

TO: FFV CLUBS

FROM: FFV Competitions Department

DATE: 24 OCTOBER 2016

SUBJECT: WOMEN AND GIRLS COMPETITION REVIEW

Dear Clubs,

On Wednesday 12 October 2016, FFV hosted a Women's Football Forum. The purpose of the forum was to give all stakeholders the opportunity to share their knowledge, feedback and experiences in key areas of women's football, and to ensure that all clubs had the opportunity to present their views and ask questions prior to decisions being made by FFV with respect to changes to the women's game in Victoria.

To view the presentation from the Women's Football Forum please click [HERE](#).

Whilst we consider women's football to be in a strong position and it is encouraging to see the current growth in player numbers for junior girls, we believe it is important to continue to develop and provide the best opportunities for women and girls to play football to capitalise on the potential which exists in this area of the game. In short, there are significant opportunities to further grow and strengthen women's football to be the sport of choice for females in Victoria.

We have taken the opportunity to summarise the key discussion points and outcomes from the forum below.

1. Women's State League (WSL)

- No changes to WSL 1 in 2017.
- FFV will conduct another WSL Health Check in 2017 and will consult with Clubs and other stakeholders towards the end of season 2017 regarding WSL structures in 2018 and beyond.
- Any changes to WSL structures will require at least a seasons notice so that Clubs can prepare accordingly and have a clear understanding of the changes to be implemented and what will affect those changes; i.e. ladder positions. For example, if structural changes are to be made post 2017, Clubs will be provided details of those changes prior to the commencement of the 2018 season, allowing Clubs sufficient time to understand relevant promotion and relegation implications ahead of season 2019 when the changes would take effect.
- Retention and Recruitment of female players were highlighted as key challenges Clubs face, especially in specialist positions such as goal keepers.
- The application of Regulation 10.3.3 will be reviewed in regards to the penalty against Clubs in WSL 1. The Regulation is designed to encourage a clear player pathway within a Club between junior and senior football. However, we acknowledge that in some instances clubs may face challenges meeting the Regulation. FFV intends amending the rule so that the implementation of a fine penalty is discretionary. In short, we want to work with clubs to grow junior opportunities for girls to play football not inhibit that or penalise clubs unnecessarily.

2. Proposed Social / Modified Format Competition for Senior Women

- An alternate option for female players who may not be able to make the formal commitment to a full winter program was suggested and discussed at the Forum. Essentially what is proposed is a standalone competition (separate from WSL) that is targeted at retention (keeping players within the game that can no longer commit to traditional winter football) and recruitment (providing an environment with less pressure for new players to the game).
- Two possible competition formats were presented; these proposals were based on the results of an online survey distributed to players and clubs, research results from the Australian Sports Commission, VicHealth, FFA/FFV and Victorian Government consultations, as well as participation rates in traditional football and pre-existing alternate football (i.e. Summer Sevens and FitFootball).
- Two alternatives to the proposal were tabled and, based on feedback; we have refined those alternatives into a third option which is affectively a hybrid of the two alternatives tabled. Details of that third option are set out in *Appendix 1* to this memo.

3. Junior girls

- FFV will conduct a Junior Girls' Health Check in 2017.
- No changes to Junior Girls' League Structures or Age Groups for the 2017 season.
- Clubs outlined that self-grading team entry is an important tool in player recruitment and retention, as it provides flexibility for Clubs starting and maintaining a Junior Girls' program within a Club.
- The ability to retain players aged 16 to 18 is a significant challenge. Clubs proposed an investigation into the possibility of a modified format for Junior Girls' in this age bracket, similar to that of the social format proposal for Senior Women. FFV will investigate further in this regard.
- Flexible kick off times will remain in 2017 and will be reviewed again post 2017 season.
- FFV put forward a proposal to gradually introduce single age groups over a four year period. Provided current growth trends continue in 2017, FFV will implement single age competitions for Under 13 and Under 14 girls' football in 2018, with a view to implementing Under 15 and Under 16 single age competitions in either 2019 or 2020, depending on player number growth. Clubs were supportive of the proposal, provided player numbers and player quality support single age groups.
- FFV aims to introduce more standalone zone based competitions annually (e.g. move from U13-14 South-East League to a separate U13-14 South League and an U13-14 East League). Again, any changes depend on the continued growth of player numbers across all age groups and grades.

4. Going Forward

FFV will also closely monitor the new social format that will be piloted in 2017 and clubs will have the opportunity to provide further feedback post season one at the July Forum (see further below).

FFV will also conduct a Women's and Junior Girls' football health check in 2017. Further information will be communicated to Clubs regarding the proposed introduction of U13 and U14 single age groups for 2018 at the forum in July 2017. Further details in relation to each of these steps are below:

Social Format

As noted above, FFV has designed a draft proposal for the Women's Social/Modified Format. It is important that clubs review the draft proposal (*Appendix 1*) and provide feedback to clubfeedback@ffv.org.au with the subject line "Women's Social/Modified Format" by no later than Monday 7th November 2016. FFV will distribute details of the final format for the Social / Modified Competition by COB Friday 2nd December along with further information regarding the introduction for the 2017 season.

WSL and Junior Girls' Health Check

FFV will continue to conduct Health Checks of Women's and Girls' football annually, in addition to continually seeking Club feedback on the above proposals and experiences in female football throughout the 2017 season. In this regard, we will schedule a further forum to discuss the progress of issues discussed on 12 October (and other issues relevant to female football) in July 2017. The introduction of and preparation for single age groups for Under 13s and Under 14s will be a key agenda item of that meeting.

5. Further Feedback

Clubs are asked to continue to provide feedback on all aspects of female football which include, but are not limited to; player registrations, league structures, competitions, coaching, refereeing and facilities. We believe that the feedback provided by Clubs is key to the continual growth and improvement of female football in Victoria. All correspondence should be forwarded to clubfeedback@ffv.org.au so it can be collated together for the Female Football Review to be held in 2017.

Kind Regards,



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FFV Participation Manager



Ash Callaghan
**FFV Women and Girls'
Development Officer**



Brad Borsato
**Senior Competitions
Coordinator**

Appendix 1 – Proposed Women’s Social / Modified Football Format for Club Review

Season Length

- The competition will be split into 2 seasons of 8-9 Rounds
- Teams do not have to commit to both seasons

Venue, Playing Format, Season Dates and Days of Play

- Venue - Centralised or Home and Away
- The competition will be 7v7 and squads should consist of a maximum of 12 players.

Proposed Season Dates		
Season 1	Weeknight: (Default day – Wednesday)	3rd May to 2nd July
	Weekend: (Default day – Sunday)	7th May to 25th June
Season 2	Weeknight: (Default day – Wednesday)	19th July to 6th September
	Weekend: (Default day – Sunday)	23rd July to 10th September

- Day of Play - FFV are open to playing on a Saturday or alternate weeknight if there is enough demand. A default day has been allocated to indicate Season Dates clearly.
- The last round can be structured as an all team finals series if the club feedback indicates this preference – 1v2, 3v4, 5v6 etc.

Pitch Dimensions

- Matches will be played on half a full-size pitch (i.e. 65 metres length x 45 metres width).
- Goals sizes will be reduced (5 metres wide x 2 metres high).

League Structures

- League Structure is dependent on Team Entries. Leagues will be divided into either
 - 1) North-West or South East
 - 2) North, West, South or East; or
 - 3) Metropolitan – Pilot Program

Match Duration

- Match durations will remain at two 20-minute halves

Match Kick Off Times

- Weeknights: Varied between 6:30pm, 7:40pm, 8:30pm and 9:20pm (if required)
- Weekends: Varied between 11am and 8:30pm – depending on ground availability

Participation Fees*

**The below fees are based on a centralised venue*

- The Final FFV Fee for this competition is to be determined and will be based on the current Summer Sevens fee structure. 2016 Summer Sevens FFV Team Entry Fee: \$450 (7 week season).
- The FFV Fee will vary pending the competition format, and will cover the following, if applicable; Venue hire, Referee fees, Equipment cost, Administration costs, Registration fees, Insurance and Venue deliverer fees.
- All players will also need to register on My Football Club with FFV. An estimated base player FFV fee will be approximately \$50 per season

Please send your clubs feedback to clubfeedback@ffv.org.au before *COB Monday 7th November 2016*