

REGIONAL TALENTED PLAYER PATHWAY FEB 2022



FOOTBALL
VICTORIA



REGIONAL TALENTED PLAYER PATHWAY

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REGIONAL TALENTED PLAYER PATHWAY

Introduction

The Football Victoria Regional Talented Player Pathway outlines the support for the development of all potentially talented regional players, both male and female, throughout their football journey. The pathways for young players to reach their potential can vary immensely and as such there is not just one way to achieving a player's maximum potential, whether that be a regional representative squad, or national team selection.

Many factors can influence a player's journey including social, emotional, psychological, physiological, and technical/tactical development. The Victorian football player pathway displays the various support programs and avenues that are in place for regional girls and boys to access in helping them reach their potential.

There are several stepping stones in the development of young Regional Footballers in Victoria that will be explored in this document, such as:

Boys Development Pathway

- Local Community Club Football
- Regional Representative Football
- Regional National Premier League (NPL) Club Football
- Regional Skill Acquisition Phase (SAP) Camps
- Regional Talent Identification & Development Centre (TIDC) Camps
- [Football Victoria State Championship](#)
- Football Australia National Youth Championships
- Elite matches

Girls Development Pathway

- Local Community Club Football
- Regional Representative Football
- Regional National Premier League (NPL) Club Football
- Regional Skill Acquisition Phase (SAP) Camps
- Regional Talent Identification & Development Centre (TIDC) Camps
- FV Talent ID Camps
- National Training Centre (NTC) Girls Program
- Football Australia National Youth Championships
- Emerging Matildas Program
- Elite matches

Football Victoria aims to offer programs for both males and females that ensure that all Regional Victorians have the chance to improve, learn and develop the appropriate skills and knowledge required to be an elite footballer. Our pathway is designed to see the best in Regional Victoria, from as young as 10 years of age, follow a stream that sees them constantly working on their technique and football IQ.



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Boys Development Pathway

The Victorian football ecosystem, and the broader National football environment, provide a number of options and opportunities for young boys to advance and develop their abilities as footballers, from the foundational level, through to support programs and State or National Teams such as the Joeys (U17s), Young Socceroos (U20s) or the Socceroos.

Local Community Club Football

Within each Regional area there are existing community football clubs that are rich in history, family values, and the essence of football bringing friends and families together. These local community clubs are the introduction to football for the majority of our regional players, and provide young boys an opportunity to play football at a foundation level against peers from their local and surrounding communities.

Across Regional Victoria you can find your closest community club via [PlayFootball](#), which may fall under any of the following Regional Victorian Football Associations:

- [Albury Wodonga Football Association](#)
- [Ballarat & District Soccer Association](#)
- [Bendigo Amateur Soccer League](#)
- [Cobram Junior Soccer Association](#)
- [Football Federation Sunraysia](#)
- [Geelong Region Football Committee](#)
- [Gippsland Soccer League](#)
- [La Trobe Valley Soccer League](#)
- [Moama Echuca Soccer Association](#)
- [Shepparton Junior Soccer Association](#)
- [South West Victorian Football Association](#)
- [Swan Hill Soccer League](#)

Regional Representative Football

The most common step beyond local community football in regional areas is to play Representative football for the Regional Association. The aim of these Regional Representative Programs that are run by each of the above listed associations is to assist in enhancing players skill, ability, and confidence, as well as providing education on the game, whilst continuing to foster a love of the sport and playing for maximum enjoyment.

Typically to be eligible for a place in these Representative programs, players must be registered and play with their local community club that is a member of the Association. There are many benefits of trialing for and/or joining Regional Representative Squads, such as the obvious opportunity to test the players skills and ability, but additionally programs typically offer additional weekly training sessions, qualified coaching, tournament entry, etc.

Historically Regional Associations have formed Representative Squads from their community playing pools, while maintaining registration at their home club, to compete against other Regional Associations at the [Country Leagues Football Association \(CLFA\)](#) "Country Championships" Tournament.



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For example, players in Bendigo and surrounding communities will play under the BASL Rep team banner against players from Geelong and surrounding communities who will play under the GRFC Rep team banner.

The Country Championships is a yearly 3-day tournament held over the Queen's Birthday long weekend, rotated each year between host towns across Regional Victoria. This tournament historically forms the focal point of the regional representative calendar, and provides an opportunity for development, talent identification for FV programs, and the chance for players to test themselves against their regional counterparts.

The evolution of Football in Australia to more of a "year-round" sport, and the fleeting nature of the Country Championships, provides FV the platform to introduce an additional complimentary competition in the form of the Regional Champions League which is to be launched in late 2022 to continue to showcase and shine a spotlight on Regional Football talent.

For more information on your Regional Representative Program, their trial process, etc, please feel free to contact the relevant Regional Association directly.

Regional National Premier League (NPL) Club Football

The Junior Boys National Premier League (JBNPL) competition is Football Victoria's aspirational tier of football for boys football for Under 14, Under 15, Under 16 & Under 18 age levels. The JBNPL competition is overseen by Football Victoria (FV), in partnership with Football Australia (FA), and provides aspirational participants a longer season (33 league games), inclusive of more training sessions, under qualified coaches who must meet minimum qualification criteria, at clubs who must adhere to enhanced facility standards and game day management standards that provide players with the best opportunity to develop their game.

The Associations listed above provide all community football across Regional Victoria, while standalone Regional National Premier League (NPL) Clubs provide aspirational pathways in Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Gippsland and Albury/Wodonga to compete against their Metropolitan counterparts. There are several regional centres that currently do not host an NPL club, such as Sunraysia, Warrnambool, etc, and the available Regional NPL Clubs can be found below:

- [Ballarat City Football Club](#)
- [Bendigo City Football Club](#)
- [Geelong Soccer Club](#)
- [Gippsland Football Club](#)
- [Goulburn Valley Suns Football Club](#)
- [Murray United Football Club](#)
- [North Geelong Warriors Football Club](#)

As players age and transition through the JBNPL competitions each Regional NPL Club may have a different offering as they advance to senior football. Dependent on the club there may be the option of senior NPL football, state league competition in Metro based leagues, or no senior football if the club is purely focused on junior development.

For more information on your Regional NPL Program, their trial process, etc, please feel free to contact the relevant Regional NPL Club directly.



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Regional Skill Acquisition Phase (SAP) Camps

The golden age of learning skills is widely considered to be between 9 and 12 years old, known as the Skill Acquisition Phase (SAP). It is the age where some players want to train and play in a more challenging environment with other players who have the same footballing aspirations. SAP Programs & Camps focus on providing a solid foundation of game-related technical skills including first touch, striking the ball, running with the ball and 1 vs 1 play.

SAP provides an environment that allows the players to improve and give them the opportunity to learn from accredited coaches, and increase training frequency above standard community club football, to begin to take the players football to the next level. This can mean attending SAP sessions or camps in addition to the player's typical club training.

Due to the success of the program, the trial process for Regional SAP Camps is for invited players only, with invitations based on club or association nominations, scouting and recent SAP/TIDC participation. The trial process typically occurs in February at Darebin International Sports Centre in allotted timeslots per age group.

Players who are not selected after the first trial can still be identified in the club environment and invited to into future camps and programs.

The SAP Talent ID Camps consist of training sessions and matches typically held during the April and July School Holidays to identify and develop our talented players for Victorian and Australian Representative Squads. Identified boys are selected to train at a training camp and will play matches against other regions at the SAP gala day to be held at a centralized location (Eg. Darebin International Sports Centre).

For relevant age groups, Camps will run during the year as part of the identification, development, and selection process for Victorian representative squads (where the number of sessions prior to tournaments will increase if selected).

Regional Talent Identification & Development Centre (TIDC) Camps

The purpose of TIDC is to provide potentially talented players aged between 13 to 17 access to a quality training environment which complements their club training. Players receive additional training sessions with fellow aspirational players focused on individual and team playing principles. These training sessions are organized at a time that club training sessions are not scheduled so that players can combine both to complement their development.

TIDC is run by Football Victoria as the State Member Federation, with guidance and support from FA Technical Department. FV facilitates the organization of TIDC through its Talent Development Manager, and appoint appropriately qualified coaches to lead each age group.

Players can be nominated for consideration for TIDC via their club or Regional Association, or they can also be identified throughout the year by a network of Talent scouts observing community and NPL matches. The trial process for TIDC Camps typically occurs in February at Darebin International Sports Centre in allotted timeslots per age group.

The TIDC Camps are training sessions and matches held during the April and July School Holidays to identify and develop our talented players for Victorian and Australian Representative Squads. Identified players are selected to train at a training camp and will play matches against other regions at the TIDC gala day to be held at a centralized location (Eg. Darebin International Sports Centre).



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Players who are not selected after the first trial can still be identified in the club environment and invited into the Talent ID Camp.

For relevant age groups, Talent ID Camps will run during the year as part of the identification, development, and selection process for Victorian representative squads (where the number of sessions prior to tournaments will increase if selected).

Elite Matches

Football Victoria & Football Australia host Elite Matches throughout the year to Identify potential Victorian players for Australian Youth Representative Teams. This supports the Talent Identification process with Talented Girls & Boys competing in High level games prior to National Talent Identification Camps for National Youth Teams.

Football Australia National Youth Championships (NYC)

The Football Australia (FA) National Youth Championships (NYC) is an annual event held in the September-October school holidays in Coffs Harbour. The tournament provides the FA National Team Unit and Technical Study Group with an opportunity to monitor and identify potential national youth team (Joeys) players.

Players are identified for State team selection through the previously mentioned SAP & TIDC programs by FV's Technical team. For Victorian players in the Under 14 and Under 15 age group this presents the opportunity to showcase their ability on the national stage, under either the Vic Metro or Vic Country banner, and experience an environment that prepares for future national team environments.

Girls Development Pathway

The Victorian football ecosystem, and the broader National football environment, continues to grow in its support for female football and provide a number of options and opportunities for young girls to advance and develop their abilities as footballers, from the foundational level, through to support programs including NTC and the Emerging Matildas, to the State or National Teams such as the Junior Matildas (U17s), Young Matildas (U20s) or the Matildas.

Local Community Club Football

Within each Regional area there are existing community football clubs that are rich in history, family values, and the essence of football bringing friends and families together. These local community clubs are the introduction to football for the majority of our regional players and provide young girls an opportunity to play football at a foundation level against peers from their local and surrounding communities.

Historically Regional Associations have run mixed junior competitions for their community clubs to enter. However, with the evolving growth and demand of the Women's game and the support of Football Victoria, many Associations have introduced Girls only aged divisions that cater specifically for the development and participation of young female footballers.

Across Regional Victoria you can find your closest community club via [PlayFootball](#), which may fall under any of the following Regional Victorian Football Associations:

- [Albury Wodonga Football Association](#)
- [Ballarat & District Soccer Association](#)
- [Bendigo Amateur Soccer League](#)
- [Cobram Junior Soccer Association](#)
- [Football Federation Sunraysia](#)
- [Geelong Region Football Committee](#)
- [Gippsland Soccer League](#)
- [La Trobe Valley Soccer League](#)
- [Moama Echuca Soccer Association](#)
- [Shepparton Junior Soccer Association](#)
- [South West Victorian Football Association](#)
- [Swan Hill Soccer League](#)

Regional Representative Football

The most common step beyond local community football in regional areas is to play Representative football for the Regional Association. The aim of these Regional Representative Programs that are run by each of the above listed associations is to assist in enhancing players skill, ability, and confidence, as well as providing education on the game, whilst continuing to foster a love of the sport and playing for maximum enjoyment.

Typically to be eligible for a place in these Representative programs, players must be registered and play with their local community club that is a member of the Association. There are many benefits of trialing for and/or joining Regional Representative Squads, such as the obvious opportunity to test the players skills and ability, but additionally programs typically offer additional weekly training sessions, qualified coaching, tournament entry, etc.



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Historically Regional Associations have formed Representative Squads from their community playing pools, while maintaining registration at their home club, to compete against other Regional Associations at the [Country Leagues Football Association \(CLFA\)](#) “Country Championships” Tournament. For example, players in Bendigo and surrounding communities will play under the BASL Rep team banner against players from Geelong and surrounding communities who will play under the GRFC Rep team banner.

The Country Championships is a yearly 3-day tournament held over the Queen’s Birthday long weekend, rotated each year between host towns across Regional Victoria. This tournament historically forms the focal point of the regional representative calendar, and provides an opportunity for development, talent identification for FV programs, and the chance for players to test themselves against their regional counterparts.

The evolution of Football in Australia to more of a “year-round” sport, and the fleeting nature of the Country Championships, provides FV the platform to introduce an additional complimentary competition in the form of the Regional Champions League which is to be launched in late 2022 to continue to showcase and shine a spotlight on Regional Football talent.

For more information on your Regional Representative Program, their trial process, etc, please feel free to contact the relevant Regional Association directly.

Regional National Premier League (NPL) Club Football

The Junior Girls National Premier League (JGNPL) competition is Football Victoria’s aspirational tier of football for girls football for Under 13, Under 15, Under 17 & Under 19 age levels. The JGNPL competition is overseen by Football Victoria (FV), in partnership with Football Australia (FA), and provides aspirational participants a longer season (33 league games), inclusive of more training sessions, under qualified coaches who must meet minimum qualification criteria, at clubs who must adhere to enhanced facility standards and game day management standards that provide players with the best opportunity to develop their game.

The Associations listed above provide all community football across Regional Victoria, and unfortunately there is a current lack of JGNPL programs within Regional Victoria as the overall playing pool is developed. Currently the only Regional JGNPL program is operated by [Geelong Galaxy United Football Club](#), with the other avenue to JGNPL participation for Regional Girls through the National Training Centre (NTC) Programs mentioned below.

Alternatively, there are standalone Regional National Premier League (NPL) Clubs provide aspirational pathways in the Junior Boys NPL competitions in Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Gippsland and Albury/Wodonga to compete against their Metropolitan counterparts. Given the lack of JGNPL programs, it is accepted that opportunities can be provided for girls to join the JBNPL programs in their regional centres.

There are several regional centres that currently do not host an NPL club, such as Sunraysia, Warrnambool, etc, and the available Regional NPL Clubs can be found below:

- [Ballarat City Football Club](#)
- [Bendigo City Football Club](#)
- [Geelong Soccer Club](#)
- [Gippsland Football Club](#)
- [Goulburn Valley Suns Football Club](#)
- [Murray United Football Club](#)
- [North Geelong Warriors Football Club](#)



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For more information on your Regional Junior Girls or Junior Boys NPL Program, their trial process, etc, please feel free to contact the relevant Regional NPL Club directly.

Regional Skill Acquisition Phase (SAP) Camps

The golden age of learning skills is widely considered to be between 9 and 12 years old, known as the Skill Acquisition Phase (SAP). It is the age where some players want to train and play in a more challenging environment with other players who have the same footballing aspirations. SAP Programs & Camps focus on providing a solid foundation of game-related technical skills including first touch, striking the ball, running with the ball and 1 vs 1 play.

SAP provides an environment that allows the players to improve and give them the opportunity to learn from accredited coaches, and increase training frequency above standard community club football, to begin to take the players football to the next level. This can mean attending SAP sessions or camps in addition to the player's typical club training.

Due to the success of the program, the trial process for Regional SAP Camps is for invited players only, with invitations based on club or association nominations, scouting and recent SAP/TIDC participation. The trial process typically occurs in February at Darebin International Sports Centre in allotted timeslots per age group.

Players who are not selected after the first trial can still be identified in the club environment and invited to into future camps and programs.

The SAP Talent ID Camps consist of training sessions and matches typically held during the April and July School Holidays to identify and develop our talented players for Victorian and Australian Representative Squads. Identified boys are selected to train at a training camp and will play matches against other regions at the SAP gala day to be held at a centralized location (Eg. Darebin International Sports Centre).

For relevant age groups, Camps will run during the year as part of the identification, development, and selection process for Victorian representative squads (where the number of sessions prior to tournaments will increase if selected).

Regional Talent Identification & Development Centre (TIDC) Camps

The purpose of TIDC is to provide potentially talented female players aged between 12 and 13 years old access to a quality training environment which complements their club training. Players receive additional training sessions with fellow aspirational players focused on individual and team playing principles. These training sessions are organized at a time that club training sessions are not scheduled so that players can combine both to complement their development.

TIDC is run by Football Victoria as the State Member Federation, with guidance and support from FA Technical Department. FV facilitates the organization of TIDC through its Talent Development Manager, and appoint appropriately qualified coaches to lead each age group.

Players can be nominated for consideration for TIDC via their club or Regional Association, or they can also be identified throughout the year by a network of Talent scouts observing community and NPL matches. The trial process for TIDC Camps typically occurs in March at Darebin International Sports Centre, before the program kicks off in April.



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The TIDC Camps are training sessions and matches held during the April and July School Holidays to identify and develop our talented players for Victorian and Australian Representative Squads. Identified players are selected to train at a training camp and will play matches against other regions at the TIDC gala day to be held at a centralized location (Eg. Darebin International Sports Centre).

Players who are not selected after the first trial can still be identified in the club environment and invited into the Talent ID Camp.

For relevant age groups, Talent ID Camps will run during the year as part of the identification, development, and selection process for Victorian representative squads (where the number of sessions prior to tournaments will increase if selected).

National Training Centre (NTC) Program

A National Training Centre (NTC) is a centralised full time football development program for girls aged 13 to 17 in most capital cities across Australia, including Victoria. The purpose of the NTC is to provide potentially talented players access to a quality training environment and exposure through the National Youth Championship and NTC Challenge with the view of identification into Junior Matildas and Young Matildas camps.

The NTC is a full-time program run by Football Victoria with guidance and support from the Football Australia Technical Department. FV facilitates the organisation of the NTC and appoint appropriately qualified coaches for each age group. Each NTC has a Head Coach who works with the FV Technical Director to administer the program and provides players, parents and coaches with all the necessary information relating to the NTC including trials, training times and venues, and competitions.

NTC is a holistic approach to player development focusing on individual and team playing principles as well as injury prevention and management, nutrition, strength and conditioning. Upon selection after FV's initial trial process, players selected into the NTC environment will be required to train a minimum of three times per week with the NTC Squad and play one match.

Trials for players will be via Nominations and Expressions of Interest (EOI) and will be invitational only based on FFA Player Competencies and selection criteria by the FV Technical Staff. Trials for the NTC Program will typically start and run throughout October and November.

Players selected in a NTC play in the Junior Girl's National Premier League (JGNPL) competition in their Member Federation in an age group higher than their age. For example, the U14 NTC Squad participates in the U15 NPL Girls Competition, the U15 NTC Squad participates in the U17 NPL Girls Competition, and the U17 NTC Squad participates in the U19 NPL Girls Competition. These players may also participate in a week-long event against NTC programs from across Australia at the National Youth Championship (NYC) in Coffs Harbour for U14 and U16 year old girls or at the NTC Challenge at the AIS, Canberra for U17 year old girls.

Football Australia National Youth Championships (NYC) & NTC Challenge

The Football Australia (FA) National Youth Championships (NYC) is an annual event held in the September-October school holidays in Coffs Harbour for Under 14 and Under 16 year old girls. The tournament provides the FA National Team Unit and Technical Study Group with an opportunity to monitor and identify potential national youth team (Junior Matildas) players.

For Victorian players in the Under 14 and Under 16 age group this presents the opportunity to showcase their ability on the national stage, under the Victorian banner, and experience an environment that prepares for future national team environments.



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The FV NTC Girls Coaches are also responsible for taking the Under 17 state team to represent Victoria at the National Talent Challenge at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) in Canberra. The National Talent Challenge (NTC) offers U17 Girls the opportunity to showcase their talent in front of Football Australia and Australian National Team selectors.

It is important to note that players who do not make it into these programs at the beginning of the year are still monitored for nationals via the FV Talent ID Camps, also run during the April & July school holidays. As the opportunity to go to nationals is not only for those in the program. From these pathways, players may then be recognized for National Team Representation, W-League, or opportunities overseas.

Elite Matches

Football Victoria & Football Australia host Elite Matches throughout the year to Identify potential Victorian players for Australian Youth Representative Teams. This supports the Talent Identification process with Talented Girls & Boys competing in High level games prior to National Talent Identification Camps for National Youth Teams.

Emerging Matildas Program

The Football Victoria Emerging Matildas program, formally endorsed by Football Australia (FA), has been established to discover and prepare future players between the ages of 17 and 20 for the Australian National team – the Matildas, A-League Women's Clubs, and additional International Opportunities.

The program provides players an opportunity to train within a high-level professional environment with the objective to bridge the gap into the Matildas, A-league Women's and International Representation.

The Victorian based program allows players to undertake training in a high-performance environment with access to coaching and support staff with experience of Australian National Senior and Youth Team programs across Men and Women.

The development of players are supported through areas including:

- Access to National Team Unit Staff Members
- High-Performance Competitive Training Environment
- Athlete Wellbeing Management
- Position Specific Technical Sessions
- Leadership & Culture Program
- GPS and Data Evaluation
- A-Licensed Accredited Coaches
- Accredited Strength & Conditioning Performance Manager
- Football Specific
- Individualised Home Programs
- Video Performance Analysis
- Access to the Home of the Matildas facility being constructed at La Trobe University

Player selection is on an invitational basis only, and selected players will be required to train with the Emerging Matildas Squad while playing matches within the senior Women's National Premier League Competition (NPLW), Victoria's top tier female competition. The strength of the Emerging Matildas Program will equip our best and brightest young female players with the tools required to maximize their potential on a national and international stage.



REGIONAL TALENTED PLAYER PATHWAY

Key Contacts

FV Technical Department - <https://www.footballvictoria.com.au/resources/players/talented-player>

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