



THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL CURRICULUM  
The Building Blocks

# “Making Australia a World Leader in the World Game”

The National Football Curriculum is a long term strategic plan, aimed at realising the necessary changes and improvements to achieve the lofty objectives.

Analysis of football in Australia reveals:

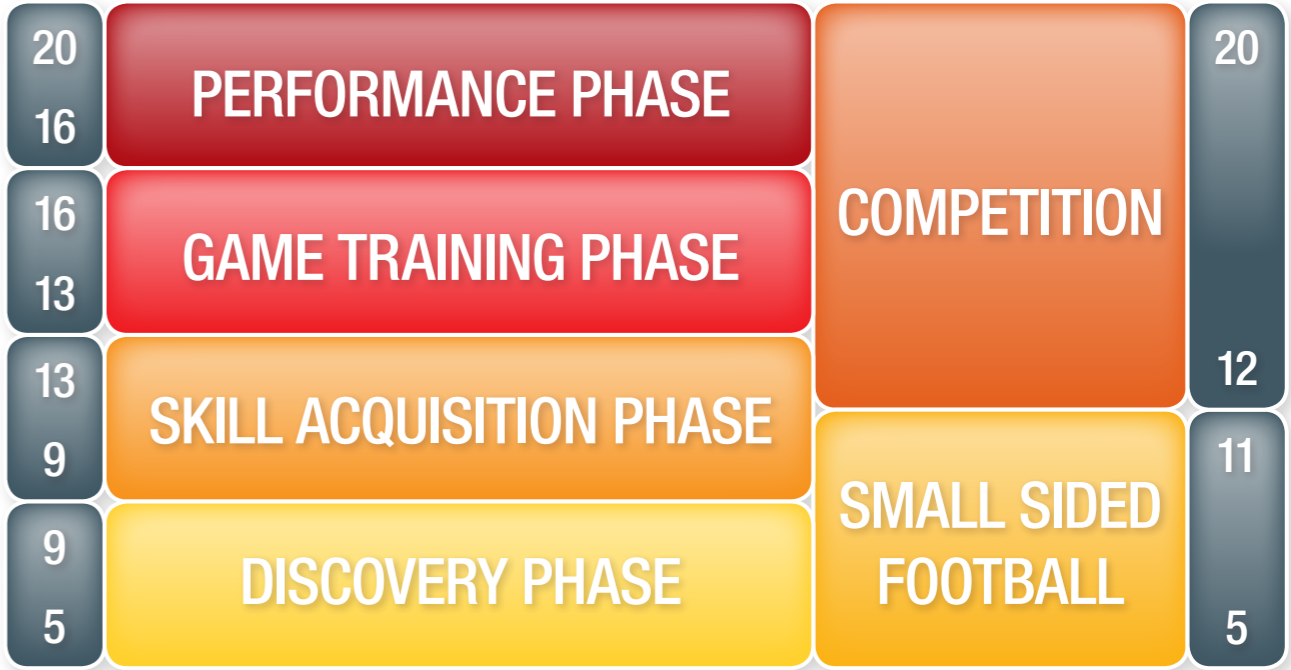
**Strengths:** Physical & Mental Competitiveness

**Weaknesses:** Technical & Tactical Abilities

As a result the domestic game at all levels is still very much a traditional "long ball-second ball" type of game while the modern game is one of "effective possession".

If we want to bring our game to the next level, changes and improvements are essential! In order to bring about the necessary changes and improvements and firmly root them to provide a sound and consistent foundation for the future of the game,

The Curriculum Building Blocks form the frame work for coaches working on all levels of youth development.



# Age 5 to 9: Discovery Phase

# Age 9 to 13: Skill Acquisition Phase



9  
5

## DISCOVERY PHASE (grassroots)

- No 'coaching' but creating a 'learning environment'
- The aim of this phase is, as much as possible, to replicate the 'street football' environment of the past
- 'Natural' development through playing FOOTBALL
- Discovering one's possibilities (and impossibilities) through trial and error
- Emphasis on fun, building a love of the game
- By the end of this phase, talented players will be identifiable



13  
9

## SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE

- Providing the necessary technical 'tools' to be able to play the game on the highest possible level
- Focus on FUNCTIONAL GAME SKILLS (as opposed to 'tricks')
- This is the decisive age group for acquiring the perfect technical foundation (the 'Golden Age' of motor learning)
- In 2010 FFA Skill Acquisition Specialists will be appointed to train the most talented players in every State & Territory
- In the near future, FFA will make Skill Acquisition Trainer courses available for interested coaches in various parts of Australia.

### What to teach?

1 v 1

Striking the ball

Running with the ball

First Touch

### How to teach

- Demonstration
- Repetition
- With both feet
- Challenging and game-related
- With game-specific resistances
- In Football (training) **T**echnique, **I**nsight and **C**ommunication are distinguishable but not seperable

## Age 13 to 16: Game Training Phase

## Age 16 to 20: Performance Phase



16  
13

### GAME TRAINING PHASE

- Applying the functional game skills
- Learning how to use the technical 'tools' playing as a team, using 1-4-3-3 as the preferred formation
- Developing of tactical awareness, insight and decision making through a game-related approach of training

#### What to teach?

Building up (playing out)

Attacking

Transitioning

Defending

#### How to teach

- The Game is always the starting point
- Simplify / modify the game situation for training by reducing the game specific resistances until the obtained training aim can be realised by the players
- Is FOOTBALL being played?

20  
16

### PERFORMANCE PHASE

- Perfecting the game-training components
- Adding FOOTBALL CONDITIONING to the program
- Performing / winning as a team in a competition environment becomes the aim (mental component)

#### Football Conditioning is about:

- Increase of explosiveness in football actions
- Quick recovery between two explosive football actions
- Maintaining explosiveness during 90 minutes
- Maintaining quick recovery during 90 minutes

#### Key Points

- Only game-related football exercises
- Gym training only relevant for core stability (= injury prevention)
- No static stretching before training or games (reduces the explosiveness of muscles)
- Australian players need to improve technically so:

**Use every available minute training FOOTBALL**



## Age 12 to 20: Competition / Age 5 to 11: Small Sided Football



## COMPETITION

20  
12


- Weekly, year-round
- The best against the best so:
- Each player on his/her appropriate level
- The game is for players, the training for the coach
- The weekly game is a vital element for the development of young players
- The game is the frame of reference that tells us if we are improving
- Only in a regular and challenging competition environment can we develop game cleverness, game hardness and game experience
- Winning the game is the purpose of football but in the development stage **not at all costs!**

## SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL

11  
5

Towards the end of the discovery phase (around 9 years old), talented players begin to be selected. Therefore, at this age elements of the competition block (above) begin to apply.





Is this 'all' there is to it?

# YES...

**But you will also need:**

- Patience
- Determination
- Discipline
- Persuasiveness
- Perseverance

GOOD LUCK and enjoy the process!



FOOTBALL  
FEDERATION  
AUSTRALIA

