

Pre-season training is an important part of preparing teams and individuals for the season ahead. Conditioning the body for the rigors of our game is essential for injury prevention and team performance. AFL Clubs commence pre-season training in November/December, they are elite professional footballers who have dedicated facilities and professional coaching and conditioning staff to manage player training loads. At a junior level, kid's bodies are still developing, and over-use injuries can be more prevalent in these formative years. Therefore, the amount of training, particularly when they are often involved in other activities, is a key consideration in player welfare.

## **How much pre-season training is required?**

Football is a running and skill-based game. It is important to remember that WJFC is a community football club so we are limited to the number of preseason sessions we can be expected to run. Players will need to do other sessions to build fitness in the premierships grades.

**Under 7 & 8** - pre-season to consist of 1 - 4 sessions of no more than 45-60 minutes per session. The training focus should be fun, skill, small sided games and game sense and getting the players to know each other and the coaches. Focus should be on the technical skills of kicking, handballing, marking and ground balls. Pre-season should be used to even spread out the talent in the teams. Match Conditions / Rules of the game should be explained.

**Under 9 & 10** - pre-season to consist of 3 - 6 sessions of no more than 45-60 minutes per session. The training focus should be fun, skill, small sided games and game sense and getting the players to know each other and the coaches. Focus should be on the technical skills of kicking, handballing, marking and ground balls. Tackling training should be included to prepare the players. Pre-season should be used to even spread out the talent in the teams. Match Conditions/ Rules of the game should be explained.

**Under 11** - pre-season to consist of 1-6 sessions of 45-60 minutes per session. The training focus should be fun, skill, small sided games and game sense. Focus should be on the technical skills of kicking, handballing, marking and ground balls. Tackling, blocking and smothering training should be included to prepare the players. Pre-season should be used to even spread out the talent in the teams. Match scenarios and basic team play should be included. Match Conditions/ Rules of the game should be explained.

**Under 12 – Under 15** – pre-season training to consist of 6 – 8 sessions of 60 – 75 minutes per session. The training focus should be skill / game sense, small sided games, team play games and minimum fitness only based activities. Where possible most running should be done with footballs. Focus should be on the technical skills of kicking, handballing, marking and ground balls. Tackling, blocking and smothering training should be included to prepare the players. Pre-season is to be used as part of the grading process. More advanced match scenarios and team play should be included. Match Conditions/ Rules of the game should be explained.