

## CLUB CIRCULAR - 29, 2019/02/15

**Subject:** WAFC Year 11/12 Competition - Update

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> February

**From:** Josh Bowler  
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**West Australian Football Commission**

**Audience:** Junior Club Presidents

<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>This circular provides details for the Year 11/12 competition and full competition rules will be circulated in line with all other Junior and Youth competition rules.</p>	<p><b>Club Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure relevant information is shared with Committee Members, Coaches and Volunteers relevant to this age group</li><li>• Complete short survey about Finals Structure by <a href="#">Clicking Here</a></li><li>• Begin working with your Senior Club to establish Transition Agreement (WAFC Staff available to support)</li></ul>
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### Previous Information

A circular was distributed on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018 outlining the background and key changes to the Year 11 and 12 Competition. This can be [downloaded here](#) or viewed as an appendix to this circular.

### Division Structure and Grading of Teams

Grading of teams will be undertaken once team nominations are received from all clubs. The primary goal for the WAFC is to ensure all teams are competitive in their division and teams will be graded accordingly. Where possible, clubs with multiple teams will be separated into their own divisions to allow for an aligned fixture and teams to play at the same venue each week. Divisions will not be based on separating out age groups (ie. Year 11's separate to Year 12's).

Clubs with two teams can move players between the two teams throughout the season in line with the competition rules but must ensure both teams are competitive in their division whilst doing so.

### Finals Structure

As outlined in previous communications, each division will have a cross-conference component to their finals series so teams in finals can become a Conference Premier and also a State Premier.

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The WAFC seeks feedback on two finals structures by March 22 by [Clicking Here](#) to respond with your preference:

#### **Option 1 – 5-week finals series**

- Top 4 of each division play finals
- Three weeks of conference finals, teams finishing 1 & 2 in a division get a second chance
- Two weeks of cross-conference finals
- Grand Finals to be played on Saturday 21 September

#### **Option 2 – 4-week finals series**

- Top 4 of each division play finals
- Two weeks of conference finals, no teams get a second chance (pending a highest ranked loser going through to the next round)
- Two weeks of cross-conference finals
- Grand Final to be played on 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> September in line with all Junior Finals

[Click Here](#) to download a visual structure of each option

#### **Finals Qualification Rules**

The finals eligibility rules are as follows;

- To be eligible to take part in any finals match all non-WAFL Colts players must have played a minimum of five matches for that club in the qualifying rounds of that season for the Year 11–12 competition age group.
- The division a player is permitted to play finals is as follows:
  - A player is permitted to play in any higher division final.
  - A player is permitted to play in any division final provided he has played five qualifying matches in the respective division he intends to play.
  - A player who plays in a finals match of a higher division is permitted to play in a lower division final (after the higher grade is eliminated) as long as the player has played five qualifying matches in that lower division.
  - A player who has played less than five qualifying matches in a division is only permitted to play finals in the highest division in which he has played.
  - Where a club has more than one team playing in a final on the same day a player from a higher division may play for the lower division, except those players stated in (ii)(d) and (ii)(c).
- A player who has suffered a long-term injury, and has subsequently not qualified for finals, may on application to the WAFC be deemed eligible given that they have provided supporting medical documentation. The final decision is at the sole discretion of the WAFC. A long-term injury refers to an injury where the recovery period is over six weeks in length.

Some **frequently asked questions** about finals qualifications are outlined below for clarity:

*Note: For the purpose of examples, if a club has two teams, the team in the higher division will be called 'Division A' and the team in the lower division will be called 'Division B'*

*Played 4 games in Division A, 1 in Division B. Do I qualify?*

Yes, but can only play Division A as this is the highest grade they played throughout the season and player hasn't played 5 games in either division.

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*Played 4 games in Division A, 1 in Division B. Club has both teams in finals. Which team can player play?*

The player can only play Division A, irrespective if teams are playing on the same day and player hasn't played 5 games in either division.

*Played 4 games in Division A, 1 in Division B. Club has Division B in finals. Can player play in finals?*

No, as highest grade he played was Division A which makes him ineligible to play Division B.

*Played 4 games in Division A, 1 in Division B. Division A loses week 1 of finals. Can player continue to play finals?*

No, as Division A was the highest grade in which he could play, player can no longer participate in finals.

*Played 5 games in Division A and 2 in Division B. We are both in finals. Can I play Division B if not selected in Division A?*

Yes, but only if Division A and Division B play on the same day. If Division A are knocked out, then he will not be able to play in Division B because he qualified in the higher grade.

*If a player has played 4 games in Division A and 8 in Division B is that player eligible to play finals for either Division A or Division B?*

Yes, because he's played the required 5 games in the lower grade to qualify. If the Division A side is knocked out player is still eligible to play Division B.

*I have played in a Division A Final. This team has now been eliminated, can I now play in a Division B Final*

You are permitted to play in a lower grade final as long as you have played five qualifying matches in the Division B side.

*Table: Finals Eligibility Examples*

# Games Played Division A	# Games Played Division B	Division A in Finals?	Division B in Finals?	Same Day?	Eligible for Division A Finals?	Eligible for Division B Finals?	Notes
4	1	Yes	N/A	N/A			The player can only play in the highest grade they played in throughout season due to not playing 5 games in either division
4	1	Yes	Yes	N/A			The player can only play in the highest grade they played in throughout season due to not playing 5 games in either division
4	1	No	Yes	N/A			Only eligible for highest grade they played for throughout the season because they haven't played 5 games in either division.
4	1	Lost Week 1 of Finals	Yes	N/A	N/A		Only eligible for highest grade they played for throughout the season because they haven't played 5 games in either division.
5	2	Yes	Yes	Yes			Qualified for Division A and can play Division B if they are played on the same day.
4	8	Yes	Yes	Yes			If the Division A side is knocked out player is still eligible to play Division B because they've played 5 games.

### **Playing in other leagues**

Players who fit within the Year 11/12 age range can play in other leagues such as the PFL and WACFL throughout the season including finals series (pending qualification) without restriction. The WAFC supports Junior Clubs and Senior Clubs to work together to allow Year 12 players to get familiar with PFL Colts football so players are comfortable to transition the year after they finish Junior Football. However, if this is occurring it should be done in line with the WAFC Player Welfare Protocols.

All junior aged players (where a junior club is aligned) should primarily play Year 11/12 Competition.

### **Junior & Senior Club Transition Agreements**

Each Junior Club with team/s nominated for the Year 11/12 Competition should have a Junior & Senior Transition Agreement in place with a minimum of 1 senior club to ensure there is a structured way for the two clubs to interact and transition players throughout and at the end of the season. WAFC staff will be in contact to assist with this process and provide a template.

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## **Attachment 1 – Information from WAFC Circular 26 distributed on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Youth Football Working Group produced a recommendation to “Develop a suitable competition format to deliver Year 12 football in order to drive transition from Youth to Senior.”

In 2017, a Working Group was established to conduct research and gather information in relation to the recommendation and ultimately agreed that the Year 11 & 12 Competition would be a combined competition from 2019 onwards.

Over the past 6 months, key WAFC staff have conducted significant consultation on a range of options relating to competition structure. After approval from the industry working group and the WAFC, the following changes will be implemented into the combined Year 11 & 12 competition in 2019.

### **KEY CHANGES**

**1. The Year 11 & 12 age groups will be combined allowing clubs to field teams with players mixed across both age groups.**

*This provides more opportunity for clubs to establish teams given they can attract players over two age groups. This ultimately will provide more opportunity for players to play club football at this age through more clubs having teams.*

**2. Matches will be played in the current conference structure however finals will have an added cross-conference component with the exact finals format to be determined through consultation with coaches and players.**

*Players were highly supportive of variety and playing new teams.*

**3. Clubs with two teams will be able to move players between teams providing more flexibility for clubs to innovate.**

*The additional flexibility will allow clubs to ensure they meet player motivations and shift players between teams on weeks where there are less players available. Clubs can now operate as ‘squads’ and train together rather than traditionally being two separate teams.*

**4. Matches will primarily be played on Sunday afternoons but clubs will be encouraged to explore playing in alternate time slots such as 10.40 Saturday mornings in line with WAAFL Colts or Friday Nights.**

*Sunday afternoons are currently well supported by clubs however there will be a strong push to diversify playing times with the aim of meeting the motivations of players and creating a stronger link to senior clubs. Where possible two team clubs will play as double headers to drive club culture and atmosphere.*

**5. Senior Clubs will be provided with the opportunity to submit teams into the competition pending they meet specific criteria ensuring Junior Clubs are aligned to their club and a WAFC Manager provides approval.**

*Senior clubs in areas which don’t currently have a team in the Year 11/12 competition will be able to work with Junior clubs to partner and nominate a team, potentially acting as a conduit for multiple junior feeder clubs.*

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**6. WAFC staff will work with each Junior Club to set up a clear Alignment Agreement with a minimum of 1 Senior club which will guide the transition of players from Junior to Senior football, provide cross over opportunities for Year 11/12 & WAAFL Colts and clearly set out Senior Club engagement in the appointment of coaches.**

*Every junior club should have at least one senior club that it is working with to transition players otherwise players won't have a clear pathway. Traditionally this has been left up to clubs to implement and has been done to varying levels of success. The more Year 11/12 players can be familiar with a senior club, the greater likelihood they will have to transition. These agreements will also drive the appointment of non-parent coaches who will ideally be linked to the Senior club to promote transition.*

**7. The competition will be re-branded and revamped.**

*Players in Year 11/12 don't want to be seen to be in 'Junior Football' so from a brand perspective this competition will be separate itself from 'Junior Football' and a standalone brand will be established. This will be coupled with greater social media focus and innovative awards structures (such as all-star teams) to drive engagement and elevate the competition above Junior Footy.*

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