



AFL WOMEN & GIRLS COMMUNITY CLUB BEST PRACTICE



The following document outlines the best practice for the involvement of women and girls in community football clubs. This document only addresses areas not referenced in the AFL's National Community Football Policy Handbook. For all other matters, please refer to the [handbook](#).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY

Leagues and clubs should champion and support the progress of women and girls' community football, guided by the following four principles.



OPPORTUNITY

Women & girls can fully participate as players, coaches, umpires, volunteers & administrators.



VISIBILITY

Women & girls are respected as leaders and role models.



ACCESS

Women & girls have safe and fair access to facilities and resources.



INVESTMENT

There is fair and equitable investment in women & girls' football.

Clubs are encouraged to become a signatory of the **Women & Girls Community Football Charter** to show their commitment in working towards making community football environments welcome, safe and inclusive for Women & Girls. [Click here for more information](#)

WOMEN & GIRLS DIRECTOR/COORDINATOR

Clubs are encouraged to appoint a Women & Girls Director/Coordinator who can act as a conduit to the club committee and represent the voice of women and girls in the club.

[Click here](#) to access a role description template.

It is also recommended that clubs should strive to have gender balance on their broader committee.

COACHING WOMEN & GIRLS TEAMS

Clubs should assign or appoint the most suitable coaches across all teams (regardless of gender). It is important that all coaches are appropriately trained and accredited to support the development of their players. For further information around coaching women and girls, coaches are encouraged to utilise the [AFL's Coaching Women & Girls Toolkit](#).

Club coaches can also access the [AFL's Female Performance & Health Initiatives](#) modules that are designed to improve knowledge on performance and health specific to female athletes. These modules are relevant for players, coaches, team managers and trainers/medical staff.



WOMEN IN COACHING

All players need positive role models, of all genders. Clubs are encouraged to also actively seek out and encourage women to take on coaching roles. Women who coach should not be limited to coaching only women and girls' teams. The AFL offers a range of programs and resources to support women in coaching, [click here](#) for more information.

PLAYER SAFETY & PREVENTING INJURIES

The AFL Prep to Play resources have been designed to ensure women and girls are best prepared for training and match-day. The resources have been formulated by experts in coaching and sports medicine, to support coaches of women and girls at all levels.

Players of all ages should perform dynamic warm-up activities (i.e. progression of movement skills) such as jumping, landing, deceleration and changing direction. For younger age groups, coaches should incorporate these activities into games with a focus on fun and enjoyment.

[Click here](#) to access the resources.

FACILITIES & ACCESS

It is important that clubs ensure women and girls' have equal opportunity to access preferred ovals and timeslots for training, have appropriate access to change facilities, and that players and spectators have appropriate access to club facilities and amenities on match day, regardless of whether there are women/girls, men/boys matches, or both.

Clubs could survey their participants to find preferred training time and work together to find an allocation that works for everyone in the club.

Everyone has the right to fully participate and reach their full potential. Without this approach women and girls will continue to face more barriers to participating in the game than men and boys. This creates an unequal playing field, and by creating both perceived and actual barriers to fair participation, Australian Football will never realise the full potential of the game for women and girls.

Clubs are also encouraged to work towards ensuring their facilities are gender-neutral and appropriately cater to all participants, as outlined in the AFL's Preferred Facility Guidelines [here](#).

UNIFORMS

It is recommended that Leagues and clubs remove any mandates for white shorts, instead allowing women's and girls' teams to wear alternate-coloured shorts as away shorts where required.

The traditional white away shorts can make women and girls feel uncomfortable.

"Having navy or black would be nice as it would make me less self-conscious when on my period"

Clubs should also provide women's and girls' teams with appropriate uniforms, designed for women and girls, not hand-me-down uniforms from men's teams, or unisex uniforms.

Research has identified that some girls (14-16yrs) do not want to participate in physical activity because they feel embarrassed or feel they are putting their bodies on display, and they do not meet society's beauty standards (Whitehead and Biddle, 2008).

Another study identified girls aged 14 years have 27% less confidence than boys the same age (YPulse, 2018). Girls need sport uniforms that make them feel comfortable, confident, and ready to play sport and physical activity.

[Click here](#) to access the Change Our Game research on the importance of uniforms for girls in sport.

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

In 2021, the AFL conducted research around the drivers of acquisition and retention for girls in Community Football. A summary of the research can be found here [Girls Community Football Acquisition & Retention Research Summary \(afl.com.au\)](#).

It is recommended that clubs review the research summary to help inform their actions in both establishing new teams, as well as supporting existing teams.

Other tips and resources for clubs on recruitment are available here [Resource Centre - Play AFL](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

- » [AFL Community Football Gender Diversity Policy](#)
- » [AFL Community Football Policy Handbook](#)
- » [AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines](#)
- » [AFL Women's Vision](#)
- » [AFL Women & Girls Game Development Action Plan](#)
- » [AFL Women & Girls Community Football Charter](#)
- » [Concussion Management Resources](#)
- » [Girls Community Football Acquisition & Retention Research](#)
- » [AFL Junior Rules](#)

