



# **DEVELOPMENT & PREMIER SQUADS HANDBOOK 2024 & 2025**



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To our Kickeroos family,

As we reflect on the incredible year of 2023, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all parents who have been a part of our Kickeroos community. To those who have placed their trust in us over the years and to the new members who joined us, we thank you.

Your trust has allowed us to provide your children with an enriching football development experience, while instilling in them the values of effort and perseverance to improve week after week.

At Kickeroos, we take pride in supporting the growth of football in Australia, and this is evident in our expanding age groups year after year.

The dedication of our coaches and staff over the past two years, especially in the post-COVID era, has brought us to where we are today. And, excitingly, we aspire to achieve even more!

Looking forward to 2024, we are particularly enthusiastic about the progress of our Development Squads and Premier Squads. This handbook contains information, guidelines and policies relevant to the players and parents/carers.

Here's a summary of what you can expect from your child's development with us from 2024.



## **Our Primary Goal**

The primary goal of the Development and PremierSquads is to provide a platform for the ongoing development of players. We aim to do so while maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all members of the community.

## **Key aspects of the program include:**

- Constant skill development.
- Fostering a desire and effort to improve.
- Instilling a commitment to the association, the team and the individual.
- Recognising and acknowledging different rates of development.
- Developing a positive attitude towards teammates, coaches, officials and opposition.
- Enjoying the game of soccer.

**The emphasis of this program is on long-term skill development, participation, confidence building, teamwork and enjoyment.**





## **The Different Phases of Player Development - ADVANCED PROGRAM**

### **U6 & U7 Development Squads - Discovery & Skill Phase**

The U6/U7 phase fosters technical skill development while introducing tactical teamwork concepts. Coaches keenly observe players' preferences and abilities, gradually assigning more specific positions. Games become more structured, with larger spaces and more detailed rules.

### **U8 & U9 Development/Premier Squads - Skill & Game Training Phase**

As we progress, players delve deeper into both technical and tactical development. They begin working on more complex team strategies, emphasising the importance of position play and teamwork. While specialisation in positions may commence, we continue to encourage versatility.

### **U10-U12 Development/Premier Squads - Game/ Team Training Phase**

The U10-U12 phase further develops technical and team processes used within the game. We now implement strategies for the individual to function within the team. This includes the different transitions of the game from defending to attacking, attacking to defending. - developing the understanding between players and their positions, with and without the ball.



## **PREMIER SQUADS & DEVELOPMENT SQUADS 2024**

Our Premier Squads and Development Squads represent selective programs from our Kickeroos Soccer Academy, both prioritising player development. The selection process hinges on a player's ability to listen, absorb instructions, exhibit a baseline skill level, and possess a genuine desire to engage in competitive football. The key difference lies in the two levels of competency, skill, and technique within these squads.

### **Development Squads U6-U12**

Players in the Development Squads will engage in a program that emphasises improvement throughout the year. Those demonstrating progress may earn opportunities to casually join Premier Squads or be called upon by coaches as needed until the annual trials. Coaches will closely monitor this development process, providing insights in our half-yearly reports to help set goals with the players.

### **Premier Squads U8-U12**

Building on the success of our inaugural participation in the Sydney International Cup in 2023, Premier Squads in 2024 will enjoy enhanced opportunities. They will represent Kickeroos in various local and national tournaments, including:

- January 15th & 16th: Newcastle Elite Summer 7s Tournament (U8 to U12 players)
- April: To be confirmed
- July 7th to 12th: Canberra Kanga Cup (U9 to U12 players)
- October 4th to 7th: Sydney International Cup (U8 to U12 players)



We are excited about the potential these competitions hold for our players' development and the unique experiences that await them on and off the field. As we embark on this exciting journey, your support is invaluable, and we can't wait to share more details in the coming months!

### **Pathway for Development Squad Players: Ensuring Squad Integrity**

While Premier Squad spots are secured for selected players, unforeseen circumstances like injuries or absences might create opportunities. In such cases, Development Squad participants may enter based on their progress throughout the year. Coaches will conduct trials if needed, ensuring a fair chance for Development Squad players to contribute to the Premier Squads temporarily. This approach reflects our commitment to merit-based opportunities and fostering an inclusive environment at Kickeroos.



## **Number of Teams/Players**

Kickeroos will enter a minimum of two teams in each age group (U6, U7, U8, U9, U10, U11 and U12) dependant on player & coach availability in each age group.

Each team consists of a maximum of 10 players

## **Selection Eligibility/Criteria**

To be eligible for selection a player must:

- Acknowledge that they and their parents/carers accept the guidelines and policies in this handbook.
- Be under the age limit as of 31st December in the year of the season.
- During the trial process, the following criteria may be considered for player selection: Demonstrated skill level in all areas of soccer: shooting, dribbling and passing.
- Attitude, dedication, work ethic, commitment and coachability.
- Positional needs of each team.
- The player's availability to commit to all the requirements of the season including preseason and finals.
- The player and their parent/carer's history of behaviour and compliance with relevant codes of conduct.







**The following factors are not to be considered by coaches in any circumstances:**

- The race, religion or sexual orientation of the player or their parents/carers.
- The position/status of the parent.
- The player's affiliation with any local competition club, school or external training program.

**Team selection process for our Development Squads**

- Unless a player is severely under performing or there are consistent behavioural problems ALL players in the Development Squads will automatically be enrolled for the following year.
- Team selection is done by the Head Coach of each age group and considerations such as friendships will be taken in to account.

**Team selection process for our Premier Squads**

Team trials are generally held in October/November the year prior to the season. The trials are to be attended by age group head coaches and assistant coaches.

**The coaches are provided with:**

- A list of all players signed up for the trials.
- A list of all players who are absent from the trial for approved reasons.
- At the trials, the lead head coach of each age group is to determine the drills or activities conducted in each session.
- Following the trial, the coaches meet to discuss the final team selections.



## Weekly Schedule 2024

### **Development Squads Term 1 and term 4:**

- Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 5:30pm training sessions in Centennial Park.
- Saturday ESAL & SSL competitions between 1pm to 5pm in Easts Rugby + Heffron Synthetic.

### **Development Squads Term 2 and Term 3:**

- Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:45 to 5:15pm in Queens Park.
- Saturday ESAL & SSL competitions between 1 to 5pm in Queens Park.

### **Premier Squads Term 1 and term 4:**

- Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 5:30pm training sessions in Centennial Park.
- Saturday SSL competition between 1 to 5pm in Easts Rugby + Heffron synthetic Field
- Sundays ESCC league between 9 to 12pm in Lough Park.

### **Premier Squads Term 2 and Term 3:**

- Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:45 to 5:15pm in Queen Park.
- Saturdays SSL competition between 1 to 5pm in Queens Park.
- Sundays ESCC league between 9 to 12pm in Lough Park.

*\*Please note that this may change for decisions out of our control such as councils venue permits, tournaments organisations decisions, weather conditions, etc..*



## **Training Expectations**

- Kickeroos teams generally have two training sessions per week of an hour and a half each.
- Training venues may include: Centennial Park, Queens Park & Steyne Park - Double Bay,
- Players are expected to be at training, fully dressed and ready to train at the scheduled start time. One minute late is considered to be late and any penalties for unnotified lateness are at the discretion of the coach.
- If you cannot attend training or will be late, this should be communicated to the coach as early as possible.
- Training sessions during the school holidays are not mandatory.
- Players should wear their Kickeroos uniform and bring water.

## **Player Match Time**

The Development Squad program is considered to be an elite development program, however, all players must play in both halves. Playing time is ultimately at the discretion of the coaches. Relevant factors to be considered include:

- Attendance and punctuality.
- Behaviour and appearance.
- Attitude towards coaches, teammates and referees.
- Playing ability.



## Kickeroos Attire

All players are required to purchase a Kickeroos uniform. Which includes; Playing Top, Shorts & Socks. Players will have the opportunity to have their names and numbers on the back of their playing top.

**Players who do not have the full correct uniform at the game will not be permitted to play.**

## Player Expectations

- All players must attend all practices and games unless they are sick or receiving professional treatment for an injury.
- Injured players should still attend training even if they cannot participate fully.
- All players must support their team at all times, whether they are on the court or on the bench, both verbally and with correct body language.
- All players are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour, bullying, or attitude detrimental to the team may result in disciplinary action or expulsion from the program.
- Representative teams are limited to 10 playing spots.





## Parent-Player-Coach Communication

- Communication between the coaches, players and parents needs to be timely, accurate and complete.
- Parents are not to approach coaching staff during games. Coaches are instructed not to deal with negative feedback directly following a game.
- If you have issues that need to be resolved, wait at least for the next day to speak with the coach. The majority of issues should be able to be resolved with the coach directly however if needed, issues can be escalated to the head coach.
- During games and practices, please support the whole team, not just your own son or daughter.
- Parents coaching from the sidelines is never appropriate regardless of their level of knowledge. By all means be passionate and vocal, give encouragement to the Kickeroos teams and praise good play by our opponents but refrain from negative feedback towards anyone.

At Kickeroos, we are committed to providing a pathway for players to grow, compete, and potentially showcase their talents on an international stage.







## **Exciting Plans for 2024 & 2025!**

### **Pathway for Premier Squads Players: Ensuring Continuity**

As we look ahead to 2024, we are thrilled to unveil an exciting pathway for our Premier Squads players, ensuring a high level of continuity in their Kickeroos development journey. This program opens doors for our oldest players to seamlessly transition into Representative Programs in the National Premier League (NPL) and Skill Acquisition Program (SAP).

Leveraging our strong affiliations and close ties with esteemed Clubs and organisations such as ESFA SAP, Hakoah FC, APIA Leichhardt, Wanderers FP, Marconi, Barça Academy, Villareal Academy, among others, this pathway is exclusively designed for oldest players aged 11 and 12 years old.

We are committed to offering comprehensive pathways that foster growth, competition, and the realisation of each player's full potential.

Premier Squads players will also be challenged internally where they could have the chance to be promoted to an older age Premier Squad team in the middle of the year; eg. From U8 to U9 in August, this also will be closely monitored by the coaches ensuring the players has achieved all proposed goals and showed improvement.

## **Our Team of Coaches**

At Kickeroos we have a wealth of talent, experience and expertise in challenging and educating all of the players in our Development and Premier Squads. All of our coaches have qualifications and experience as both players and coaches.

### **Hicham Sakhi - Head Coach Development and Premier Squads**

“ My goal is to share my knowledge and experience to provide an environment for players, coaches and parents to enjoy football and to deliver the best environment for players to develop lifelong values of respect, hard work, discipline, fairness and loyalty”.





## **The Future...**

As we look forward to the future, Kickeroos is thrilled to announce our ambitious plan to create competitive Premier Squad teams for the 2025 season, aiming to participate in an international tournament in the vibrant city of Barcelona, Spain. This endeavour will be meticulously organised and planned throughout the year, with an official proposal slated for presentation at the end of 2024, following the Premier Squads Trials for 2025.

We are looking at different packages and options (tournaments, training sessions, accommodations, transport, meals, etc) to make it as affordable as possible to everyone that is eligible to participate.

Ideally, we would like to take 2 teams in 2025:

- U9/10 Premier Squad 2025 – Players born in 2016 and 2015.
- U11/12 Premier Squad 2025 – Players born in 2014 and 2013.

The journey promises to be an incredible opportunity for our players to not only showcase their skills on an international stage but also to immerse themselves in the rich football culture of Barcelona.

Stay tuned for regular updates on this thrilling news as we progress with the planning and organization.

Thanks,

The Kickeroos Team