





COMMBANK EMERGING
CHAMPIONSHIPS PLAYER AND
PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK











FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA WELCOME MESSAGE

We are delighted to welcome all players, coaches, match officials and families to the 2025 CommBank Emerging Socceroos Championships and 2025 CommBank Emerging Matildas Championships hosted across Melbourne and Sydney.

These Championships have long been a launchpad for international careers and stands as the pinnacle of youth football in Australia. They will be a celebration of the next generation of talent and a vital part of the pathway toward the CommBank Matildas and Subway Soccroos. Many of our national team heroes including Jordy Bos, Ellie Carpenter, Steph Catley and Harry Kewell once stood where you stand today (just to name a few).

The 2025 edition marks a new era. The reforming of the National Youth Championships into the CommBank Emerging Matildas and CommBank Emerging Socceroos Championships has been spearheaded by our Football Development Committee – comprising of former Matildas, Socceroos, and leading performance experts. It signals a renewed focus, commitment, and investment across every stage of our development and performance pathways.

In an exciting step forward, this year's Championships also welcome international participation — with Malaysia fielding teams inboth the girls' and boys' tournaments. In the years ahead, we look forward to hosting multiple international teams, creating even greater opportunities for our young footballers to experience diverse playing styles, cultures, and competition on the path to international football.

These Championships unite our football community's shared ambition to pursue a world-class development platform to identify and nurture future stars. This is an opportunity for our youth to understand the values and objectives of our senior national teams, through a structured program which provides the resources, support, and education they need to thrive.

Our new format lays the foundational pillars that will help Australia develop world-class talent.
Our global best practice program will integrate player education, holistic wellbeing, talent ID, and data-driven insights to prepare participants for the demands of elite football, while promoting values of sportsmanship, resilience, and pride.

During the tournaments, teams from across our nine Member Federations come together in an environment that celebrates competition, camaraderie, and excellence. Whether you're testing yourself against the country's best, learning from new experiences, or forming friendships that will last a lifetime, these Championships are about developing our future players and people.

We are proud to see you participate in these Championships and we wish you all the very best,



Heather Garriock Interim Chief Executive Officer Football Australia



Anter Isaac Chairman Football Australia



WHERE DO THE COMMBANK EMERGING CHAMPIONSHIPS SIT IN THE TALENTED PLAYER PATHWAY AND AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL ECOSYSTEM?

The CommBank Emerging Socceroos and CommBank Emerging Matildas Championships represent the natural intersection where the Australian football development system meets the start of the National Team pathway.

2025 sees an exciting injection of National Team and Football Australia focus to transform and elevate the status and importance of the national youth championships with renewed emphasis on:

- Player identification from current national team coaches
- All matches filmed and coded for national team selection
- Physical player testing to assist with national team player profiling
- Athlete development workshops
- International opposition

This is the entry door to a players green and gold journey – with the added incentive of annual U17 Asian Cups / World Cups.

The first steps in a player's international football career.

Why are the CommBank Emerging Socceroos and CommBank Emerging Matildas Championships so important for National Teams?

- Identify talented young players for Australia's National Teams
- Undertake physical player testing to form a baseline for player profiling that continues throughout a players national team journey and shows us who can do what to inform selection decisions
- Establish full match and individual match clips to assist with national team selection now and into the future
- Establish monitoring lists for boys and girls in the U15 and U16 age groups
- Give every talented player a chance
- Form a crucial base for identifying, monitoring and developing players for annual U17 Asian Cup and U17 World Cups – boys and girls!





NATIONAL TECHNICAL IDENTITY





EMBEDDING A DISTINCTLY AUSTRALIAN BRAND OF FOOTBALL

'A philosophy which embodies an aggressive, proactive style of play where high pressing in non-possession is followed by ball-recovery, skilled possession and rapid penetration through the lines. It means a brand that is uniquely ours, based on fundamental principles: forthright and skilled, adventurous and intelligent, ruthless and accountable – with the ball, and without.

Head coaches of our National Teams will aim to coach essential player behaviors, and expected outcomes and responsibilities, and will deliver a progressive approach to skill development, transitioning from technical mastery to tactical acumen. Our approach towards high performance will aim to be enjoyable, positive, well-planned, player-centered and individual-specific.'





HIGH PERFORMANCE TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

Current and future Junior National Team players are expected to have the knowledge and ability to carry out their specific roles and tasks in attack and defense (both in and out of possession).

Player techniques, movements and behaviours should be automated through high intensity training and match repetition. These include:

- In depth understanding of team tactics and formations and structures, this includes both in and out of possession.
- Winning Mentality Australian Brand of Football
- Facing forward when receiving the ball towards your attacking goal
- Using the inside of your feet where possible to control and receive the ball
- Keep the ball moving, out of tackling range from your opponent
- Controlled running speed with the ball and minimising out of control behaviors
- Getting level and outside of your opponent to receive the ball, in particular within attacking areas

- When the player on the ball has the opportunity to play forward, make forward runs to get in behind your opponent and defensive lines
- Movement and forward runs into the penalty box, minimum of (3) players in the attacking box when a ball is played into the area
- Positive communication amongst teammates
- Timing of when to apply pressure individually/Team and in defensive structures to win back the ball
- Positional responsibility with and without the ball
- Game presence and ability to affect the outcome of the match
- Confidence to attack lvl in the front third of the pitch and attacking areas
- Delivering dangerous balls into the penalty area creating goal scoring opportunities
- Correct decision making under high pressure and high physical loads







STYLE OF TEAM & UNIT PLAY

IN POSSESSION

OUT OF POSSESSION

Goalkeeper

- Proactive in positioning and communication to support team possession.
- Can be both calm and composed and urgent under pressure with the ball at feet.
- Can break lines with a variety of throws and passes.
- Desperation to protect the goal, makes saves.
- Deals with crosses and balls beyond the back line with effective positioning, decision making and technique.
- Has success in 1 v1 situations using a range of techniques.

Defensive Third

- Brave to play under pressure and through pressure and aware of attracting pressure.
- Aware of timing to move and body shape to receive the ball to break first defensive line.
- Variety of playing to the free space; through, around and over from defensive third.
- Desire to protect goal and get behind the ball.
- Denying and dealing with crosses and clearing the ball outside of danger zone.
- Connected to win the second phase and start an attack.

Midfield Third

- Ability to find a player who can face forward and play forward.
- Movement off the ball to receive beyond a defender – create overload into F3.
- Variety of passing types to penetrate the defensive line.
- Connected and in control of the pressure forcing opposition backwards or to the sides.
- Horizontal spaces small to deny central combinations.
- Anticipation to win the ball and start an attack.

Attacking Third

- Willingness to attack in lv1 situations and create an opportunity in and around the box.
- Instinct to take opportunity to shoot on goal.
- Numbers in box to finish and keep the ball in the danger area.
- High controlled pressure and vertically connected forcing opposition into desired areas.
- Awareness of cues to join the press collectively and win the ball to attack.
- Balanced proactive backline and ability to judge flight and head the ball if opposition goes long.



INDIVIDUAL PLAYER BEHAVIOURS

Goalkeepers

- Consistent handling when dealing with shots at and around the goalkeeper.
- Makes overhead saves using a combination of athleticism and physical size.
- Can distribute to both break lines and build though controlled team possession.
- Communication and connection with the team at all times.

Defensive Players

- Driving with the ball and executing passes through pressure to launch the attack.
- Passing range short, medium and long.
- Footwork and body shape to deal with direct long balls.
- Leadership in terms of effective communication and organisation

Midfield Players

- Defensive midfield protection when out of possession and readiness to intercept and launch an attack.
- Passing range to include medium passes through, around and over.
- Body shape and awareness to be able to play first time passes.
- Transition at speed effort to get into the box and back to protect defensive box.

Attacking Players

- Positive in 1v1 situations and dribble/attack space behind.
- · Final pass/cross detail to create greater opportunities.
- Final shot composure and accuracy.
- · Front third defensive pressure and connection with their team when out of possession.

Mental Attributes

- Awareness and courage to have confidence in self
- Perform under pressure – embrace the challenge
- Focused and connected to the game always
- Brave in possession Adaptable – Unpredictable
- Resilience to deal with challenging situations













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INDIVIDUAL PLAYER BEHAVIOURS

Goalkeepers

- Shot stopping
- Clear communication and organisational skills for defensive block
- Ability to organise defence in set pieces (zonal, man-marking etc)
- Excellent distribution, with both feet and hands
- Body positioning and anticipation
- Demonstrated ability to judge the flight of the ball on crosses and through balls

Defensive Players

- Composure on the ball and the ability to play through the 6's or higher
- · Positioning and spatial awareness
- Dominating and taking control of one-on-one situations
- · Defending the penalty box with purpose
- Winning aerial duels and retaining possession, "winning the ball to us"
- Clear communication and organising players within the defensive block

- Defending ball side of the opposing player to anticipate interceptions
- Recognising when to press or when to drop, provide cover
- Acceleration and recovery speed with urgency
- Display organisational skills within defensive set piece moments
- Demonstrated ability to judge the flight of the ball on long balls and crosses
- Desire to dominate aerial duels in attacking set pieces

Midfield Players

- Ability to play out of tight spaces whilst under pressure
- Constantly looking for the ball to contribute in build up
- Constantly looking to play forward and break the lines
- Ability to play penetrating passes and exploit opposition's defensive block
- Ability to scan before receiving and demonstrate environmental awareness

- Desire to get into the box and "Hot Zone" areas in attack
- Win tackles and retain possession
- Defending ball side of the opposing player to anticipate interceptions
- Rapid transition from attack to defence and vice versa

Attacking Players

- · Score goals
- Confidence in one-on-one situations and mindset to "beat the defender"
- Desire to win aerial duels and compete in the air, particularly in front third set pieces
- Movement off the ball and positional awareness in build up
- Desire to get into "Hot Zone" areas in front of, or "ball side" of defenders
- Ability to retain possession and link up in the attack





HISTORIC PLAYER PROFILES







Player Profile

Cameron Devlin

Position

Midfielder

Current Club

Heart of Midlothian FC (Scotland)

National Team

Socceroos (Australia)

Background

Cameron Devlin represented New South Wales at the National Youth Championships (NYC) during his junior years. Known for his relentless work rate and combative style, Devlin stood out in the NYC as a player with maturity beyond his age.

Career Progression

After playing in the A-League for Sydney FC and Wellington Phoenix FC, Devlin moved to the Scottish Premiership with Hearts FC. His NYC performances laid the foundation for selection into youth National Teams and development squads. He made his senior Socceroos debut in 2022 and has since become a reliable midfield presence.

Why NYC Mattered

The NYC gave Devlin early exposure to national selectors and A-League recruiters. Competing against the top talent in the country under high-pressure conditions sharpened his decision-making and resilience—traits that now define his professional game.





FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA'S COACHING GUIDELINES STARTING XI

Coaching is about more than just trying to get players to get a result in a match.

Coaching is about developing and inspiring people to be the very best versions of themselves on and off the pitch and to come together as a team to achieve something more than they could do by themselves. Coaching Guidelines Starting 11 below are designed to remind coaches of what is important:

1. The Player Is at the Centre

- Every decision should be made in the interest of the player's holistic development.
- Focus on the individual needs of each player.
- Prioritise learning and enjoyment over results.

2. Coach with Enthusiasm, Joy and Passion

- Passion motivates players bring energy and joy to every session.
- Be emotionally engaged and enthusiastic.
- Create a positive and motivating atmosphere.

3. Be a Role Model - On and Off the Pitch

- Coaches must embody the values they expect from their players.
- Demonstrate respect, fairness, discipline, and integrity.
- Be reliable and consistent in your behaviour.

4. Encourage Instead of Criticise

- Constructive feedback builds confidence and promotes learning.
- · Focus on strengths and solutions.
- Use positive reinforcement to develop players.

5. Create a Safe, Positive Learning Environment

- Learning happens best in a safe, supportive, and challenging space.
- Allow mistakes as part of the learning process.
- · Encourage curiosity and creativity.

6. Promote a Sense of Belonging

- Football is a team game develop social and cooperative skills.
- · Foster inclusion, trust, and shared goals.
- Encourage communication and mutual support.



7. Adapt to the Players Ability, Age and Stage

- Training should match the player's age, ability, and development stage.
- Modify intensity, complexity, and expectations accordingly.
- Use age-appropriate methods and language.

8. Provide Clear Achievable Individual Goals

- Clarity helps players stay focused and measure progress.
- Define realistic, meaningful individual goals.
- Align session content with long-term development objectives.

9. Foster Self-directed Individuals

- Encourage players to take initiative and make decisions
- Give agency and autonomy to the players
- Pass on responsibilities to players where there is competence

10. Plan and Reflect

- Great coaching requires preparation and constant self-improvement.
- Use planning tools (session plans, season plans).
- Reflect after each session to continuously improve.

11. Be a Lifelong Learner

- Coaching is a lifelong learning process.
- Stay open to new methods, technology, and perspectives.
- Engage in formal and informal learning regularly.





AUSTRALIAN REFEREE IDENTITY

The "Australian Way"

- A 'fair & open' attitude a commitment to fairness and equality.
- Relatable & approachable to build strong connections with players.
- Flexible & understanding having a strong understanding of football and what football expects.
- Calm & composed We respond.
 We consider. We are deliberate.
 We don't react.

Part of the Football Fabric

- Valued and integral to the game.
- Great referees read the game like great players do - this awareness builds respect and trust within the greater football community.
- Part of a wider community through a shared love of the game.

The Match Conductor

- Orchestrates the flow of the game understands what the match needs in each moment—calm, energy, control, or restraint.
- Our decisions shape the rhythm and feel of the match - we provide space for creative, attacking, entertaining football.
- Manage the game with understanding and awareness - manage where we can be flexible; uphold the standard where we set our limit.

Why Not Referee? Continue Your Football Journey

Think playing is the only pathway to the top? Think again.

Refereeing is your chance to stay on the pitch, deepen your understanding of the game, and take your football journey to the next level — all while playing a crucial role in every match.

Whether you're a player, coach, or passionate supporter, refereeing offers a unique perspective and the opportunity to:

- Sharpen your knowledge of the game
- · Stay involved at an elite level
- Develop leadership, confidence, and communication skills
- Progress through local, state, and national ranks — and beyond
- Many of today's top officials started just like you — with a love of football and a desire to stay in the game.

Why not take the next step? Why not referee?

Start your journey today.
Visit learn.footballaustralia.com.au
to find out how.

Referee.

Understand the game.
Reach the top.





DIGITAL RESOURCE HUB





DIGITAL RESOURCE HUB

The Digital Resource Hub has been designed to support your experience at the 2025 CommBank Emerging Championships and assist you on the pathway towards representing Australia as a future Socceroo, Matilda, Coach or Referee.

The workshops and resources have been carefully selected by Football Australia to support you in your personal development journey well beyond the final whistle. You are encouraged to watch and explore all the content before and after the tournament to

ensure you make the most of this important moment in your green and gold career.

The Digital Resource Hub can be accessed using the below login details.



Username FC2025

Password

EC2025!





Football.
United.

From grassroots to the world stage, we're all in.





EVENT PROGRAMS





COMMBANK EMERGING SOCCEROOS CHAMPIONSHIPSHOME OF THE MATILDAS

	TOURNAMENT	WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS
Sat 5 July MD-1		 Sport Integrity Australia Activation Player Performance Testing Perform + Workshops Referee Seminar Goalkeeper Workshop Pre-Tournament Meeting
Sun 6 July MD1	Opening Ceremony 9.30am • First KO - 11:00am • Last KO - 3:30pm	 Community Coach Education Workshop Parent Workshop: Sideline Champions Sport Integrity Australia Activation
Mon 7 July MD2	First KO - 10:00amLast KO - 2:30pm	Referee Education Workshop Athlete Nutrition Workshop
Tue 8 July MD3	First KO - 10:00amLast KO - 2:30pm	
Wed 9 July MD4	First KO - 10:00amLast KO - 3:00pm	Multicultural & CALD Community Mini Tournament/ Youth Clinic MF CEO Workshop
Thu 10 July MD5	Placement Matches Semi Finals First KO - 10:00am Last KO - 6:00pm	 Green Football Day Multicultural Community Engagement Club Changer Workshop MF CEO Workshop Coles MiniRoos Tournament
Fri 11 July MD6	Placement Finals Championship Finals First KO - 8:20am Last KO - 12:10pm Closing Ceremony 2pm	Coles MiniRoos Mascots & Half Time Heroes FDC Meeting



COMMBANK EMERGING MATILDAS CHAMPIONSHIPSVALENTINE SPORTS PARK

	TOURNAMENT	WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS
Mon 14 July MD-1 Tue 15 July	Opening Ceremony 9.30am	Sport Integrity Australia Activation Player Performance Testing Perform+ Workshops Referee Seminar Goalkeeper Workshop Pre-Tournament Meeting Sport Integrity Australia Activation
MD1	First KO - 11:00amLast KO - 6:30pm	Parent Workshop: Sideline Champions
Wed 16 July MD2	First KO - 10:00amLast KO - 2:30pm	Athlete Nutrition Workshop: Strong. Fast. Fed.
Thu 17 July MD3	 First KO - 8:30am Last KO - 5:30pm Football NSW Sapphire Cup 7:00pm 	Multicultural Community Engagement Coach Education Manager Workshop
Fri 18 July MD4	First KO - 9:00amLast KO - 7:00pm	Green Football Day Multicultural Community Engagement Coach Education Manager Workshop Club Changer Workshop Coles MiniRoos Tournament
Sat 19 July MD5	Placement Matches Semi Finals First KO - 9:00am Last KO - 7:00pm	Community Coach Education Workshop
Sun 20 July MD6	Placement Finals Championship Finals First KO - 8:20am Last KO - 11:40am Closing Ceremony 1.30pm	Coles MiniRoos Mascots & Half Time Heroes



GREEN FOOTBALL DAY

COMMBANK
EMERGING SOCCEROOS
CHAMPIONSHIPS

10 JULY

COMMBANK
EMERGING MATILDAS
CHAMPIONSHIPS

18 JULY

Join Football Stars in saving kit from landfill and support Green Football Day at the CommBank Emerging Championships.

Earlier this year the Great Save was executed in Australia and New Zealand through a series of collaborative efforts involving the A-League, clubs, players, and sustainability partners KitAid Australia, The Salvation Army and Unwanted FC.

"Within Australia each year, more than 200,000 tonnes of textiles go to landfill each year, which could be otherwise repurposed, recycled or reworn," Sarah Oakley, Salvos Acting Senior Manager – Circular Economy, said.





Donate Football Gear

For those who want to give back on Green Football Day you can contribute by donating your own **pre-loved football jerseys**, **shorts, boots and gloves** to Salvos Stores bins on site, ensuring more football lovers can enjoy quality merchandise while supporting a good cause!



Find out other ways to support Green Football Day HERE



