

# **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & GUIDELINES**

## **UNDER 13'S 9 VS 9 GAME FORMAT**

### **OVERVIEW**

Football Victoria is implementing some changes to the start of the JBNPL season for 2021 due to the global pandemic, that has significantly interrupted this year's fixtures and the ability of clubs to train and play as normal.

There has been significant investment by Football Victoria into the Men's & Boys & Women & Girls competition reviews. Both competition reviews have recommended changes to competition structure with several recommendations already introduced.

Taking the recommendations into account and feedback we have received from our football stakeholders; Football Victoria is proposing the following Start Up conditions for season 2021 for the U13's level of competition.

Football Victoria is introducing a 9 vs 9 game format for season 2021. This format may be played on a half pitch or box to box depending on specific club facility availability.

This competition format was introduced at the Girls level and would have come into effect in season 2020.

Both the Boys & Girls who would have turned 12 in 2020 have not had the opportunity to play any games due to the 2020 season being called off.

There are some clearly defined development opportunities with this game format and as such Football Victoria believes it is in the best interest of the players development to introduce 9 vs 9 for season 2021.

### **WHY IS FOOTBALL VICTORIA INTRODUCING THIS CHANGE?**

Football Victoria believes this game format change is in the best interests of the players development. Our technical team have identified several key development opportunities for this age group and strongly believes that the 9 vs 9 game format provides the best opportunity for improving a player's technical skills

In addition with an increase in technical actions (tackles, passes, dribbles) being executed and an increase in '*ball in play time*' there is an increase in the demands placed on the body, improving the physical attributes of our young players as well.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPROVED DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES?**

There are several improved development opportunities by playing small-sided football. Below Football Victoria has listed some of these opportunities:

- Game time
- More touches in the game with the ball - average touches increases in SSG by 33% (JFA International Coaching Conference 2019)
- Not be overwhelmed by field size going up an age group
- Quicker decision making in tighter areas/spaces

- Less focus on physical qualities of the player
- More attacking & defending opportunities in game play
- More opportunities to develop shooting and finishing skills in a challenging goal size, more goalkeeping opportunities - Number of shots over 130 matches increase by over 40% in small-sided games versus 11 vs 11 (JFA International Coaching Conference 2019)
- Goal size age appropriate – more realistic opportunity for a goalkeeper to make saves
- More opportunities for goalkeepers to participate in attacking actions of the team
- On average the GK participated in the SSG every 42 seconds (JFA International Conference 2019)

Football Victoria's technical team are continuously reviewing player development opportunities including best practice from around the world when considering these type of decisions

### **WILL THIS FORMAT CONTINUE IN 2022?**

Football Victoria is committed to the continual review of its competition programs at all levels. As such this game format along with other parts of our Football competition design is under constant review. It is envisaged that this game format will remain in place beyond the 2021 season.

### **WHAT IF A PLAYER IS MORE PHYSICALLY DEVELOPED THAN OTHER PLAYERS AT THIS AGE LEVEL?**

Football Victoria recognises that all players develop at different levels both physically and technically. If a player is more physically and technically developed, then others at this age level we ask that the club consider what is best for that player.

A player who is an early developer may have the opportunity to play up an age group and be introduced into an 11 vs 11 game format earlier.

### **HOW WILL FOOTBALL VICTORIA SUPPORT THE TRANSITION OF THIS AGE GROUP INTO AN 11 VS 11 GAME FORMAT FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR?**

Football Victoria is considering various ways of transitioning players to an 11 vs 11 game format. Clubs will have the option to play either half pitch or box to box to provide variation for U13's playing 9 vs 9. Another initiative will be to introduce a post season **11v11 full pitch tournament** for players in this age group after they have had a complete season of playing 9 vs 9.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE PARENTS AND PLAYERS AT MY CLUB THAT ARE DISAPPOINTED WITH THIS DECISION?**

We understand that not all recommendations will be considered favourably by all stakeholders at any given time.

This decision has been carefully considered and recommended after reviewing the impacts of COVID-19 on our 2020 season, the advice of our technical team, feedback from our stakeholders and previous reviews completed by Football Victoria.

We ask that all parents and guardians consider and respect the recommendations of our technical team regarding the development opportunities for all players under this game format.

"9v9 aims to set realistic expectations that meet the needs of young people, not those of adults." - Youth Football Development FA