



# MVSC Player Development & Movement Policy

## Introduction

The Modbury Vista Soccer Club values the participation and development of all players. We believe all players should be given equal opportunity to explore and develop their football careers in a safe and friendly environment. All of our player development programs are designed in line with the FFA National Coaching Curriculum. This ensures that all of our programs are age and ability appropriate and follow world's best practice. Our junior focus is development over winning. The coaching and administration staff of the Modbury Vista Soccer Club adheres to the club policies. Coaches at MVSC are accredited and are required to have a national police clearance certificate.

## Key expectations and differences by age group

### U6 – U9 Age Group

- > Coach accreditation – FFA Grassroots Football Certificate as a minimum standard
- > Coaching model – Discovery phase model sessions
- > Enjoyment and fun
- > Teamwork and friendship
- > Learning club values
- > Listening to instructions
- > Learning about the game
- > Playing formats include:

Mini Roos (FFSA)		EDJSA	
Age Group	Playing Format	Age Group	Playing Format
U6 – U7	4 v 4	U6 – U8	8 v 8
U8 – U9	7 v 7	U9	11 v 11

### U10 – U13 Age Group

- > Coach accreditation – FFA Skill Acquisition Football Certificate as a minimum standard
- > Coaching model – Skill acquisition phase model sessions
- > Structured approach to training.
- > Learning the core football skills (first touch; running with the ball; 1 v 1; striking the ball)
- > Theme based sessions
- > Enjoyment and fun
- > Development over winning
- > Training and playing different positions
- > Learning club values
- > Listening to instructions
- > Learning about the game
- > Playing formats include (introduction to the 1-4-3-3 playing formation):

Mini Roos / FFSA Juniors		EDJSA	
Age Group	Playing Format	Age Group	Playing Format
U10 – U11(Mini Roos)	9 v 9	U10 – U13	11 v 11
U12 – U13 (FFSA Juniors)	11 v 11		



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## U14 – U17 Age Group

- > Coach accreditation – FFA Game Training Football Certificate as a minimum standard with preference to obtain FFA Youth C Licence
- > Coaching model – Game training phase model sessions
- > Theme based sessions
- > Learning the ‘main moments’ of the game
- > Learning team tasks
- > Learning player tasks based on the national curriculum
- > Development over winning
- > Enjoyment and fun
- > Practicing club values
- > Beginning of preparation for senior football
- > Introduction to match based rotations
- > Playing format for this age group is 11 v 11 focusing on the 1-4-3-3 playing formation:

FFSA Juniors		EDJSA	
Age Group	Playing Format	Age Group	Playing Format
U14 – U17	11 v 11	U14 – U17	11 v 11

## Senior football

- > Coach accreditation – FFA Game Training Football Certificate as a minimum standard with preference to obtain FFA Senior C Licence or higher
- > Coaching model – performance phase model sessions
- > Theme based sessions solving ‘football’ problems
- > Continuous development with a focus on winning
- > Performance based
- > Practicing club values
- > Playing format for this age group is 11 v 11 focusing on the 1-4-3-3 playing formation (or an alternate playing formation determined by the senior coaches)

## Attendance to trainings

It is expected that all players of Modbury Vista Soccer Club attend every regular training session. Player development is best achieved within a team context. Non-attendance to training is detrimental to the development of other players within the team and affects the session planning done by the coaches. If a player cannot attend training he/she must inform the coach as soon as possible and provide a reason for non-attendance.

## Growing within a team

We believe at Modbury Vista that the best way for players to develop is to settle and grow within a team. When a player is offered a position at Modbury Vista Soccer Club within their age group, it is expected that the player will remain with his/her team within that age group for the duration of the season (except where there is movement between squads as required). It is expected that the focus of the player with the support of their parent/s is to work hard at improving their football technique and practice the Modbury Vista club values, improving as a person. There may be opportunities through the season where players are invited to train with other teams or invited to extension trainings. This will be at the discretion of the technical director/s in consultation with the coaches.

## Player movement between squads

Whilst there is a preference for players to develop and grow within a team, players for Modbury Vista are players for the “club” and there may be times due to injuries, sickness or team requirements where a coach of another team requires a



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player to fill in. Where possible the preference is for a player to be brought in from another team within the same age group. Where a coach requires a player, the coach shall request a player by contacting the technical director/s. The technical director/s shall liaise with the appropriate coaches to identify and select an appropriate player. If the player for any reason is unable or unwilling to fill in for that team, the technical director/s will support the player in his/her decision remembering that our focus is development over winning for junior players. Where there is a difference of opinion between coaches on the player being asked to move between squads, the final decision will rest with the technical director/s.

There may be times due to form that player movement is required between teams (e.g. a player in the U18's may be required to return to a junior team (where age eligible) to get more game time or a JSL player has earned the right to play for the JPL team). These decisions will be determined between the technical director/s and coaches of the respective teams affected. If the player for any reason is unable or unwilling to fill in for that team, the technical director/s will support the player in his/her decision. Where a player is moved based on form, the player and parents will be provided with feedback and reasons for the decision.

## **Junior selection trials**

Modbury Vista Soccer Club prefers players to trial for teams in the age group that they are eligible for based on their date of birth. For example in the year 2020 players born in 2008 would be required to trial for U12 teams. There may be circumstances where at the discretion of the junior technical director players will be allowed to trial for teams older than their age group where it is in the best interests of the player and for Modbury Vista Soccer Club.

## **Talent identification and preparation for senior football**

Throughout the season, the senior coaching staff may identify and invite talented/elite junior players from any junior age group or team within Modbury Vista Soccer Club to join the senior squad for trainings and or games. The players identified may be asked to join the senior squad on a temporary basis such as for one week or one month or they could be asked to remain with the squad permanently for the duration of the season. Where a junior player is asked to permanently move from their regular squad to join the senior squad, a discussion with the parent/s of the player, the junior technical director and the senior coach shall take place to ensure the player feels comfortable in moving. If the player and parent/s feel comfortable with the move, no further discussions will take place. Where there is uncertainty the junior technical director and senior coach will work with the player and parent/s to ensure an optimal outcome for all parties is reached.



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## What is the Discovery Phase (U6 – U9)? – Extract from FFA Curriculum

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### The Discovery Phase (U/6-U/9)

Regarding the first Building Block, the points made earlier concerning the development of excellence don't really apply yet and fortunately things are still quite simple.

What are the characteristics of children in this age bracket?

- They are still 'clumsy' (lack fine motor skills), because they are still developing their coordination
- They have a short span of attention and are quickly and easily distracted
- They are 'self-centred' and not yet able to really work together (so do not ask them to perform team play, it is impossible for them!)
- They play or participate for fun with short bursts of energy and enthusiasm
- They are unable to handle a lot of information (instructions; feedback)

What does this mean for training sessions with children this age?

### **Just let them play a lot of varied fun football related games!**

In the 'good old days' as a kid you learned to play football in the street or the park. There were no coaches involved who made you run laps or do stretches and push-ups. When you were with just one mate you played a 1 v 1 game, when there were 8 of you, you played 4 v 4. There were no referees either, you made your own rules and every problem got solved. You just played, every free minute of the day. Funny as it may seem, this was (and still is) the best possible way to develop a basic skill level, understanding and passion for football.

In third World countries the old saying "the game is the teacher" still applies and is one of the reasons why we find so many creative and technically good players from Africa and South America in the European top leagues. But in our developed society children do not play sports in the streets

and parks that much anymore. They watch television, surf the internet, play computer games, chat on Twitter and Facebook as well as having to study.

As parents we now send our children to a club or academy to learn to play football and, despite all good intentions, here we make the mistake of 'coaching' children this age.

The first and most important step when 'coaching' the youngest kids is to take the word 'coach' out of your mind. Your most important job is to recreate that street football environment, be an organiser of fun football-related practices and..... let them play! This approach, where they can 'discover' how the game works in a natural way, is the right one for the Discovery Phase.

**You'll find the  
Discovery Phase  
Model Sessions on  
page 85.**





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## What is the Skill Acquisition Phase (U10 – U13)? – Extract from FFA Curriculum

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### The Skill Acquisition Phase (U/10-U/13)

The characteristics of children this age are:

- They are highly motivated and enthusiastic
- They are competitive, like challenges and want to show they're the best
- They are well balanced and coordinated
- They are very adaptive to learning motor skills
- Although still self-centred, they start to learn how to work together
- They are sensitive to criticism and failure (praise is important)
- They are physically and mentally ready for a more structured approach to training

As mentioned above, in the period before entering the growth spurt that goes hand in hand with puberty, children are well balanced and coordinated. This makes them very adaptive to developing motor skills (techniques) especially since this is one of the brain's key development periods.

The Japanese call this phase of 'turbo charged' technical development the 'Golden Age of motor learning'. In no other development phase in life will motor learning happen faster than here. As a logical consequence of the above, it makes sense that we make optimal use of this period to lay a sustainable technical foundation.

#### **TECHNICAL SKILLS MUST BE DEVELOPED NOW**

(if we miss out here it will hamper us for the rest of our playing career).

Hopefully it now makes perfect sense why we call this phase the 'Skill Acquisition Phase'. The focus during this period is on the development of the 'functional game skills'.

These are the technical skills you need to perform effectively during a game.

The word 'functional' emphasises the difference to 'un-functional' tricks, which may be fun to see and do but useless during the game.

### The 4 Core Skills:

The FFA Skill Acquisition training program focuses upon developing four core skills when in possession of the ball.

#### **1. Striking the ball**

This includes all forms of striking the ball such as short/long passing; shooting and crossing

#### **2. First touch**

Controlling the ball with all allowed body parts

#### **3. 1 v 1**

All moves, feints and accelerations to get past and away from an opponent

#### **4. Running with the ball**

At speed (with a lot of space) or 'dribbling' (in tight areas), this includes techniques for protecting the ball and changing direction.

These four core skills cover 95% of the actions of any outfield player when in possession of the ball during a game of football. The other 5% consists of actions such as heading and throw-ins.



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## What is the Game Training Phase (U14 – U17)? – Extract from FFA Curriculum

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### The Game Training Phase (U/14-U/17)

The most important aspect of this age bracket is the fact that these players are in (or entering into) the **puberty** phase which is a phase of radical mental and physical changes.

Huge changes in the hormonal system cause confusion while the physical changes can also unsettle the youngsters. Physically they may sometimes suddenly look like adults but mentally they often are still children, something that may also confuse coaches. Another aspect for coaches to consider is that in general, girls enter the puberty phase slightly earlier than boys.

The main **mental** characteristics of the puberty phase are:

- Sudden mood changes
- Resistance against authority
- Impulsiveness (first acting then thinking)
- Accelerated intellectual development
- Identity search which leads to a desire to be part of a group

The main physical characteristic of the puberty phase is a sudden acceleration in growth. One of the consequences of this **growth spurt** may be a temporary decrease of coordination and strength.

Because suddenly the bones start growing fast and the muscles and ligaments as well as the nervous system need time to adjust to the new proportions, players may look 'clumsy'. Players are also prone to overuse **injuries** like Osgood-Schlatter disease during this phase.

It goes without saying that it's of the ultimate importance that coaches working with players this age have knowledge and understanding of all these aspects to be able to guide youngsters through this critical development phase in a well-considered way.

While during the puberty phase players' physical and technical development temporarily stagnates or loses ground, their intellectual development accelerates as does their understanding of and appreciation for teamwork. This makes the Game Training Phase exceptionally suited for developing tactical awareness and insight.

Whereas the purpose of the Skill Acquisition Phase is to **acquire** the core skills, the Game Training Phase is about learning how to **apply** them in a functional way. In the Game Training Phase the focus shifts towards learning to play as a team and developing an understanding of the team tasks during the main moments (attacking; defending; transitioning), as well as the specific tasks that go with the individual team positions.

To be able to properly develop the team tasks and the individual player tasks we need the context of a playing formation. After all, team tasks and player tasks may differ depending on the playing formation.

### The 1-4-3-3 formation

**It is important to realise that we did not just take 1-4-3-3 as a starting point! Unfortunately this has been and continues to be widely misunderstood and far too much attention has been devoted to discussions about playing formations.**

Of course there are many successful styles and formations in football but FFA considers 1-4-3-3 the most appropriate formation to develop an understanding of **team play** in young players.

Our opinion is supported by another very interesting quote from the Chris Sulley research on Europe's most successful academies:

**“There was a clear emphasis on a possession based philosophy and most employed a 4-3-3 model with an explicit attempt to pass the ball through the units. There was a tangible difference in the type of work delivered to the players from what is typically delivered at EPL academies. Early age players typically participated in random and variable practices that involved decision-making tactically. The consistent Talent ID criteria was centred around the player's ability to handle the ball, make good decisions and speed, as opposed to the notions of power, size and strength that still dominate the English youth system”.**





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## What is the Performance Phase (17 years and older)? – Extract from FFA Curriculum

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### The Performance Phase (17 years and older)

The Performance Phase starts when the puberty phase has ended and the growth spurt has come to a standstill. Generally this happens around the age of 16, but differs from individual to individual and, as stated before, girls generally reach this point earlier than boys.

Girls and boys diverge in their physical abilities as they enter puberty and move through adolescence. Higher levels of the hormone **Testosterone** allow boys to add muscle and even without much effort on their part, get stronger. In turn, they become less flexible.

Girls, as their levels of the hormone **Estrogen** increase, tend to add fat rather than muscle. They must train rigorously to get significantly stronger. Estrogen also makes girls' ligaments lax which makes them more flexible than boys but also more prone to certain injuries such as ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) rupture.

**Core Stability** strength training is therefore an important training element in the Performance phase, especially for girls. However, it's unnecessary to do that in a gym since Core Stability programs can perfectly be done on the pitch as part of the warm-up. This way we avoid losing valuable **football** training time.

At this stage of development, the young adults are ready for high performance training. Coordination is back, the mental balance has been restored and the energy systems of the body are now effectively 'trainable'.

This is the moment that **football-specific conditioning** can start. At an earlier age so-called 'conditioning' is mostly pointless and generally a waste of time (or even dangerous if conducted inexpertly).

This is also the moment that winning really starts to matter. That's why the purpose of the Performance Phase is:

#### **Learning how to perform/win as a team**

So in the Performance Phase, the coach is very much focused on getting results. Training, therefore, is centred on fixing specific problems with the team's tactical performance.

**You'll find the Performance Phase Model Sessions on page 267.**