under 18's team, that has played 5 or more games for the Senior Club's Premier Cup team in the season immediately completed by AFL Sydney as at 30 September.
7. For the purpose of clause 6.a, a Player "*is a known under 16's Player coming out of a Junior Club*" if the Player was born in 1995, and has played 5 or more games for a Junior Club that is in the same Pathway as the Senior Club.

Who is not to be on the Named List

8. A Player that is 15 years of age (i.e. was born in 1996) or younger is not to be included on the Named List.
9. A person who has not played a minimum of five matches for a Junior Club the previous year and otherwise does not fall within the provisions of paragraph 6 above is not to be included on the Named List.

Registration of Named List

10. On the first business day after 30 September the Named List last provided to AFL Sydney by the Senior Club is taken to be registered.
11. On the second business day after 30 September any Player not named on a Named List "registered" is entitled to register with any club of the Player's choice, including any Senior Club. That is, the Senior Clubs may build a base beyond the Players identified in its "registered" Named List.
12. Once a Player is named on a Named List that has been "registered", the Player cannot register with any other Senior Club during the year the Named List is "registered", subject to clauses 13 and 14 below.
13. It is recognised that Junior Clubs may be in the same Pathway with more than one Senior Club such that a known under 16's Player coming out of a Junior Club may be eligible to be placed on more than one Named List. In those circumstances, where the Player's name is placed on more than one Named List, the Player can choose to register to play for any Senior Club that has named the Player on its Named List.
14. A Player need not register to play with a Senior Club that has named the Player on its Named List if the AFL Administration Committee agrees in writing to the Player's name being removed from the Named List.

Application to have name removed from a "registered" Named List

15. A Player may apply to the AFL Administration Committee to have the Player's name removed from the Named List provided by a Senior Club at any time.
16. Any application to the AFL Administration Committee must:
 - a. be in writing;
 - b. be lodged by the Player;
 - c. set out the reasons why the Player wishes to have their name removed from the Named List; and
 - d. be served on the Senior Club that has provided the Named List.

17. The AFL Administration Committee must not agree to the removal of a Player's name from a Named List unless:
 - a. the Senior Club that provided the Named List consents; or
 - b. the Player has moved residential location such that the Player's ability to participate in, train and play for the Senior Club will be adversely impacted to a significant degree; or
 - c. the Player has moved schools such that the Player's ability to participate in, train and play for the Senior Club will be adversely impacted to a significant degree; or
 - d. some other matter will adversely impact to a significant degree upon the Player's enjoyment and participation at the Senior Club; or
 - e. the Player's immediate family (parents and siblings) participate, train or play for another Club (**the Proposed Club**) and the Proposed Club agrees that the Player will form part of its Named List.
18. In considering whether to agree to the removal of a Player's name from a Named List, the AFL Administration Committee must take into account:
 - a. the Overall purpose of this Pathway Policy; and
 - b. the desire of all Senior and Junior Clubs and AFL Sydney to ensure that the competition quality is enhanced; and
 - c. any alternative solutions put forward by the Senior Club to address the matters, if any, raised by the Player in respect of clauses 17.b to 17.d above.
19. In considering whether to agree to the removal of a Player's name from a Named List, the AFL Administration Committee may take into account:
 - a. the efforts of the Senior Club in providing development support to the Player;
 - b. the efforts of the Senior Club in providing development support to the Player's Junior Club;
 - c. the efforts of the Senior Club in ensuring that the principles outlined in Player Transition – Youth Football to Senior Football are being implemented and developed at the Player's Junior Club;
 - d. the location of any other Senior Club the Player wishes to play for; and
 - e. any other matter the AFL Administration Committee deems relevant in the interests of the Player's development within AFL (NSW/ACT) and the interests of AFL (NSW/ACT).
20. In determining whether the Player's name is to be removed from a Senior Club's Named List the AFL Administration Committee must not consider what advantage, if any, another Senior Club will afford the Player, including:
 - a. the financial benefits, if any, the other Senior Club could afford the Player;
 - b. the coaching and support staff of the other Senior Club;
 - c. the facilities provided by the other Senior Club;
 - d. the relationship with the Player of persons that participate, train or play at the other Senior Club, other than the Player's immediate family (parents and siblings).
21. On hearing any application to the AFL Administration Committee only the following may appear:
 - a. the Player;
 - b. representatives of the Player, including the Player's family;
 - c. representatives of the Senior Club;
 - d. if clause 17.e above applies, representatives of the Proposed Club.

Decisions of the AFL Administration Committee

22. Any decision of the AFL Administration Committee is, subject to any relevant by-laws, final.

Pathways AFL GSJ Clubs to AFL Sydney U18's @ 2012

Pathways	AFL Sydney U18's Club	AFL GSJ Clubs
1.	Wollongong	Dapto, Albion Park, Nthn Dist, Kiama, Pt Kembla, S'harbour, W'gong, Sthn Highlands, Figtree
2.	St George Southern Power Moorebank Sports	Bankstown, Bangor, Miranda, Heathcote, Cronulla, Ramsgate, Penshurst, Liverpool, Holsworthy
3.	Western Suburbs	Wests, Concord, Bankstown, Drummoyne
4.	Balmain	Drummoyne, Glebe, Nth Ryde, St Michaels Blue
5.	UNSW-ES	Maroubra, East Sydney
6.	Sydney University	Moore Park, Newtown, Glebe
7.	Nth Shore Manly Warringah	St Ives, Forest, Willoughby, Manly, Mosman, Pittwater
8.	East Coast Eagles Holroyd Parramatta Nor West	Baulkham Hills, Kellyville, Hawkesbury, Hills Lions, Quakers Hill, Holroyd Parramatta, Rooty Hill, St Clair
9.	Pennant Hills Macquarie University	Pennant Hills, Westbrook, Hornsby, North Ryde, St Michaels Blue
10.	Campbelltown Penrith	Wollondilly, South Campbelltown, Ingleburn. Liverpool, South West Tigers, Campbelltown, Sthn Highlands Emu Plains, Camden, St Clair, Penrith, Blue Mountains