



Club Information Guide 2008

youthgirls.aflvic.com.au



Program History

The Youth Girls Competition was established to cater for the growing interest from teenage girls wanting to participate in Australian football in regular community competitions. With the increasing number of girls participating in the Auskick, school and junior competitions, AFL Victoria identified that a structured female player pathway was required.

The inaugural Youth Girls competition was established in 2004 with 122 young girls competing in a 15-a-side competition using slightly modified rules. The competition has not only allowed these girls to continue playing and supporting the game, but also created an environment to allow them to play the game with their peers in a fun, safe and inclusive environment.

The Youth Girls competition was planned around a safe, fun and female friendly football venue, where girls could compete in an environment that they felt was non-threatening. Some rule and equipment modifications have been made to encourage participation and safety. Our objective was to design and deliver a 10 week Australian football pilot competition for girls aged 13 to 17.

The Competition linked people from all areas of the with teams representing government and independent secondary schools, football clubs, leagues and also community based teams located in Rosebud, Glen Iris, Narre Warren, Berwick and Waverley.

A comprehensive evaluation of the Youth Girls competition was conducted by Deakin University with participants, parents and other stakeholders all being involved.

The evaluation revealed that the girls were very passionate about the game, often stating their 'love of the game' as being the reason for playing. The opportunity to play a male dominated contact sport had been relished by many of the girls. Wanting to show that 'girls can do it' was a recurring theme and reflects frustration on the part of many of the girls that they have been denied this opportunity before.

A recurring theme emerged about having fun while meeting new people and making new friends, suggesting that this competition could indeed be a significant vehicle for social interaction and community connectedness.



Program Overview

The Youth Girls competition is all about fun, fitness, friendship through football in a family friendly environment. The Youth Girls competition is a community football competition specifically designed to promote a female football friendly environment for girls aged between 13 and 18 years. Run at central venues around Melbourne and beyond, the competition continues to expand to provide more playing opportunities for girls under the age of 18.

The competition is managed by AFL Victoria and is supported by local councils, the AFL, VicHealth and the Department of Sport and Recreation Victoria.

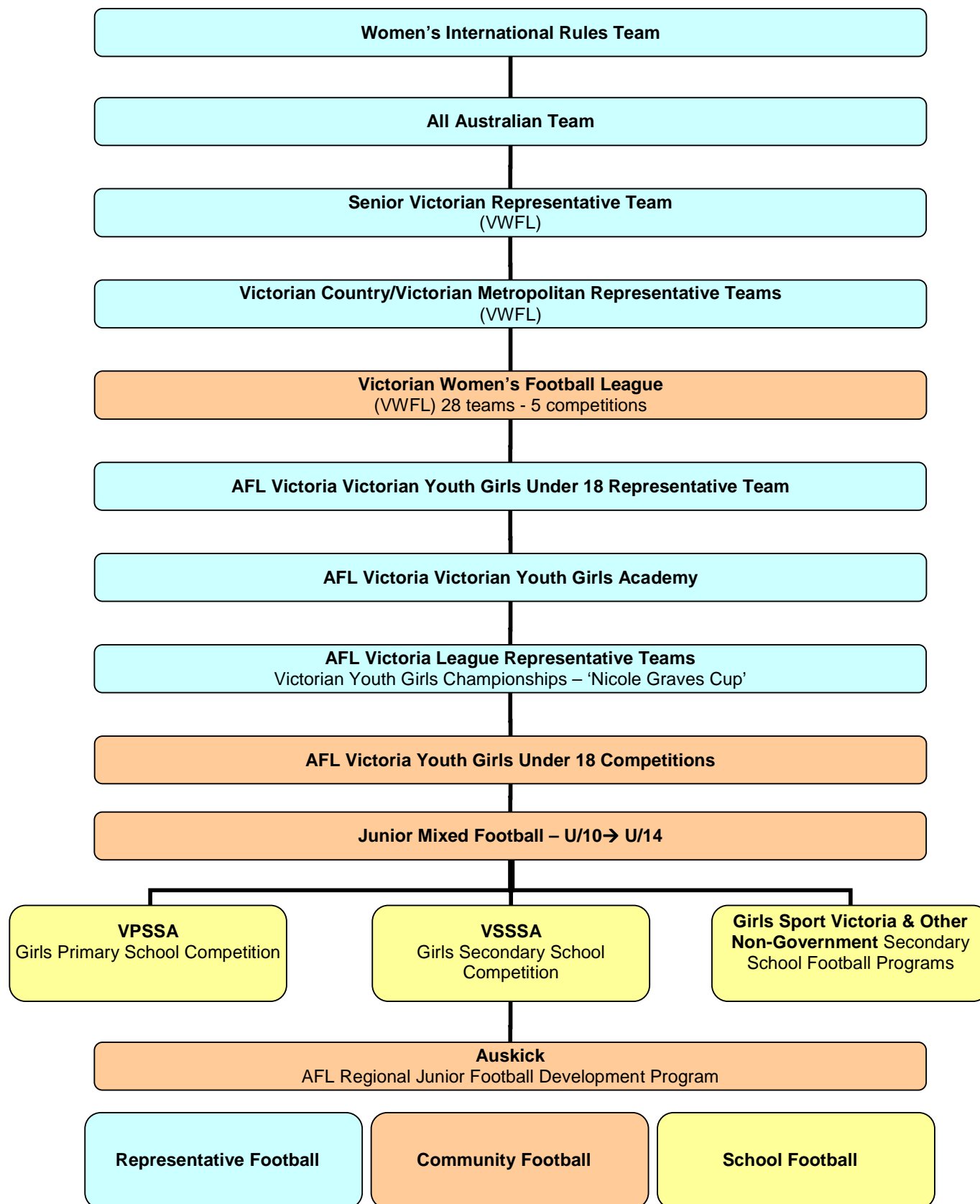
It gives girls the opportunity to play in a real football competition with an emphasis on fun, friendship and fitness. It welcomes teams and players from government and non government schools, football clubs and leagues and all girls wishing to have a go at footy in their very own competition.

The program comprises of the following elements:

- **A structured competition** – a weekly competition played over 14 weeks from April to August (including finals)
- **A fun atmosphere** – the emphasis of Youth Girls is on fun, friendship and fitness to develop football skills
- **Flexibility** – no prior experience is needed, many participants did not participate in either AusKick or junior club football
- **Convenient** – All games are played at a central venue decreasing the amount of travel for families
- **Coaching** – each YG team is required to have at least one coach who is accredited at a minimum Level 1
- **Membership** – each player is a member of their club and AFL Victoria
- **Cost** – The cost of the club membership will be determined by the individual club, lasting for the season and includes insurance (payable at the beginning of the season)
- **Slightly modified rules to further develop skills**
 - No intentional kicking off the ground
 - No more than 2 consecutive bounces
 - No taking ball out of ruck
 - 15 on field, 6 on interchange bench
 - 10m kick
 - 25m penalties



Female Football Pathway



Benefits of Youth Girls for football clubs

- Retain junior girls and their families for longer (4 years)
- Increased membership
- Increased volunteer base
- Greater diversity in membership
- Inclusive club environment
- Assists in funding applications (government and private)

Handy Hints for clubs to recruit Youth Girls players:

- Contact existing families within club (sisters, daughters, cousins, nieces, friends)
- Contact former female players (may have participated in AusKick/club football)
- Contact AFLV for promotional posters
- Advertise in local high school newsletters or local paper
- Conduct clinics at local high schools (AFLV will assist)
- Contact local VWFL club (senior women's competition)

Club/School Responsibilities:

- Provide a coach with a minimum Level 1 accreditation (team manager is strongly encouraged but optional)
- Provide a trainer with a minimum Level 2 First Aid qualification
- Training venue
- Training equipment
- 1 Boundary and 1 Goal Umpire
- Uniforms (at near cost price through competition sponsors, Cramark Footy Pak)
- Annual team registration fee and insurance fee (payable to AFL Victoria)

Benefits for players and their families

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Fun | • Opportunity to represent club, league and state |
| • Fitness | • Join the Youth Girls Academy |
| • Friendship | • Improved relationship between daughters and fathers (Deakin Uni evaluation, 2004) |
| • Ongoing participation from Auskick to Seniors | • Family bonding |
| • Continuing to participate in sport | |
| • Opportunity to play in team sport | |

Player Responsibilities

- Club membership (to be determined by the club)
- Player affiliation to AFL Victoria
- Purchase uniform (possibly – determined by club)
- Attend training and matches
- Provide a volunteer to participate in the volunteer roster (1-2 times per season)



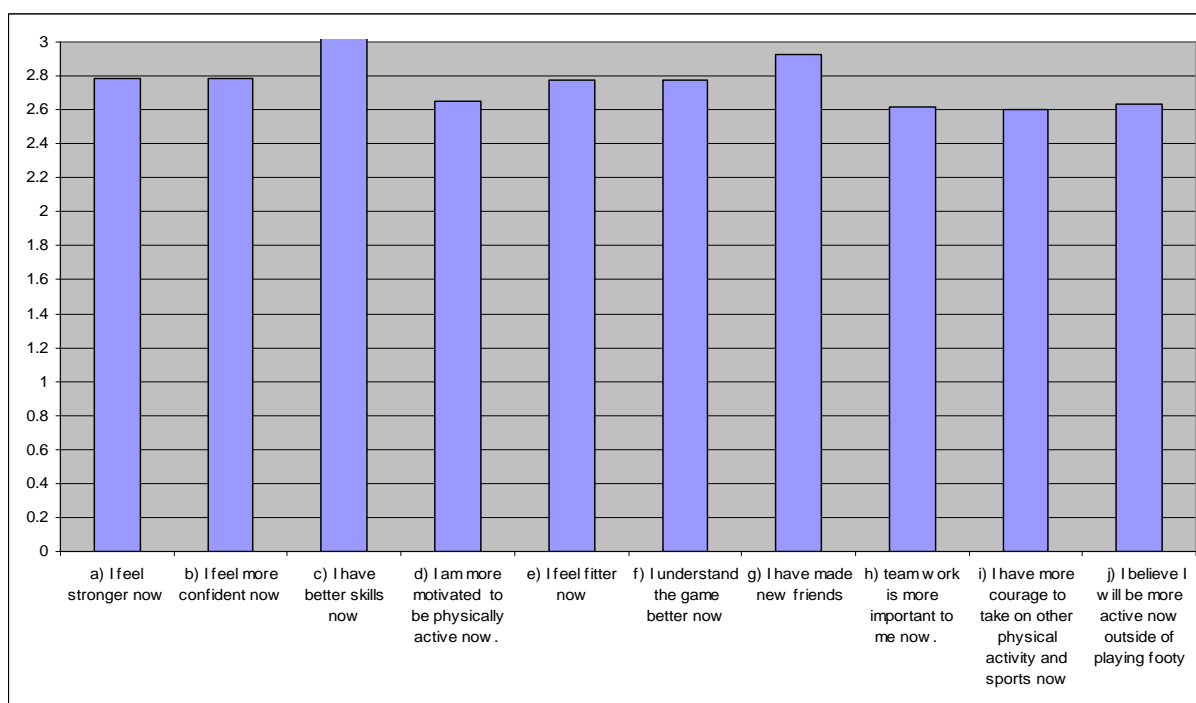
Feedback from participants of the Youth Girls Competition

The girls who participated in the 2007 Youth Girls Competition were surveyed at the end of the season.

The main reasons for the girls participating were fun, fitness and the love of footy. Not surprisingly the enjoyment of participating stemmed from the fact that it is fun, keeping fit, learning how to be a better player and the friendships made.

Just under 60% of the girls found out about Youth Girls through a friend, the majority of the remaining participants found out through school or the local football club.

The following graph depicts the impact that football has had on the participants (3 indicates the participant agrees):



At the conclusion of the season the majority of participants were going to play Youth Girls for at least another season, or play in the VWFL for those who were over the age of 18.

Case Studies:

Alicia Eva (East Malvern Youth Girls)

Entry level/pathway:

Auskick → Junior (East Malvern JFC) → Youth Girls (Sacre Coeur/East Malvern JFC)



Alicia Eva joined the first Youth Girls competition through her school, Sacre Coeur, which entered a team in the south east competition. Alicia was a highly skilled junior footballer with East Malvern however upon approaching the age of 14 (after which boys and girls can not compete against each other) she joined her school team as a participant in the first Youth Girls competition. Since then, her school team has moved to East Malvern JFC, where Alicia is a vital member

of the team. She has been selected in the South East representative team, is a competition best and fairest winner, and is a member of AFL Victoria's Youth Girls' Academy. Her father, Brian, is one of two fathers coaching the girls' team at East Malvern.

Tess Haywood (Melbourne University Youth Girls)

Entry level/pathway: Youth Girls

Tess Haywood joined the Melbourne University Women's Football Club's Youth Girls ranks in 2007. After watching her older sister, Lisa, relishing the opportunity to play football, Tess joined the team a year later and is now an integral member of the club's defence. Her mum, Michelle, is the first parent representative on the club's Executive, and backs up this role as the Youth Girls' Team Manager on match day. Tess' dad, Dennis, is an enthusiastic spectator each Saturday morning and occasional rostered volunteer, making Youth Girls football a family affair for the Haywood clan.



Mercy College Bulldogs



The Mercy College Youth Girls team is one of the founding teams in the Western Youth Girls competition. Situated in Melbourne's multi-cultural northern suburbs, the team's make up reflects the diversity of the student body and local community. With many daughters of European and Middle Eastern

immigrants involved, the team bridges the gap between school and local community competition through the trust instilled by the parents in the school's co-curricular activities. This trust, and the team's excellent scoreboard results, are elevated by the dedication and organisation of enthusiastic coach and long time teacher at the school, Noel Bruzzese. The team, which has made the finals each year since it's first, trains during lunchtimes at school on an asphalt basketball court as they don't have an oval or grassed area. Having regular access to the girls however makes scheduling training sessions easy and gives the Noel more time to work on the girls' skills.

Narre South Lions JFC

The Narre South Lions Junior Football Club often found that when their junior girls turned 14 they either gave up football or moved to another club. The Narre South Lions JFC established a Youth Girls team in 2006 to give girls the opportunity to continue playing football with all sides wearing the same guernsey.

Narre South Lions JFC President, Peter Gajanovic said 'The girls are a crucial team to the club, they have been fantastic. The enthusiasm and keenness of the girls is no different to the boys. They are very much apart of the club and are integral to everything we do''

The club currently has a number of girls participating in both junior football and Auskick. The presence of a strong pathway for girls has been a fantastic benefit to the club, 'The younger girls can definitely see evidence of a pathway now that we have the Youth Girls team at the club. We currently has several girls playing in the Under 13's who are very excited about playing Youth Girls next year – and that is fantastic, knowing they can continue playing a game they love' Gajanovic said.

Several of the Youth Girls also assist with Auskick on Saturday mornings which is a fantastic help to the club but also provides the younger girls with great role models.

Testimonials

'It's fun to get dirty without getting into trouble'

- 15 year old Youth Girls player

'My daughter was a couch potato. Now she goes out with friends more, she socialises and is more active. She is fitter and best of all she has more confidence in herself. Football has been the turning point for her'

- mother of a Youth Girls player

'When I'm away she texts me, telling me when the games is on and how she been training'

- father of a 13 year old Youth Girls player

'Playing football has become a cool thing and something to be proud of at our school'

- 15 year old on her school football team

'The Saturday morning ritual of standing on the sidelines with the other parents and family members has become a social event for us, and I the one activity we do together every week'

- parent of two Youth Girls.

'I just really love playing football, it's definitely my favourite sport. It keeps me fit and I have great friends.'

- 16 year old Youth Girls player

'Passionate about footy, love the way game's played, love the adrenaline I get when I'm holding the ball'

- 17 year old Youth Girls player

'I love being a part of a team and working together to achieve the same goal. I love learning about the game and testing how far I can push myself'

- 15 year old Youth Girls player

'I get to learn from my mistakes, I get useful advice and it increases my skill level and football knowledge'

- 17 year old Youth Girls player

'It made me motivated to get a team together for interschool sport'

- 14 year old Youth Girls player

'It gets you fit, gives you something to do on weekends, you get to make new friends, it's fun, and now my niece and nephew want to play as well.'

- 18 year old Youth Girls player

'Playing footy has helped me to stand up for my rights unlike before I was scared to'

- 15 year old Youth Girls player

'Learned new skills I didn't know, made lots of new friends, got to know my favourite sport again since leaving the boys' comp'.

- 16 year old Youth Girls player

'I feel a lot healthier inside'

- 17 year old Youth Girls player

'I really like footy because I am not very good at school work and so during the week I have something to look forward to, and it's made me more confident.

- 15 year old Youth Girls player





EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

TheFootball Club is interested in participating
in a Youth Girls competition.

We would like AFL Victoria to make contact with our club to discuss the process for getting a team together. Completing and returning this form to AFL Victoria does not commit our club to establishing a Youth Girls team, however it simply expresses our interest in getting involved in a Youth Girls competition.

Contact details for Youth Girls team

Name: _____ Position in team: _____

Postal Address: _____

Ph. _____ w. _____ m. _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Signed Endorsement of Club Executive

The _____ Football Club Executive supports our club's participation in a
proposed Youth Girls competition.

Name: _____ Position on Executive: _____




Postal Address: _____

Ph. _____ w. _____ m. _____

Email: _____ Fax: _____

Signature: _____

Please return to: Chyloe Kurdas

 chyloe.kurdas@aflvic.com.au	Fax (03) 9654 8684
 03 8663 3042/ 0418 572 902	 PO Box 4337 Melbourne VIC 3001

