NATIONAL JUNIOR SPORT POLICY

A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING JUNIOR SPORT IN AUSTRALIA
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciation is expressed to those agencies and their representatives who coordinated the development of this Policy.

The Conference of Directors-General of Education - Mr Max Sawatski - Ms Rosemary Walsh
The Standing Committee on Sport and Recreation - Mr Jack Busch
The Confederation of Australian Sport - Mrs Kathy Edwards
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FOREWORD

Playing sport is an integral part of growing up in Australia. The majority of our young people are active participants in sport, whether it be in the schoolyard or backyard, the local park or in organised competitions. If children find their involvement enjoyable and fulfilling, they are more likely to continue it into their adult lives and the chance of lifelong participation is greatly increased.

This National Junior Sport Policy is very timely. With the strong focus on sport in Australia, and the Olympic Games to be held in Sydney in the year 2000, it will set a solid foundation for the participation in sport by all young Australians.

Australian Schools have an important role in providing for the physical development and fitness of young Australians and recognise the potential of sports to enhance their educational experiences.

We applaud the consultative manner in which this policy has been developed. The Working Party is to be congratulated for bringing together the key agencies involved in junior sport.

The challenge for us all is the implementation of this policy. Its success will depend on the continuation of the strong co-operative approach that has been taken to date.

We urge all concerned to work towards this end, as participation in sport by young Australians makes us, we believe, a healthier and better union.

John Faulkner
Minister for the Environment, Sport and Territories

Ross Free
Minister for Schools, Vocational Education And Training

John Faulkner

Ross Free
PREAMBLE

(i) WHY A NATIONAL JUNIOR SPORT POLICY

Every young Australian has the right to a wide choice of appropriate sporting activities in which to enjoyably and safely participate.

A number of agencies have an important responsibility in organising and conducting sport. The co-operation and goodwill of these partners is vital if we are to succeed in providing all young people with ready and appropriate access to sporting activities.

However, the very proliferation of sport providers, while in the main offering a healthy diversity, sometimes results in duplication and conflicting standards. More importantly, it leaves gaps in the delivery of sport which can mean a less-than-complete experience for many young people.

In response to these concerns, the Australian Sports Commission and the Confederation of Australian Sport convened, in October 1991, a national conference: junior Sport - Time to deliver! to address the structural and philosophical changes required for the more systematic and coordinated provision of junior sport in Australia.

The major recommendation of the conference of 350 representatives from sport, education and government was that a National junior Sport Policy be developed. A working party (representing the Australian Sports Commission, the Confederation of Australian Sport, the Conference of Directors-General of Education, the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport, and the Australian Schools Sports Council) subsequently produced a draft document which was circulated widely for the submission of comments. The Policy now reflects this feedback and consultation.

Since the conference, two other national developments have had an impact upon the shaping of this Policy. The 1992 Federal Senate Inquiry into 'Physical and Sport Education in Australian Schools' reinforced the need for a national junior sport statement, especially one that assists schools and the community to form closer, co-operative sporting partnerships.

In addition, the availability of two documents for Health and Physical Education -

- A statement on health and physical education for Australian schools
- Health and physical education - a curriculum profile for Australian Schools.

recognise physical activity, physical education and sport as integral to the school curriculum, and acknowledge the need for school and community to co-operate in providing appropriate activities, as suggested in this document.

These documents are the result of a joint project of the States, Territories and the Commonwealth of Australia initiated by the Australian Education Council (now the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA]).

(ii) WHAT IS ‘JUNIOR SPORT’?

In this Policy, 'junior sport' is defined as the organisation and management of sport (and presport activities) for young people aged from five years to 19 years. For the 5-7 age group, the term 'sport' simply covers play and pre-sport activities. For those eight years and above, it is used here to mean a competitive physical and educational activity played according to agreed rules and procedures. More generally, it encompasses sport in schools, as well as community sport for those defined as 'junior' or younger by the governing ??????

The terms 'young Australians', 'young people', ‘juniors’ and 'participants' here refer to all in the junior sport age bracket. More specifically, 'children' refers to those aged five years to 12 years and 'youth' to those in the 13 to 19 age range.

'Schools' encompasses all educational institutions that cater for the junior sport age group: primary schools, secondary/high schools, colleges and technical colleges.

'Community sport' encompasses all sport for young people that is provided by sports clubs and other community organisations, outside the school system.
This Policy provides a framework and guidelines for the efficient and equitable delivery of all forms of junior sport through programs in schools and in the community.

The Policy contains the following sections:

Section 1: Introduction details the mission, objectives and rationale of the Policy, outlines the benefits of sport, and highlights the relationship between sport and physical education.

Section 2: The Participants describes players' rights and responsibilities, and appropriate levels of sport participation. It also presents a junior sport development model.

Section 3: Competition deals with the issue of competition for juniors: appropriateness, levels of competition, mixed-sex participation, and competition for groups with special needs.

Section 4: Sport Educators deals with those at the 'coalface' in the delivery of junior sport: coaches and teachers. Stress has been placed on the importance of quality instruction for participants, and hence the need for the appropriate training of sport educators.

Section 5: School and Community Links provides guidelines for extending links between schools and community providers of junior sport, particularly to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach and the best utilisation of resources (people, equipment and facilities).

Section 6: Other Personnel outlines the roles and responsibilities of other important contributors to enjoyable and equitable junior sport.

Section 7: Safety Guidelines provides basic information and advice for the safe conduct of junior sport, and includes a list of contacts for further details.
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INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this junior Sport Policy is to ensure the provision of opportunity to all young Australians to develop and enrich their lives through sport.

To this end, the Policy contains a framework and guidelines for those responsible for the development, organisation and conduct of junior sport, including guidelines for a coordinated and complementary approach to sport in schools and in the community.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

To achieve the stated purpose, the following objectives for junior sport have been identified:

To provide the best possible sporting experiences for all young Australians so as to encourage lifelong participation in sport.

To provide supportive environments for enjoyable participation in a wide variety of physical activities, through the development of skills and good sporting behaviour.

To provide the safest possible environment for the conduct of Junior sport.

To better provide for the allocation of appropriate resources and facilities.

To provide equal opportunities for young females and males to participate in sport.

To provide equal opportunities for young people with special needs to participate in sport.

To encourage and actively cater for talented young sports people.

1.3 RATIONALE

This Policy is premised on the principle of social justice and the belief that sport, when presented and organised properly, is an important educational and developmental area that offers benefits to both the individual and to Australian society.

Social Justice A fundamental tenet of this Policy is the principle of social justice. This means that all young Australians must be given the best opportunity to develop their physical potential and fitness, and to develop interests in physical activities including sport.

However, this does not mean that everyone must be treated in the same way. Groups who have been disadvantaged in the past may need specific assistance before they are treated the same as other groups. Special measures (ie programs aimed at attaining equity between different groups) are often necessary to achieve social justice.

The low level of girls' participation in sport is still a matter of major concern. All sport providers must work together to develop and implement policies that specifically address the needs of girls.

Specific assistance will also be necessary for other groups, such as people with disabilities, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and rural or isolated populations, and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.
**Benefits of sport**

*Some of the benefits for young people are:*

- Improved physical fitness, health and self-confidence.
- Experiencing fun, enjoyment, excitement, achievement and personal challenge.
- Opportunities for friendship.
- Development of a variety of sporting skills.
- Opportunity to develop social, organisational and leadership skills.
- Improved academic, and other skilled activity, performance.
- Learning how to handle success and failure.

*Some of the benefits for Australian society are:*

- A healthier population with an active lifestyle.
- Promotion of group and community identity.
- Social skills gained through interaction and co-operation.
- Understanding of the need to adhere to codes of practice.
- Development of positive (rather than anti-social) personal interests.

**Sport as education**

Sport is an integral part of the general life education and development of young Australians.

*Sport education aims to:*

- Encourage, and provide opportunities for, the participation of all young people in a wide variety of sports at a level commensurate with their physical, mental, social, emotional and skill development.
- Develop fitness and sport-specific skills so that participation is enjoyable and successful.
- Contribute to the social, cognitive, emotional and aesthetic development of all young players.
- Teach young people how to manage the cooperative and competitive requirements of sport.
- Develop the capacity of young players to make reasoned decisions about ethical issues in sports that will lead to good behaviour as players, spectators, coaches and administrators.
- Develop in young people a knowledge and understanding of:
  - sport as a significant cultural force in Australian society
  - the capabilities and limitations of the human body in the performance of sport
  - games, tactics, strategies and rules
  - administration, umpiring, coaching and sports medicine
1.4 RESPONSIBILITY FOR JUNIOR SPORT

Junior sport is the shared responsibility of education departments, departments of sport, schools, sporting associations and agencies, community organisations, local governments, parents/guardians, sports administrators and officials, sports health professionals and the participants themselves. Schools have a particular responsibility because they are the only organisations that can ensure the provision of sport for the majority of young Australians.

The agencies jointly responsible for the development of this Policy - the Australian Sports Commission, the Confederation of Australian Sport, the Conference of Directors-General of Education, the Australian Schools Sports Council and the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport - have a leading role in overseeing its implementation. Their endorsement and commitment to the Policy is detailed in the Policy Implementation section on page 21.

1.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education is that part of education which uses physical activity as the medium. It is concerned with the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to health, fitness, sport and recreation.

Sport encompasses a range of physical activities that provide opportunities to further apply and develop the skills acquired through physical education.

Sport and physical education are complementary. Their benefits are greatly enhanced when they are provided in an integrated and coordinated manner. The role of schools in the provision of both sport and physical education is crucial.
THE PARTICIPANTS

2.1 THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF JUNIOR SPORT PARTICIPANTS

All young Australians have the right to:

Enjoy sporting activities.
Be treated with dignity.
Experience a wide range of physical activities and sports.
Proper preparation for sport participation.
Participate at a level commensurate with their maturity and ability.
Play according to rules and values appropriate to their level of development.
Skilled and qualified leadership.
Safe and healthy sporting environments.
Share in leadership and decision-making roles related to their sporting activities.
Equal opportunity for successful participation.

All young Australians also have a responsibility to practice good sporting behaviour. This means to.

Play fairly and safely.
Play by the rules.
Co-operate with coach, team-mates and opponents.
Abide by decisions, without argument or bad temper.
Applaud all good play, by own team and opponents.
Not engage in practices that affect sporting performance (eg alcohol /tobacco/drug use).

2.2 A JUNIOR SPORT DEVELOPMENT MODEL

All young people should be able to play sport at a level appropriate to their interests and abilities.

Accordingly, the junior Sport Development Model presented in Table 2.2 provides a logical progression of experiences that will assist all young participants to develop fitness, skills, knowledge and positive attitudes through physical activities and sports.

The Policy acknowledges the rights and responsibilities of national sporting organisations to determine their own junior sport policy.

This national Policy aims to provide the framework and principles which should influence and govern the sport's policy development.

The development model acts as a guide for consideration by national sporting organisations. Once a sport policy has been established, Nose’s should seek to negotiate a complementary approach to their sport with other delivery organisations such as school sport and non-affiliated community groups.

The model is based on the following fundamental principles:

The focus of all junior sporting activities should be enjoyable and successful participation.

Physical activities and sports help to develop self confidence as well as co-operative skills.

There are identifiable stages of development - progressing from general physical activities to specific sports skills.

Juniors differ in their ability to acquire skills and move through the various stages of development.

Games should be modified so that the levels of skill and stamina required are appropriate to the development of the participants.
Rules used in schools and in the community should be congruent.

Sport involves competition. However, junior sport competition should differ from that experienced by adults and be free from undue adult pressures and demands.

2.3 APPROPRIATE SPORTS

Range of sports and positions It is important that girls and boys develop the same wide range of fundamental sports skills, and have the same opportunity to participate in a number of sports before specialising in one sport or position.

Modified sports

Playing sport with equipment and rules appropriately modified to take account of their level of ability and maturity enables young people to develop skills in a safe, rewarding and enjoyable environment.

A number of sporting associations have developed modified versions of their sports to provide equality of opportunity, to encourage optimum skill development and enjoyable involvement, and to assist the transition from modified to adult sport.

Modified sports should be incorporated at all stages of junior sport development (as shown in Table 2.2). Competitions for children under 10 should involve only modified sport

Modifications to sports are recommended in relation to:

Field, pitch and court dimensions.

Rules: eg duration of game, team, team size, playing time of each player, interchange of players, rotation of positions.

Equipment.

Consideration should also be given to organising contests, particularly in contact sports, that match height, weight, age maturation or skill level (as appropriate).

Specialisation

Early specialisation can lead to decreased interest in that particular sport and/or negative attitudes towards sport in general. It is recommended that young players not specialise in one sport or position until they have developed a variety of sport skills, which will give them a real choice of which sport they can play.

Transition to adult sport

The transition from modified sport to adult sport has been described in 2.2 junior Sport Development Model.

The participation of young players in adult competitions requires careful consideration.

Whilst young people's skills may be sufficient for them to play with adults, their physical strength and psychological and social needs must also be taken into account. Young people need to interact with their peers and inclusion in adult sporting ranks could hinder this need.
COMPETITION

3.1 GENERAL

Competition is an intrinsic part of sport that involves measuring performance against an opponent, oneself, or the environment. Competition provides stimulation and challenge as well as the opportunity to apply, test and further develop skills in a game situation. Properly managed, competition should be seen as a healthy and desirable part of sport.

Within Australian society, competition is closely associated with success and failure. Junior sport participants should be taught that 'winning' and 'losing' are merely results of all sporting competition. There should not be an overemphasis on winning in junior sport as this can lead to dissatisfaction with sport in general.

Competition is also a test of ability and potential, with the pursuit of excellence as desirable in junior sport as in other forms of endeavour. All junior participants should be encouraged to achieve, do their best, and develop their full supporting potential. Challenging competition is one element of this developmental process. The emphasis in junior sport competition should be on the quality of the experience and its appropriateness to the age and ability of the participant. All participants should be given opportunities to succeed and do their best through competition.

In keeping with a 'sport for all' philosophy, school and community organisations should make adequate provision for appropriate levels of competition for junior sport participants in stages 2-4 (see Table 2.2). They should cater for all levels of ability, ensuring a satisfying experience for all participants.

3.2 APPROPRIATENESS

There are a number of levels of formal competition available to Junior sport participants: intra-school, inter-school, inter-club, district/regional, intrastate, inter-state and international. Competition can also be conducted on a less formal or social basis, purely for enjoyment.

The level of competition must be appropriate to the age and development of the individual. A progression of competitive experiences in line with the stages identified in the Junior Sport Developmental Model (see Table 2.2) is recommended.

For children in the first stage (5-7 years approx), formal or structured competition is inappropriate. The emphasis at this level should be on play activities, basic skills learning and minor games.

In the second stage (8-10 years approx), low-level competition should involve structured minor activities and modified sports. Inter- and intra-school, and inter- and intra-club competitions should be introduced as stepping stones to more formal competition later.

In the third stage (11-12 years approx) programs should become more structured and involve both inter-school and inter-club competition. Involvement in regional/district and intra-inter-state development programs/camps/exchanges may also be appropriate.

There are different views on the appropriateness of commencing inter-state competition at this stage. However, there is general agreement that interstate programs should be conducted only where the national sporting organisations, in consultation with their affiliated state sporting organisations and the education authorities and school sport organisations, agree on the concept and format of these programs. The national sporting organisations would need to incorporate these programs in the context of the overall development plan of their sport, based on the aim of lifelong participation and on the long term sport development, social and educational value of such programs.

Programs of this nature should include an emphasis on skill development and game appreciation. These programs may include coaching clinics, appropriate competition and educational excursions.

In the fourth stage (13-19 years approx), structured competition at both inter-club and inter-school levels should continue. Inter-state competition can be introduced after appropriate consultation between the national sporting organisation, its affiliated state bodies, and the relevant school sport organisations and participating education systems, regarding the educational and sport development value of such competition.

It is essential that community and education organisations work together in providing junior sport competition, particularly to ensure that unnecessary duplication does not occur.
3.3 MIXED-SEX PARTICIPATION

Physical differences between girls and boys under the age of 12 years are generally considered irrelevant to sporting ability. However, socialisation may - and often does - prevent girls developing sporting competencies equal to those of boys.

Current evidence suggests that skill development in mixed groups is generally appropriate, but that competition should remain single-sex until it can be shown that girls will not be disadvantaged in mixed-sex contests. This means that special measures may be necessary for some time to assist girls to increase their sporting skills.

Sporting organisations are strongly encouraged to adopt a single-sex competition philosophy until such time as there is substantial research evidence to suggest review. The provision of single-sex sporting competitions is the best way at present to encourage maximum participation and guarantee all children a 'fair go'.

For young children (5-7 years approx), mixed-sex activities are always appropriate. At all ages, mixed-sex sports participation may be appropriate in an informal or social situation.

3.4 COMPETITION FOR GROUPS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Both school and community organisations should be aware of junior sport groups with special needs, such as adolescent girls, people with disabilities, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and rural or isolated populations, and those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

These groups should not be treated as if they have a problem, but given competition opportunities comparable with those of other groups. Where appropriate, special measures should be taken to ensure this, and the possibility of integration should also be explored.
SPORT EDUCATORS

4.1 THE ROLE OF COACHES AND TEACHERS

Coaches and teachers educate participants in the fundamentals and various techniques of a sport. Appropriately trained coaches and teachers are vital to quality junior sport development.

They have a special responsibility to foster positive attitudes towards physical activity and sport, and to help young people develop sporting skills. They are a powerful influence on the continued involvement of juniors in sport.

*Junior sport coaches/teachers should:*

Encourage enjoyment of sport.

Cater for varying levels of ability so that all juniors have a ‘fair go’ (in practice and competition).

Provide equal encouragement to girls and boys to participate, acquire skills and develop confidence.

Recognise and cater for groups with special needs.

Recognise exceptionally talented juniors and give them the opportunity to develop their full sporting potential.

Prepare and conduct sessions based on sound coaching principles.

Set realistic standards and objectives for their juniors.

Put more stress on effort than outcome.

Provide safe playing conditions (see Section 7)

Educate juniors and parents on health and safety in sport (see Section-7).

Ensure that the consequences of inappropriate behaviour are clearly understood.

Keep up to date on junior sport coaching developments.

Set an example of good sporting behaviour.

4.2 COACH/TEACHER TRAINING

Quality sport education is dependent on quality coaches and teachers. All junior sport coaches and teachers should have the qualifications/training necessary to provide excellent learning experiences for young people.

Both education and community sporting organisations have roles in such training. Education organisations encompass primary and secondary schools, teacher training institutions, education authorities (state, Catholic, independent) and professional associations.

Community sporting organisations include sports clubs, state and national sporting bodies, departments of sport and recreation, and local government and community agencies.

*The role of community sporting organisations*

To foster a ‘sport for all’ philosophy, including an awareness of groups with special needs.

To encourage quality coaching for juniors through Orientation to Coaching courses and the adoption and promotion of the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS).

To support the inclusion, in coach education, of an examination of the particular sporting needs of girls.
To liaise with education organisations in the development of co-operative refresher/inservice coach education/accreditation courses for teachers.

To provide access to quality coaching resources.

To provide a supportive environment for coaches and teachers of sport.

To encourage more coaching role models from different groups (women, Aboriginal and other cultures, etc).

To encourage coaches to be excellent role models.

To provide regular updates on rule changes, training methods and safety.

**The role of education organisations**

To foster a 'sport for all' philosophy, including an awareness of groups with special needs.

To encourage quality sport coaching/teaching for juniors through the adoption and promotion coach education courses, including orientation to Coaching courses and the NCAS (here appropriate).

To liaise with sporting organisations in the development of co-operative refresher and inservice coach education/accreditation courses for teachers.

To provide access to quality coaching resources.

To provide a supportive environment, recognising sport education as a valued part of a teacher's job.

To encourage more coaching role models from different groups (women, Aboriginal and other cultures, etc).

To encourage coaches to be excellent role models.

To support appropriate training in physical/sport education for all teachers through in-service and pre-service courses, and that such training include examination of the particular needs of girls.

To ensure that all physical education teachers have at least two Level I NCAS coaching qualifications (in one summer and one winter sport).

To provide for, and actively support, a physical education/sport curriculum in all schools.
SCHOOL & COMMUNITY LINKS

5.1 GENERAL

Close links must be established between schools and community organisations to ensure a systematic and coordinated delivery of junior sport. These links will reduce wastage and inefficiencies caused by duplication and under-utilisation of resources, while providing a consistent and complementary approach to the provision of Junior sport. Close links will also provide for a smooth transition between school and community sporting competitions.

Duplication

It is recognised that duplication can mean more opportunities for more participants. However, the generally negative effects of duplication in school and community sport are widely recognised, particularly in the competition area. Duplication can lead to over-training, ‘burn out’ and unnecessary competing demands on young people. It also leads to excessive burdens on parents, coaches, officials, community organisations and schools.

The duplication of junior sport activities can be reduced by establishing mechanisms that will ensure ongoing communication and consultation between school and community organisations.

Some ways of reducing duplication in the provision of junior sport include:

- Coordinated scheduling of school and community competitions at all levels.
- Junior development programs that incorporate both school and community-based components.

Consistency Inconsistencies in the provision of junior sport by schools and community groups can lead to confusion for the participants.

Examples of inconsistencies include:

- The manner for determining a junior competitor’s age, (e.g., age at date of competition, age at start of calendar year, age at start of school year, etc).
- The age groupings for competition, (e.g., under 12, under 14). School and community competitions in each sport should use the same age groupings.
- The rules and conduct of competition, (e.g., size of playing area, duration of game, etc).

Shared Resources Where possible, school and community groups should implement measures to share the resources used in the delivery of junior sport. Shared resources could include: facilities, equipment and human resources (coaches, administrators and officials). This would help avoid unnecessary extra costs and inconvenience for the participants, and lead to a more efficient and effective junior sport delivery system.

5.2 THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

Schools should establish closer links with community sporting organisations by:

- Encouraging the use of their facilities by community sporting groups, both during and outside school hours.
- Liaising with local community groups dealing with each sport played in their school.
- Integrating their sporting competition programs with those of community organisations.

5.3 THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY SPORTING ORGANISATIONS

Community Sporting organisations should establish closer links with schools by:

- Encouraging the use of their facilities by local school groups - both during and outside working hours.
Providing coaching assistance and resources to school teams in their local area.

Loaning sporting equipment to schools in their local area.

Integrating their sporting competition programs with those of schools.
OTHER PERSONNEL

6.1 GENERAL

Responsibility for the delivery of junior sport is shared by many groups: Teachers and coaches (see Section 4) Schools and community organisations (see Section 5) Parents/guardians

Officials

Administrators

The media

Governments at all levels

The roles of some of these groups have been outlined earlier (as indicated). The other groups are set out below.

6.2 PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The delivery of junior sport would not be possible without the on-going commitment of parents and guardians, who provide voluntary support in many ways.

Their expectations and attitudes significantly affect the enjoyment that their children receive from sports participation.

To ensure that children receive the greatest benefit from their sporting activity, parents and guardians should:

Encourage children to participate, without forcing them to do so.

Focus on effort and performance rather than on the outcome. Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing an event.

Encourage children to always play according to the rules.

Be models of good sports behaviour for children to copy.

Be courteous in their communication with players, coaches, officials and administrators.

Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical violence from sporting activities.

6.3 OFFICIALS

Officials (umpires, referees, judges) also have an important influence on children’s enjoyment of sport and their continued participation.

When officiating at junior sport activities, umpires (or referees or judges) should:

Be consistent, courteous and helpful to all participants.

Be models of good sports behaviour for children to copy.

Keep informed of sound officiating principles that take account of children’s growth and development.

Modify rules and regulations to match the skill level of children and their needs.
Encourage rule changes that reinforce the principle of participation for fun and enjoyment.

Use commonsense to ensure that the spirit of the game is not lost by the strict application of rules and the over-calling of violations.

Discourage unsporting behaviour and promote respect for opponents.

6.4 ADMINISTRATORS

Administrators have a responsibility to ensure that junior sport is conducted in a safe, fair and appropriate manner.

In conducting junior sport activities, administrators should:

Develop a positive junior sport environment by allowing for the special needs of children, by emphasising enjoyment and by encouraging and complimenting all participants on their efforts.

Ensure that equal opportunities for sports participation are available for all children.

Ensure that rules, equipment, facilities, training schedules and games are safe to match the needs and skill level of the participants.

Ensure that adequate supervision is provided by competent coaches and officials capable of developing appropriate sports behaviour and skill technique.

Ensure that all those involved in junior sport understand their responsibilities regarding fair play and appropriate behaviour.

Avoid allowing junior sport programs to become primarily spectator entertainment. Focus on the needs of the participants rather than the spectators.

Involve children in the planning and evaluation of sporting activities.

6.5 THE MEDIA

The media plays a significant part in the shaping of attitudes.

To be a positive influence, the media should:

Develop a climate of acknowledgement and support by reporting on all sport.

Identify and report on the benefits of children participating in sport.

Increase coverage of both competitive and noncompetitive activities.

Focus on the juniors’ fair play and honest effort.

Take into account the differences between junior and adult sport.

Place in proper perspective any incidents of unsporting behaviour, rather than make such incidents the highlight of the event.

Report equitably on both female and male sport activities.

Recognise the sporting achievements of juniors from disadvantaged groups, including adolescent girls, people with disabilities, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and rural populations.
6.6 GOVERNMENTS

All levels of government (local through to federal) have a responsibility to ensure that a range of sporting opportunities is available to all young Australians.

Governments should:

Be committed to the promotion of junior sport for the benefits that it offers individuals and Australian society (see section 1.3).

Provide support and encouragement to schools and community organisations to improve their delivery of junior sport.

Conduct or financially support only those programs that encourage participation in sport by all young Australians and provide equality of sporting opportunity.

Support and encourage talented young sports people.

Provide for a range of appropriate sporting facilities in every community.

Ensure that junior sport is delivered in the safest possible manner.

Ensure that optimum co-operation occurs between all levels of government in the delivery of junior sport.
SAFETY GUIDELINES

7.1 GENERAL

An important objective of this Policy is the provision of safe environments for junior sport activities.

Accordingly, those involved in the conduct of junior sport need to:

Take into account the ways in which the physical and emotional maturity of a child/youth differs from that of an adult.

Take into account any long term or short term medical conditions participants may have.

Ensure that junior sport facilities and equipment are appropriate and safe.

Ensure that participants wear protective equipment (where appropriate).

Ensure that participants are properly prepared for their sporting involvement, especially through quality teaching and coaching.

Ensure that coaches /teachers have adequate first aid knowledge.

7.2 PHYSIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

General

Warm-up and cool-down exercises should accompany all sporting activities. Repetitive training techniques should be avoided, and endurance activities (eg long-distance running) restricted, so that developing bones, joints and muscles are not injured. Young people should play in a variety of positions and not over-train in particular skills.

The selection process should take account of body shape and size, matching players as closely as possible. For particular sports and/or particular positions, this is even more important.

Body temperature regulation

Compared with adults, children have a larger skin surface area to body mass ratio, and their sweat glands are immature, making them more susceptible to heat loss or heat gain. Sport sessions should not, therefore, be of long duration (over 30 minutes) in conditions of extreme temperature (over 30 degrees) and humidity (over 50 percent). Care must also be taken when children are competing in swimming events in cold water.

Fluid

Children do not instinctively drink enough fluids to replace the amount they lose during activity. Adequate fluid intake before and during all sessions must be ensured.

Nutrition

The nutritional needs of junior sport participants are affected by their level of activity. A balanced diet that provides them with all the essential elements should be encouraged. Regular fluid intake before and during training and competition should also be encouraged.

Weight loss

Methods of weight reduction by dehydration are extremely dangerous and should not be used under any circumstances.
Weight Training

Before adolescence, weight training does little to increase muscle size or strength; time and effort are better spent on skill development. At any level, weight training should only be under the supervision of a qualified instructor or it may result in injury if inappropriate.

Stress

Whether children find playing sport stressful depends on the attitudes of parents, coaches and officials. Adults should not set unrealistic goals, but should instead offer support and encouragement.

Drugs and Sport

The drugs most commonly used by (mostly older) children are alcohol and tobacco. Their use affects general health and well-being and, therefore, sports performance. Less common but still of concern is the use of performance-enhancing drugs, which some young people may use in response to pressures to 'win at all costs'.

Everyone involved in junior sport can help children to develop appropriate attitudes by discussing the issues with them, by emphasising participation rather than outcome, and by setting a good example. It should be stressed that good training practices and a healthy lifestyle are the factors that most contribute to enhanced sports performance.

Sun Exposure

Organisers of sporting competitions and events have a responsibility to protect junior sport participants, to the greatest extent practicable, from the dangers of exposure to the sun.

Participants should be encouraged or obligated to wear protective clothing, especially hats, and apply a 15+ sunscreen on exposed skin.

Sports organisers should also maximise the provision of shaded areas at venues and events.

7.3 MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some children have medical conditions that may affect their participation in physical activity. Particular care should be taken in the case of long term conditions (eg asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and heart or lung disease). Coaches/teachers should be aware of each child's specific needs and also know how to deal with any emergency.

Medical opinion should be sought when the fitness or performance of any junior sport participant is questionable, and when recovery from illness or injury is in doubt.

7.4 FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Measures should be adopted to reduce the risk of facility or equipment-related injury during sport activities:

- Maintain facilities and equipment in a safe condition.
- Properly supervise all participants during sessions.
- Ensure that adequate protective equipment is available and used for training and competition.
- Ensure that protective equipment is correctly fitted.
- Modify equipment, rules and field/court dimensions (as appropriate).
- Cancel matches or training where inspection of playing surfaces and equipment shows they are unsuitable or unsafe for play.

7.5 CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Each sport is urged to develop its own safety guidelines specifically for juniors, by making use of the points above and by contacting the following organisations for more details and guidance:
Australian Sports Commission (AUSSIE SPORT, Aussie Able, Women and Sport)

State AUSSIE SPORT Units

Australian Coaching Council (eg Coaching Children book)

Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER)

Australian Schools Sports Council

Australian Sports Medicine Federation (Children and Adolescents in Sport)

Australian Sports Drug Agency

Australian Association for Adolescent Health

State departments of sport and recreation

State education authorities

State sports federations
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

**MAKING IT HAPPEN**

**Introduction**

The major implication of the National junior Sport Policy is that everyone has an ownership and responsibility for it. The Policy will not be the single responsibility of any one agency and its ultimate success will rely on the commitment and actions of all agencies involved with junior sport. Devolving this responsibility ensures that its ownership is shared and reliant on working together to achieve its aims.

This section of the Policy seeks to address the implementation issues and recommends a course of action that may be appropriate.

The implementation of the Policy does not start at the very beginning. It is important to recognise that over the past several years many initiatives have been developed which contribute to and are consistent with the aims of the Policy. The Policy seeks to formalise and reinforce these strategies and where possible contribute to the enhancement and extension of good practices.

A majority of States and Territories have established junior Sport Councils whose charter it is to develop and monitor policy development in their State/Territory. It is essential that the National Junior Sport Policy be supported by these Councils, or any like group, and that they determine many of the implementation strategies, particularly as they effect their State/Territory.

Achievement of the implementation of the Policy will require ongoing consultation and self monitoring. To this end, the Working Party will continue to operate to provide support and guidance for the initial implementation stages. With time, this group may no longer be necessary or be replaced with a National junior Sport Council with broader representation. It will be an ongoing review process by the Working Party which will determine this need.

**ENDORSEMENT AND COMMITMENT STATEMENTS**

The following statements indicate the commitment and endorsement of the five national agencies involved in the development of the Policy. Each agency has also identified the strategies that they will undertake in order to assist in the implementation of the Policy.

**AUSTRALIAN SPORTS COMMISSION**

The Australian Sports Commission welcomes the development of this National Junior Sport Policy.

The Policy is a recognition of the strong community and sport industry demand for a clear set of principles and guidelines which encourage a coordinated and co-operative delivery of junior sport in Australia.

It applauds the bringing together of all the agencies involved in junior sport, particularly in the sport and education sectors.

As part of the Commission's role in facilitating sport nationally, this Policy provides a major foundation for sport in Australia and one that the Commission is committed to support.

The Australian Sports Commission endorses this National junior Sport Policy and will contribute to its implementation in the following ways:

- actively promote and advocate the Policy to Government and key agencies
- work with key agencies at the national level to adopt and implement the Policy
- request National Sporting Organisations to support the Policy in terms of developing complementary sport specific policies and to work with them to enhance their current practices
- assist National Sporting Organisations to implement the Policy
• work with State AUSSIE SPORT Units to assist key agencies at national and state level in implementing the Policy

• provide secretariat support for the junior Sport Working Party to assist in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Policy.

AUSSIE SPORT makes a significant contribution nationally to the development of junior sport. The Australian Sports Commission, in partnership with state departments of sport and education, will ensure that the AUSSIE SPORT initiative continues to assist those involved in junior sport develop and implement programs and strategies consistent with the Policy.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RECREATION AND SPORT AND THE SPORT AND RECREATION MINISTER’S COUNCIL

The Sport and Recreation Minister’s Council (SRMC) and the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS) welcome and fully endorse the National Junior Sport Policy.

As an active contributor to the development of the Policy, SCORS, with the endorsement of SRMC, is also committed to the application of this Policy.

In particular, SCORS members will:

• continue to afford a high priority to junior sport in each State and Territory

• work closely with State sporting associations, education and community organisations to facilitate the implementation of the Policy

• monitor and evaluate the impact of the Policy, and take any appropriate action to improve this application

• continue to support the National Working Party for as long as is required.

CONFERENCE OF DIRECTORS GENERAL OF EDUCATION

The Conference of Directors-General of Education welcomes the development of this National junior Sport Policy. The Directors General have appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the development of the Policy and applaud the consultation process which has been undertaken.

Each individual Education authority is in accord with the principles encompassed in the Policy and will endeavour to incorporate them in the existing policies and practices of their agency.

The Policy will be disseminated by each Education authority and implementation strategies considered and incorporated where appropriate.

CONFEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN SPORT

The Board of the Confederation of Australian Sport formally endorses the National junior Sport Policy. We are pleased that this major recommendation from the National junior Sport Conference in 1991 has come to fruition.

The Confederation believes that the process of consultation involved in developing the Policy has been particularly useful in drawing together many of the relevant organisations as partners. It is important that sporting organisations and government agencies have joined forces with representatives from education in developing these policy guidelines - they therefore stand a more reasonable chance of acceptance and implementation.

The Confederation also welcomes the recognition of the Policy of the autonomy of sport and the need for sports to give junior activities their rightful priority in overall development strategies.

From the Confederation’s point of view, you may be assured that we will continue to use our best endeavours to promote the importance of junior sport as a key element of the sporting industry in Australia, to governments, the media and our own membership.
Specifically, we are planning articles in our various publications, discussing the Policy through our various forums around the states and formally notifying our members of the Confederation's endorsement of the Policy.

The Confederation will also promote the Policy with its counterpart State sporting federations and seek their endorsement of the document. We note that the Working Party will continue to review the implementation and acceptance of the Policy and no doubt our representative will continue to liaise with the various representatives as required.

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS SPORTS COUNCIL

The Australian Schools Sports Council is delighted to have been a member of the Working Party which developed this National junior Sport Policy.

Many key issues were identified and addressed during the development of the Policy, some of which took longer than others to resolve. This lengthy consultation process has been appreciated in resolving these issues.

The Policy's directions in the areas of school development, coaching and competition, including the provision through consultation for both primary and secondary school activities at all levels, is to be applauded.

The ASSC is now confident that this Policy provides clear principles and directions which will allow all junior sport providers the opportunity to best develop their programs at all participation levels.

The emphasis on the need for a consultative approach between community and education organisations to sports development is to be applauded and the ASSC looks forward to the opportunity to work as an equal partner with other agencies and sports organisations in the future delivery of junior sport.

To this end, the ASSC will actively promote the Policy within both the school sport community and education.

- The Council is committed to continuing its liaison with national sporting organisations in order to develop appropriate junior sports programs which can become an integral part of each sport’s Development Plan.

- Similar consultation will be encouraged between state and territory school sports associations and state sporting organisations to ensure that appropriate sports policies and programs are developed at school, district, regional and state level.

This commitment by the ASSC and its member associations to work towards the development of complementary junior sports programs will hopefully enhance participation opportunities for children at all levels of sport.

The ASSC commends the National junior Sport Policy to all interested in the future of Australian sport.
AGENCY CONTACTS

In addition, other national agencies also have a role and responsibility to contribute to the implementation of the Policy and should seek to reflect the Policy in their own policies and practices.

*These agencies include:*

AUSTRALIAN COACHING COUNCIL

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION

AUSTRALIAN SPORTS MEDICINE FEDERATION

AUSTRALIAN SPORTS DRUG AGENCY

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF SPORTS ADMINISTRATORS.

*Strategies for these agencies include:*

- where possible, provide public endorsement of the Policy

- identify those aspects of the Policy which have an influence on the operations, practices and services of the agency. Consider any necessary modifications of these to reflect the principles of the Policy

- consider the inclusion of a reference to the Policy in resources and courses that are targeted to junior sport. By identifying the relationship, user groups will be able to use the resources and courses to contribute to their implementation of the Policy

- positively advocate the Policy and its principles through policy and resource development and in appropriate publications

- encourage State affiliates to contribute to and work with State Junior Sport Councils or similar agencies to develop state and local initiatives to support the Policy implementation.

Strategies identified for national agencies do not, and should not, assume a 'top down' approach. These strategies will need to be mirrored and supported by actions at all levels, i.e. club, schools, sporting associations, local and state governments and community groups. The Working Party, however, recognises the importance of state and local needs which should reflect specific situations and applications. The development of implementation strategies, whilst consistent with the Policy, should be flexible and be determined at the State level. This section of the Policy therefore only highlights action at a national level.
<table>
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<th>DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE</th>
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| ONE 5-7 YEARS        | • Spontaneous play and movement  
                        • Coordination skills  
                        • Trying more complex tasks  
                        • Informal games  
                        • Minor Games (1) | The strong desire for general play and physical activity during these years lays the foundation for future sport involvement. Emphasise enjoyment, and encourage the learning of basic physical skills: throwing, catching, kicking, hitting, jumping, running and swimming/water safety as well as social skills, and positive attitudes (fair play, etc.). |
| TWO 8-10 YEARS       | • Coordination skills  
                        • Small group activities  
                        • General skill development  
                        • Modified sport (2)  
                        • Competitive sport: inter/intra school/club | Experiences during these years should build upon the foundation laid earlier. In this stage, children accept the challenges of sport participation. Provide enjoyable opportunities for the development of positive social skills and a wide range of physical skills which can then be applied to specific sports. |
| THREE 11-12 YEARS    | • Sport-specific skill development  
                        • Modified sport (2)  
                        • Talent squads (3)  
                        • Sports development programs/camps/exchanges (4)  
                        • Competitive sport: inter/intra school/club | Continue to offer opportunities in a wide range of physical activities, helping to develop interests and skills in particular sports. Maximise positive sporting experiences through cooperation with other schools and clubs. Programs at this stage should emphasise skill development and game appreciation. These programs may include coaching clinics, appropriate competition and educational excursions. |
| FOUR 13-19 YEARS     | • Sport-specific skill development  
                        • Modified sport (2), where appropriate  
                        • Talent squads (3)  
                        • Sports camps (4)  
                        • Competitive sport, inter/intra school/club, district/regional, inter/intra state, international, social  
                        • Leadership opportunities | Take account of general adolescent development as well as individual differences in ability and interest. Continue to cooperate with other schools and clubs in the provision of programs, to minimise duplication but still allow for maximum participation opportunities. Educate players about good sporting behaviour and provide excellent role models. Provide leadership development opportunities. |

** THE AGES IN THIS MODEL ARE A GENERAL GUIDE ONLY. THE NEEDS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED WHEN APPLYING THESE GUIDELINES.**

**NOTES:**
(1) **Minor games** are small, structured activities that build basic skills.
(2) **Modified sports** develop skills by allowing for the needs and abilities of developing children (see 2.3).
(3) **Talent squads** provide opportunities for talented players to develop their sporting potential. The focus should be on skill development leading to the adult game. The method for selection should be decided by sporting associations in consultation with education authorities.
(4) **Sports development programs/camps/exchanges** provide opportunities for talented players to receive intensive instruction in a specific sport. These programs/camps/exchanges could be at regional, state or interstate level.