



Western Eyre Football League – Junior Development Cup 2024

Current Situation – Junior Football – Western Eyre Football League

The Western Eyre Football League has the current junior grade structure:

Age Group	Year Of Birth
Under 16's	2008, 2009, 2010, 2011*
Under 13's	2011, 2012, 2013, 2014*
Under 10's	2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

*These players require an exemption signed by a parent/guardian.

The AFL recommends no more than 2-year age spans in competitions; however, due to low numbers, this would not be viable in this league. We can run competitions with 4-year age spans in Under 16s and 13s. The players at the low end of the 4-year age span require an exemption signed by a parent/guardian to play in this higher age group.

Projections of junior numbers - 2024.

The following projections of junior numbers in 2024 are based on 2023 participation data.

Age Group	Total	Over 6 teams
Under 16's	107	17.8
Under 13's	92	15.3

This information shows that there are not enough juniors to make complete teams of 18 players. Provisions are already in place to even up matches should clubs not have enough numbers, and it is known that some clubs have more junior players available than other clubs, which skews the data, making it look more even than it actually is.

2023 – Junior Football Information

Grade	Games Played	Average Winning Margins	Forfeits
Under 13's	38	49 points	7
Under 16's	32	59 points	13

This information shows the disparity between the junior sides of the Western Eyre Football League, with big margins in matches and a rising number of forfeits due to player number issues.

Summary

There is clear evidence of issues with player numbers and uncompetitive matches.



Background – Junior Development Cup.

The concept of the junior development cup was raised in Eyre Peninsula Football Board – “The Future of Eyre Peninsula Football and Netball – Recommendation Paper”, released on 23rd August 2023.

A recommendation was for leagues to investigate implementing a development cup; the following is from the review paper:

Aim of a Development Cup competition?

To provide an opportunity for the junior players to play in an even and strong competition with similar age, size and standards. Unfortunately, in some of our communities, it is hard to have teams with equal abilities, size and ages. Some teams are winning by large margins which does not provide an opportunity for improvement for either the winning nor losing team. A more equal competition improves skill development and allows players to learn the game better. This competition is also promoting that it is about the game and not the colours we wear.

A survey was conducted following the release of the review paper, and all six Western Eyre Football League clubs indicated that they supported implementing a junior development cup.

Junior Development Cup Proposal – 2024

The junior committee, comprising members from all six clubs, have devised the following concept for the junior development cup.

The development cup would be run over three rounds of the season, during which all the matches are played in Ceduna: round 4, round 8, and round 14.

On these days, normal Under 16 and Under 13 club games will not occur, and the players will be divided up into the following age groups.

Age Group	Year of birth
Under 16	2008 and 2009
Under 14	2010 and 2011
Under 12	2012 and 2013

Two even teams will be picked for each age group to ensure the most competitive match can occur. Following the matches, changes could be made to the composition of each team if required. The two-year age spread has been selected due to AFL recommendation, and there are enough players to pick two full teams within these age groups.

The matches would consist of 20-minute quarters, and each age group would play at a different venue. The matches would commence at 10:20 a.m., allowing people to return to their club's venue and players to prepare for senior football. The Under 10's competition would run as usual on these days, starting at 1:00 p.m.



Program.

Round and date	Ceduna	Koonibba	Thevenard
Round 4 – 4/5/2024	Under 12	Under 14	Under 16
Round 8 – 15/6/2024	Under 14	Under 16	Under 12
Round 14 – 3/8/2024	Under 16	Under 12	Under 14

Umpire Allocation

Each listed club is required to supply 1x field umpire, 1 x goal umpire and 2 x boundary umpires and 1xtime keeper.

Round and date	Ceduna	Koonibba	Thevenard
Round 4 – 4/5/2024	Under 12 Blues and Wirrulla	Under 14 Koonibba and West Coast Hawks	Under 16 Thevenard and Western United
Round 8 – 15/6/2024	Under 14 Blues and West Coast Hawks	Under 16 Koonibba and Western United	Under 12 Thevenard and Wirrulla
Round 14 – 3/8/2024	Under 16 Blues and Wirrulla	Under 12 Koonibba and West Coast Hawks	Under 14 Thevenard and Western United



Frequently asked questions:

Is the development cup instead of normal club football?

Yes, the junior competition would move to a twelve-week competition and three weeks of junior development cup matches.

Do I need to indicate I want to participate in the junior development cup?

Yes, players can register their interest once the season starts via Google Forms.

Do I need to reregister via PlayHQ?

No, as you have already registered with your home club, which will cover your participation in the junior development cup.

Who will coach these teams?

The junior committee will approach coaches.

Who will select the teams?

The junior committee will select two even teams in consultation with the teams' coaches. There is the ability to adjust these teams from game to game.

Will my children play at different venues?

Your children may be playing at two different venues on these days, but to give the best opportunity for development, the competition has been structured with only 2-year age spreads. It is hoped that people can work together to help assist with the transportation of children from venues. The advantage of playing the games in Ceduna is that the biggest distance between the grounds is 4 km.

If I attend two venues, will I have to pay at both?

No, a pass system will be implemented on these days, and you will only have to pay at one venue on these particular days.

Will normal rules apply?

Yes, the same rules as any normal Saturday will apply,. In the unlikely event players receive yellow/red cards, they will be treated like a normal club game.



Will there be special training leading up to these games?

No. Players would train with their own club to alleviate travel for families in the lead-up to these games.

What uniform does my child need to provide?

Your child will need to come in their normal club shorts and socks; neutral guernseys will be supplied.

Will there be any player awards for these games?

Yes, the umpires will award votes after each game, and a medal will be presented to the player with the highest votes in each grade.

Does my child have to participate?

It is optional for children to participate, but it is highly recommended that they do so for their own personal development as footballers. There is clear evidence that the current junior structure has issues with player numbers and big margins, and this is an opportunity for players to experience playing a competitive game against players of similar age, size and ability.

My child is away in Adelaide at college. Can they participate?

Preference will given to local players who don't have the usual exposure to higher level football like the college kids do each week; however, the development cup doesn't fall during school holidays or exeat weekends.