

YOUTH FOOTBALL WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2018

RECOMMENDATION 6



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper relates explicitly to the work undertaken by the Youth Football Working Group and specifically recommendation 6. This particular recommendation is as follows;

Develop a Youth Football Calendar to better align School, Community, WAFL and State Academy programs that further supports the welfare of the player and the existing stakeholder relationships.

The development of an aligned youth calendar is critical to enhancing youth retention across all segments of football, and will create a “player first” approach to scheduling of youth football fixtures. The calendar will provide a strategy for engaging all stakeholders in the consideration of other competitions in their scheduling. Although only in the first year of implementation, the WAFC would expect that this process will evolve quickly, and will be a key process every season.

Through the initial consultation periods, and through the Youth Calendar working group discussions, it was clearly evident that concise player welfare protocols were needed to be established and endorsed by the WAFC. This welfare protocol was developed to support

players, coaches, clubs and schools in their approach to managing players workload (particularly talented players), and also to ensure that as an industry we weren't burning players out or creating overuse injuries through our actions or subsequent inactions.

The youth football calendar meetings, and engaging with the different stakeholder groups including schools, also highlighted the importance of establishing a player hierarchy matrix that sought to limit the ‘forced choice’ that young players face. The matrix that was developed, provides a simple to follow guide for players, coaches, schools and clubs to adhere to when a player has to choose between two competitions and includes games and training sessions. This matrix will provide direction for all parties as to the hierarchy choice of participation in the WA Football system.

This document will provide clear direction on:

1. WAFC Player Welfare Protocols;
2. Youth Football Matrix;
3. 2018 Youth Football calendar;
4. Implementation Processes;



WAFC PLAYER WELFARE PROTOCOLS

Introduction

The ultimate goal of participation in youth programs in sport, regardless of the level, should be to promote lifelong physical activity and skills that can be used in all facets of future endeavours. The issue of training and playing workload for youth aged players, particularly those involved in the talent pathway, has been an item of debate amongst all sports, and particularly those involved in the AFL talent pathway.

Talented young footballers must be mentored carefully to prevent over participation, which may affect them physically as well as psychologically. The issue of balancing a talented player's workload over these crucial formative years is one of the most pressing challenges for stakeholders involved in the talent pathway.

It is important to recognise that of the most popular and recognised body contact sports in the world, players generally only play one game per week, due very simply to the physicality of the respective sports and the recognised load that this places on the individual. Yet, at all age groups below the age of 18 years, we as an industry allow all our players and particularly our most talented players, to play multiple games per week at a time in their physical, emotional and mental development, they are at their most vulnerable. This very simple fact displays a negligence towards our future adult players that requires our ongoing and considered attention.

The rationale behind this paper is to provide factual data to the industry in order to generate

recommendations that will ensure our most talented players are not exposed to unsafe and unrealistic training and playing workloads. High workloads when combined with insufficient rest and recovery periods, can place the developing footballer at risk of:

1. Overuse injuries: these include osteitis pubis and stress fractures which can have a detrimental impact on their capacity to develop to their optimum potential.
2. Overtraining syndrome: the process by which the combination of training, competition and non-sport specific stressors combine to negatively affect the athlete. Can lead to "burnout" which is a negative emotional reaction to sport participation.



It is important to highlight that whatever strategies are put forward will be based on fact and underpinned by a strong focus on player welfare. As mentioned in the opening paragraph, the balancing of a player's workload can be challenging, but given the ongoing examples of youth elite players presenting with overuse injuries or displaying signs of pre-disposition to such injuries, there has never been a more important time to ensure that the welfare of the player drives our decision making going forward. Creating the appropriate workloads within a talent pathway will lay the framework for players to reach their optimum as well as provide a foundation for lifelong physical wellbeing.

The project's initial objectives were defined as follows:

Objectives

1. To provide factual research and data on the impact of inappropriate training and playing workloads.
2. To provide recommended training and playing workloads based on age, number of sessions and intensity.
3. As a result of the above two objectives, provide direction on the levels of playing priority for players involved in the talent pathway.

The paper has been circulated for relevance and accuracy to the following key stakeholder groups:

- WAFL Football Managers
- WAFL Player Development Staff
- WAFC Talent Development staff
- AFL High Performance Managers
- AFL Football Operations staff
- Physiotherapists
- WA State Academy Staff
- Strength & Conditioning staff
- WAFC Community Football Staff
- WAFC Executive staff
- AFL National Academy coaching and conditioning staff



RELEVANT RESEARCH PAPERS

Research Paper 1 - "Prevention and management of osteitis pubis in the Australian Football League: A qualitative analysis"

In June 2008, a paper titled "Prevention and management of osteitis pubis in the Australian Football League: A qualitative analysis" was commissioned and funded by the AFL Research and Development Board. This paper was designed to examine current practices and develop a set of recommendations for the management of osteitis pubis in AFL.

The clear findings of this paper are as follows;

1. Prevention of osteitis pubis is a product of balancing workload and pelvic integrity
2. Early detection and intervention is the key to optimal management

Further to this the following factors were identified as being possible predisposing factors in the development of osteitis pubis;

EXTERNAL FACTORS	INTERNAL FACTORS
Training intensity	Immature skeleton (the immature pubic bone has a reduced ability to cope with tensile and compressive forces)
Training volume	Hypermobility (lax ligaments, poor stability through the pelvis)
Kicking	Motor Moron (the inability to utilise appropriate muscles for stability and function)
Trauma	Hypomobility (restricted use of hip internal and external rotation)
Change of direction	Intrapelvic asymmetry (lack of balance / symmetry in the pelvic region)
Recovery time	Technique deficits (technically poor runners, kickers and players with poor agility)
Ground hardness	
Number of games played	

It is interesting to note that all the external factors outlined above can be controlled by coaches and administrators.





The internal factors require more individual attention and screening by qualified medical staff. This screening is an integral aspect of the role of the club medical staff and plays an important role in the management of each individual player.

As a result of the research undertaken, the following recommendations were put forward by the authors of the research;

1. Young AFL players require reduced training loads and a graded progression into full training over several years.
2. Strategies need to be implemented to prevent excessive participation and training in young elite players before the drafting process (it is worth noting that similar restrictions are in place for bowling workload in junior cricket players in Australia and pitching workload in junior baseball players in the USA).
3. Coaching staff and officials need to recognise that optimal performance and prevention of overuse injuries is achieved by balancing load with pelvic integrity. Load should vary between the team and not be homogenous.
4. Players should be screened for the presence of proposed predisposing factors and management strategies put in place for each player.

Research Paper 2 – “Effect of Pitch Type, Pitch Count and Pitching Mechanics on Risk of Elbow and Shoulder Pain in Young Baseball Pitchers”

In 2002, a paper titled “Effect of Pitch Type, Pitch Count and Pitching Mechanics on Risk of Elbow and Shoulder Pain in Young Baseball Pitchers” was printed in the American Journal of Sports Medicine, under the auspice of the American Sports Medicine Institute and the American Baseball Foundation.

The recommendations of this paper as they relate to overuse injuries in developing athletes were as follows;

1. Limitation of the number of pitches made per game and per season for junior and youth age pitchers;
2. Pitchers should not be allowed to circumvent the above pitch limits by participating in more than one league at a time;
3. All organised throwing sessions should be monitored by a coach.

Research Paper 3 – “Overuse Injuries, Overtraining and Burnout in Child and Adolescent Athletes”

Published by Joel S. Brenner (MD, MPH) and the Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness in Paediatrics Volume 119, June 2007, provides another perspective on the issue of overuse injuries in developing athletes.

The key recommendations highlighted by this paper, were as follows;

1. Take time off from organised or structured sports participation 1 to 2 days a week to allow the body to rest or participate in other activities;
2. Permit longer scheduled breaks from training and competition every 2 to 3 months while focussing on other activities and cross training to prevent loss of skill level or conditioning;
3. Athletes should have at least 2 to 3 months off per year from their particular sport;
4. Encourage the athlete to participate on only 1 team during a season. If the athlete is also a member of a travelling or select team, then that participation time should be incorporated into the aforementioned guidelines;

Research Paper 4 – “Volume of Physical Activity and Injury Occurrence in Young Basketball Players”

Published by Jenny Gianoudis, Kate E. Webster and Jill Cook in March 2008 in the Journal of Sports Science and Medicine, this paper does provide some relevant commentary on the topic of overuse injuries in developing athletes.

Young athletes may be particularly susceptible to injury sustained during sport (Cook and Leit, 1995; Stanish, 1984). An increasing number have been reported to require medical intervention for these injuries (Maffulli and Baxter Jones, 1995), particularly overuse injuries (Patel and Nelson, 2000). There is speculation that chronic injuries in young athletes may negatively affect their sporting performances once competing at the senior elite level (Finch et al, 2002). Furthermore, injury in the adolescent athlete could reduce current and future participation in physical activity; negatively impacting on their health (Emery, 2003; Riddoch and Boreham, 1995).

Research Paper 5 – “Is Bowling Workload a Risk Factor for Injury to Australian Junior Cricket Fast Bowlers?”

The particular piece of research was commissioned by Cricket Australia and funded by the NSW Sporting Injuries Committee and Cricket Australia.

It is interesting to note that Cricket Australia has in place an Australian Junior Cricket Policy which outlines bowling workload guidelines for junior fast bowlers, describing the maximum number of deliveries to be bowled in matches and training sessions for players

aged less than 19 years. Once of the key reasons this piece of research was commissioned was that Cricket Australia had concerns with the implementation of this policy and saw a need to evaluate the appropriateness of current bowling workload guidelines.

Key excerpts as they relate to the topic of overuse injuries in developing athletes include;

1. Overall, the results suggest there is a relationship between high bowling workload and injury. As with first class bowlers, increased bowling frequency is significantly associated with increased injury risk. Parents and coaches should be aware that programs designed for senior fast bowlers are not appropriate for junior players, who may be more prone to overuse injury because their bones and ligaments are not fully developed. It is, therefore, important that workload guidelines are specific to junior players, as direct extrapolation from senior fast bowlers may not be appropriate due to these physical, growth related factors;
2. Fast bowlers have consistently been identified as the cricket players at the greatest risk of injury, with a combination of pre-disposing factors including poor technique, poor physical preparation and overuse;
3. High bowling workload has been identified as a risk factor for overuse injury to junior fast bowlers. As with first class fast bowlers, increased bowling frequency is significantly associated with increased injury risk. Rest days should be considered for inclusion in bowling workload guidelines.





Research Paper 6 – *“The training-injury prevention paradox: should athletes be training smarter and harder?”*

This paper written is written by well credentialed sports scientist Dr Tim Gabbett and published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine in January 2016. Dr Gabbett has worked extensively as a consultant and researcher with a variety of professional sport teams and organisations including AFL, Rugby League, Rugby Union and Cricket. The main points presented in the article include:

- Training has a protective effect against injury and that across a wide range of sports and well-developed physical qualities are associated with a reduced risk of injury.
- There is also evidence that under-training may increase injury risk where athletes are not prepared for the rigours of competition form an inadequate loading
- Challenge for coaches is to find the “sweet spot” where athletes are not overtrained or undertrained
- Junior and Senior players may adapt differently to a given training stimulus, suggesting that training programmes should be modified to accommodate differences in training age.

Research Paper 7 – *“Overtraining and Elite Young Athletes”*

This book chapter was written by Winsley and Matos in 2011. The paper presented various definitions of overtraining, overtraining syndrome and burnout. The main points presented in the article include:

- Overtraining syndrome is a state of physical exhaustion arising from a prolonged imbalance between sports related stressors and recovery. Sports related stressors in AFL could include all aspects to do with football including training, playing, weights, team meetings, recovery session etc.
- Burnout is when the resulting exhaustion is primarily due to emotional factors
- Training load is considered by some to be the principal reason underlying overtraining syndrome, however, in some cases it is not the only reason and alternate factors/stressors should be considered.

Research Paper 8 – *“Overuse injuries and burnout in youth sports: a position statement from the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine”*

This position statement was developed to recommend guidelines on youth sport participation and published in British Journal of Sports Medicine in 2014. Main points:

- Youth sport participation offers many benefits including the development of self-esteem, peer socialisation and general fitness. However, an emphasis on competitive success, has resulted in an increased pressure to begin high-intensity training at young ages. Such an excessive focus on early intensive training and competition at young ages rather than skill development can lead to overuse injury and burnout.
- Regular participation in a resistance training programme can improve bone health, body composition and potentially reduce sport-related injuries.
- Early sport specialisation may not lead to long-term success in sports, and may increase risk for overuse injury and burnout. With the exception of early entry sports such as gymnastics, figure skating and swimming/diving, sport diversification should be encouraged at younger ages.
- When an overuse injury is diagnosed, it is essential to address the underlying cause(s). The athlete, parents and coaches should be involved in reviewing all risk factors and developing a strategy to attempt to avoid recurrent injury.



Research Paper 9 – *“Compelling overuse injury incidence in youth multisport athletes”*.

This 2017 paper written by A. Rejeb, A. Johnson, R. Vaeyens, C. Horobeanu, A. Farooq and E. Witvrouw, focused on examining the incidence and pattern of injuries in adolescent multisport athletes.

The results of this study identified a high incidence of injuries in the youth sports population that was examined. However, most alarming was the prevalence of overuse injuries of 50%, which suggests the need for injury prevention protocols for adolescent highly trained athletes.



ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH PAPERS

The 9 papers referred to above are derived from a range of team sports. Whilst there is variance amongst the sports and their style of play, physical impact, training regimes etc., there are several clear outcomes that are worth highlighting in the context of the effect of overuse in developing athletes;

1. Increased workload, poor technique and developing bodies are closely linked to the onset of overuse injuries;
2. Playing in multiple teams in one season is a strong contributor to increased workload;
3. Developing players are more prone to overuse injuries as their bodies are still growing and are not prepared nor conditioned for adult style training programs;
4. Appropriate amounts of rest, recovery and time away from their chosen sport, is an important consideration for sports administrators in order to prevent overtraining syndrome and possible burnout.
5. The importance of developing and implementing Player Welfare protocols to reduce the incident of injuries in youth participants.



STRATEGIES

Considering the evidence presented in the afore mentioned research papers, the following approach has been developed as reasonable measures to protect the welfare of players most at risk to overuse injuries i.e. players in the AFL talent pathway:

WAFC Position Statement - Clear direction provided on player workload (i.e. game and training sessions) based on age and level of competition. These "Player Welfare Protocol's" will underpin the industry's strategy in relation to player welfare.

PLAYER WELFARE PROTOCOLS FOR 17 – 18 YEAR OLD'S

This hierarchy will apply to the WA State 18 Academy members and is strongly recommended to be adopted for athletes in a WAFL Colts Program

17 - 18 years

- 3 x football focussed sessions per week in pre-season
- 2 x football focussed sessions per week in season
- 1 x game per week
- 2 x appropriate weight training, and core stability sessions per week focussing on basic athletic movement
- 1 x recovery based session per week
- Any core and strength program to be developed and monitored by suitably qualified practitioner
- Prior to Christmas, WAFL colts pre - season training to start no earlier than November 15 and conclude December 15. Post New Years, training can recommence no earlier than Jan 15. Inductions and education sessions can occur prior to November 15th.

Player Welfare Hierarchy (i.e. players in the talent pathway will play the recommended one game per week based on the following order of priority)

- AFL National Academy
- WA State 18's
- WA State 16's
- PSA / ACC
- WAFL League or Colts
- WAFL Development Squad Programs
- Junior & Youth club community football
- SSWA and Secondary School Football*

**a mid - week school game that are 2 x 20 minutes of duration will count as one of the 'football focussed' sessions for the week (see Youth Football Matrix for more detail).*



PLAYER WELFARE PROTOCOLS FOR 15 – 16 YEAR OLD'S

This hierarchy will apply to the WA State 16 Academy members and is strongly recommended to be adopted for athletes in a WAFL Development Program

16 years

- 2 x football focussed sessions per week in pre-season
- 2 x football focussed sessions per week in season
- 1 x game per week
- 1 x recovery based session per week
- Commence appropriate regular strength training and core stability sessions focussing on basic athletic movement (2 x week)
- Any core and strength program to be developed and monitored by suitably qualified practitioner
- WAFL 16's training programs to commence no earlier than December 1st.

15 years

- 2 x football focussed sessions per week in pre-season
- 2 x football focussed sessions per week in season
- 1 x game per week
- 1 x recovery based session per week
- Introduction to core stability and body weight strength training focussing on basic athletic movement (2 x week)
- Any core and basic athletic movement programs to be developed and monitored by a suitably qualified practitioner.

Player Welfare Hierarchy (i.e. players in the talent pathway will play the recommended one game per week, based on the following order of priority)

- WA State 16's
- PSA / ACC
- WAFL Colts (or League)
- WAFL Development Squad Programs
- Junior & Youth club community football
- SSWA and Secondary School Football*

**a mid - week school game that are 2 x 20 minutes of duration will count as one of the 'football focussed' sessions for the week (see Youth Football Matrix for more detail).*

The WAFC acknowledges that there will be multi-sport athletes that are participating in football, and we support and encourage these athletes. Multi-sport participation can lead to better performance, less player burnout, less social isolation and most importantly more lifelong enjoyment in sport. Regarding multi-sport athletes, it is important that coaches, schools, clubs and talent managers monitor the culmination of workload on these players.



YOUTH FOOTBALL MATRIX

This matrix provides a clear guide and direction to youth aged participants, coaches, clubs, schools and the WAFC in order to limit forced choice for football participation

	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFL Development Squad Training	Community Football Game	Community Football Training	PSA Game	PSA Training	ACC Game	ACC Training	SSWA Game	SSWA Training	WAFC School Game	WAFC School Training
AFL Academy Game		AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Game
AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Game		WA State 18's Game	AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	AFL Academy Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Training	PSA Game	AFL Academy Training	ACC Game	AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Training	AFL Academy Training
WA State 18's Game	AFL Academy Game	WA State 18's Game		WA State 18's Game	N/A	N/A	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Game
WA State 18's Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game		N/A	N/A	WAFL League/Colts Game	WA State 18's Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	WA State 18's Training	Community Football Game	WA State 18's Training	PSA Game	WA State 18's Training	ACC Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 18's Training	WA State 18's Training	WA State 18's Training	WA State 18's Training
WA State 16's Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	N/A	N/A		WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Game
WA State 16's Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	N/A	N/A	WA State 16's Game		WAFL League/Colts Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	WA State 16's Training	Community Football Game	WA State 16's Training	PSA Game	WA State 16's Training	ACC Game	WA State 16's Training	WA State 16's Training	WA State 16's Training	WA State 16's Training	WA State 16's Training
WAFL League/Colts Game	AFL Academy Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WA State 18's Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WA State 16's Game	WAFL League/Colts Game		WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	PSA Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	ACC Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Game
WAFL League/Colts Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game		WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFL League/Colts Training	Community Football Game	WAFL League/Colts Training	PSA Game	PSA Training	ACC Game	ACC Training	SSWA Game	WAFL League/Colts Training	WAFC School Game	WAFL League/Colts Training
WAFL Development Squad Game	AFL Academy Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	WA State 18's Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	WA State 16's Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL Development Squad Game		WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	PSA Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	ACC Game	WAFL Development Squad	WAFL Development Squad	WAFL Development Squad	WAFL Development Squad	WAFL Development Squad
WAFL Development Squad Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Training	WAFL Development Squad Game		Community Football Game	WAFL Development Squad Training	PSA Game	PSA Training	ACC Game	ACC Training	SSWA Game	WAFL Development Squad Training	WAFC School Game	WAFL Development Squad Training
Community Football Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	Community Football Game	WA State 16's Game	Community Football Game	WAFL League/Colts Game	Community Football Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	Community Football Game		Community Football Game	PSA Game	Community Football Game	ACC Game	Community Football Game	Community Football Game	Community Football Game	Community Football Game	Community Football Game
Community Football Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFL Development Squad Training	Community Football Game		PSA Game	PSA Training	ACC Game	ACC Training	SSWA Game	SSWA Training	WAFC School Game	Community Football Training
PSA Game	AFL Academy Game	PSA Game	WA State 18's Game	PSA Game	WA State 16's Game	PSA Game	PSA Game	PSA Game	PSA Game	PSA Game	PSA Game	PSA Game		PSA Game	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
PSA Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	PSA Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	PSA Training	Community Football Game	PSA Training	PSA Game		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ACC Game	AFL Academy Game	ACC Game	WA State 18's Game	ACC Game	WA State 16's Game	ACC Game	ACC Game	ACC Game	ACC Game	ACC Game	ACC Game	ACC Game	N/A	N/A		ACC Game	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ACC Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	ACC Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	ACC Training	Community Football Game	ACC Training	N/A	N/A	ACC Game		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SSWA Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	SSWA Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	SSWA Game	Community Football Game	SSWA Game	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		SSWA Game	SSWA Game	SSWA Game
SSWA Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFL Development Squad Training	Community Football Game	SSWA Training	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	SSWA Game		WAFC School Game	SSWA Training
WAFC School Game	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFC School Game	WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFC School Game	Community Football Game	WAFC School Game	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	SSWA Game	WAFC School Game		WAFC School Game
WAFC School Training	AFL Academy Game	AFL Academy Training	WA State 18's Game	WA State 18's Training	WA State 16's Game	WA State 16's Training	WAFL League/Colts Game	WAFL League/Colts Training	WAFL Development Squad Game	WAFL Development Squad Training	Community Football Game	Community Football Training	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	SSWA Game	SSWA Training	WAFC School Game	

Competition Preparation Windows

The WAFC recognises that there will be periods of time prior to a competition or a season commencing whereby there is a requirement for a training block of a set period of time to ensure correct preparation and build up. These preparation windows include:

- **State 16's and 18's Carnivals** – Prior to any State 16's or 18's game there will be a 10-day preparation window whereby the State 16's and 18's will take priority in terms of training/match simulation, etc.
- **PSA Competition** – 2 weeks prior to the commencement of a PSA season a preparation window will be established whereby PSA training will take priority.

The WAFC encourages all clubs, schools and Talent Managers to work together to ensure that there is a player first mentality in regards to player welfare. All parties should meet prior to the season to discuss individual talented player requirements and expectations.

REFERENCES:

1. Pizzari.T, Coburn.P, Crow.J, “*Prevention and management of osteitis pubis in the Australian Football League: A qualitative analysis*”. Physical Therapy in Sport. 2008.
2. Dennis R.J, Finch C.F, Farhart P.J, “*Is bowling workload a risk factor for injury to Australian junior cricket fast bowlers?*” British Journal of Sports Medicine. 2005.
3. Giannoudis.J, Webster.K, Cook.J, “*Volume of physical activity and injury occurrence in young basketball players*”. Journal of Sports Medicine. 2008.
4. Brenner J.S, “*Overuse injuries, overtraining and burnout in child and adolescent athletes*”. Pediatrics. 2007
5. Lyman.S, Fleisig.G, Andrew. J, Osinski. D, “*Effect of pitch type, pitch count and pitching mechanics on risk of elbow and shoulder pain in youth baseball pitchers*”. American Sports Journal, Volume 30, Number 4. 2002.
6. Gabbett, Tim J. “*The training—injury prevention paradox: should athletes be training smarter and harder?*” British Journal of Sports Medicine 50.5 (2016): 273-280.
7. Winsley, R., and N. Matos. “*Overtraining and elite young athletes*.” The elite young athlete. Vol. 56. Karger Publishers, 2010. 97-105.
8. DiFiori, John P., et al. “*Overuse injuries and burnout in youth sports: a position statement from the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine*.” British Journal of Sports Medicine 48.4 (2014): 287-288.
9. Rejeb, A., et al. “*Compelling overuse injury incidence in youth multisport athletes*”. European Journal of Sports Science. 2017 May; 17(4): 495-502.

