Australian Football League

# Joint Venture & Club Alliance Guidelines

AFL Sydney Juniors

22/09/2026

# ***JOINT VENTURE GUIDELINES***

**Joint Venture's Overview and Purpose**

A Joint Venture ('JV') arrangement is when players from different Clubs come together as equals to form a team to maximise participation. A JV has multiple benefits to ensure that players remain in the game and can return to their original Clubs following the completion of the JV arrangement with the aspiration of clubs fielding standalone teams in future seasons.

JV's are for the use of clubs for the strict requirement of ensuring maximum participation for players who would otherwise be unlikely to play a game of football on a given matchday.

**Joint Venture Requirements:**

- Joint Ventures will be approved for a one-year period only, however, can be applied for in successive seasons subject to approval by the League
- Clubs cannot form JV teams (graded JVs) across multiple divisions within the same age group
- Clubs who have sufficient registered numbers to field standalone teams, should do so
- Where clubs have standalone teams and are also engaged in a JV at the same grade, the JV is to be entered into a lower division for which either club competes in the given age group
- Academy rules must be adhered too in all JV teams.
- JVs are for the strict purpose of maximising participation of players who would otherwise have missed opportunities to play matches

*Guidance note: Examples of Joint Ventures adhering to the requirements;*

- *Team A has too many players for one team, Team B has too few players for one team. In this scenario Team A forms one stand alone team at the most appropriate division, a Joint Venture is then formed between Team A remaining players and Teams B available players. The Joint Venture team shall be entered into a competition grade at the same or a lower division.*
- *Team A has too few players for one team, Team B has too few players for one team. In this scenario players combined from Team A and Team B to form one JV team at the most appropriate division*

**JV Administration**

Joint Ventures support players to remain registered at their home club.

This is facilitated by:

- One of the joint venture Clubs becoming the administrative base for the JV.
- Each player registering at the players home club.
- Players not registered at the Administrative Club will request a permit to play at the JV team. Permits are granted and remain in force for one season only.
- Players participating in a Joint Venture are only eligible to particiate in other age groups or divisions at their registered Club. For clarity, players participating on permit into a JV team are not able to participate in other teams for the permit club.

# Joint Venture and Club Alliance Guidelines (2027)

**Application and Approval of Joint Ventures**

Clubs are required to submit all joint ventures for league approval.

The submission must be made via the cognito form below by no later than final team nominations.

An outcome of the JV Application will be provided to the applicable Clubs within 14 days of submission of the cognito form.

These details to be included in the submission to the league are as follows;

- Proposed JV Name
- Proposed clubs
- Purpose of the JV
- Colours / Playing Uniform arrangements
- Administrative Club
- Permitting Club/s
- Match Day "Home Ground" arrangements – Split of home matches
- Number of forecasted players per club
- Number of academy players per club

*JOINT VENTURE APPLICATION LINK*

**Joint Venture Termination Advice**

Joint Venture Termination Advice is required to formally close the JV arrangements. This is an important communication as it has implications for Player retention and transfer Rules. This will be in the form of an Email communication supported by all participating Clubs.

This should be provided at the earliest possible time to enable participants to prepare for the following season.

*Both communications should be sent to the Competitions Management Committee, who will communicate the arrangement (not detailed) to the broader Sydney Juniors community.*

**Operational Guidelines**

**Team Name**

The JV team name should be unique to that team and may take on part/s of the Names of the JV Clubs.

**Team Colours**

Clubs entering into a Joint Venture can opt to arrange a unique design or utilise either teams current designs for the duration of the season.

**Team Coaching & Management**

The roles of the Coaching and Management structure where practicable should be shared to ensure equal input from all clubs involved in the joint venture; control and decisions are made for the betterment of the team and equal player involvement and satisfaction.

Whilst there may be a need to have one head coach, this should be balanced in the selection of the assistant coach and team management.

The coach will be required to be currently accredited coach or be in the process of achieving coaching accreditation.

**Training and Playing Locations**

Training and playing locations should preferably be shared across the JV Clubs to provide an "as equal" accessibility.

Note: This is best left to the Clubs to determine, and it may come down to ground availability for either training or playing. In making this decision, it is necessary to be mindful that a partnership of equals is being formed.

**Presentation Day/Night**

The team should be recognized at all JV Club's presentation events, with the full team invited to share in each Club's experience. There may also be an opportunity to hold a night specific to the team, as well as have team members recognized at each of the participating Clubs presentation evenings/days.

**Dissolving Joint Venture**

From an administration point of view the Joint Venture is self-dissolving, Players are permitted into the JV for one year, and as their registration remains at their Club of origin, they return to that Club to continue their football pathway.

# *CLUB ALLIANCE GUIDELINES*

**Club Alliance Overview**

This Guideline is applicable when two or more Clubs join to create a team in the highest grade in which the club participates across age group/s for more than one season, subject to yearly review by the league. Unlike Joint Ventures, which are formed between two clubs in the lowest division to ensure team feasibility and maximum participation on a yearly and needs basis, Club Alliances can be formed to create a sustainable pathway within a region, or out of necessity in fielding teams.

Junior Clubs can apply to form alliances provided they meet the following criteria;

From Under 13's onwards

**a.** In the highest grade at which the clubs compete

**b.** One team per age group

**i.** Subject to 1.b

**c.** within aligned senior pathways (SFL or AFL Sydney Divisional Club), as defined in Appendix A and Appendix B.

**d.** All clubs within the applicable senior pathway have been invited to participate within the alliance.

**i.** Noting should a club opt out of alliance this shall not impact if the alliance will be approved or not.

*Guidance notes: In addition to alliances, clubs can also field joint ventures in-line with JV guidelines.*

**Club Alliance Review Process & Requirements:**

Any alliance meeting the above criteria will be reviewed by the league for approval under the following competition balance and equalisation requirements;

1. Academy Distribution Limits - Alliances teams must adhere to the Academy distribution limits (8 players for single age groups and 12 players for dual age groups).
    - If these limits are exceeded, the Alliance will only be approved if two Division One teams are established, in accordance with AFL Sydney Juniors Rule 15.6.
2. Competitive Balance - Alliance teams will only be approved provided competitive balance can be maintained across all competitions in which they participate.
3. In line with AFL Sydney Juniors Rules and applicable AFL NSW/ACT policies

*Note: If a proposed Alliance does not meet the criteria or requirements at any age group, it will not be approved for those age groups.*

**Application Process**

Clubs wishing to form a Club Alliance must submit a Joint Club Alliance Application to the Competition Management Committee ('CMC') via the prescribed Cognito form, by no later than 30th November in the season prior to the beginning of the proposed alliance.

CLUB ALLIANCE SUBMISSION LINK

This application must include all the information as outlined below as part of the submission. **Clubs will receive an outcome within 14 days of submission.**

*Please note: no new Club Alliances will be considered for the following season beyond this deadline. The Club Alliance Application will be regarded as a formal agreement between the participating clubs. Clubs cannot enter into a formal agreement without first obtaining approval from the Competition Management Committee. Additionally, clubs are not permitted to be part of multiple Club Alliances simultaneously.*

**Alliance Submission Inclusions**

**Background and Purpose**

The application must outline the rationale for the Club Alliance, addressing the following points:

- The clubs involved
- The background and objectives of the alliance
- The player needs being addressed, and the benefits provided by the pathway
- Any additional resources or benefits that justify the alliance
- The anticipated impact on neighboring clubs not involved in the arrangement
- Written confirmation that all clubs within the applicable senior pathway have been consulted and given the opportunity to participate in the alliance, with confirmation of any clubs who have opted not to participate.
- Details on how the Club Alliance promotes growth, such as improving retention, recruitment, or other advantages

**Management Details**

The Application must provide all specific management and administration details, including:

- Club Alliance Name
- Colors / Playing Uniform arrangements
- Coaching and Management Structure
- Administrative Club arrangements
- Permitting Club arrangements
- Training Arrangements
- Match Day "Home Ground" arrangements
- Presentation Day arrangements
- Other key resource sharing agreements

*Note: Refer to Club Alliance Administration & Internal Arrangements: Guide & Recommendations, for further information on administrative process*

**Alliance Team Details**

The application must provide the following information regarding specific age groups and divisions:

- The age groups proposed to be involved
- The playing numbers in each age group per Club from the previous competition season
- The projected playing numbers in each age group per Club in the upcoming season
- Projected number of teams in each age group and their projected division in the upcoming season
- The number of Academy players in each Club in the respective age groups, based on the previous competition season
- The current divisions and ladder positions of the respective teams from the previous competition season
- Any additional benefits to the Alliance

**Club Alliance Administration & Internal Arrangements: Guide & Recommendations**

The administration of a Club Alliance is to be designed to allow players the option to continue with their Club of origin through to the end of the Youth Pathway.

This is facilitated by:

- One of the Club Alliance Clubs becoming the administrative base for the Club Alliance (the Administrative Club).
- Each player registers at their Club of origin.
- Players not registered at the Administrative Club will request a permit to play at the Administrative Club. Permits are granted and remain in force for one season only.
- Permits sitting with the Administrative Club, which will allow the permitted players to play with the Club Alliance team only.
- Permitted Players not playing in other age groups or divisions of the Administrative Club, where these teams are not covered by the Club Alliance arrangements but can play in other age groups or divisions for the Club with which they are registered.

*Note: Upon request AFL Sydney Juniors can create a shared database to reduce the administrative burden on Alliance clubs.*

**Club Alliance Internal Arrangements**

The Competitions Management Committee (CMC) recognizes and accepts that Clubs will have their own preferences for their alliance arrangements. Where possible and practical (and consistent with the Joint Venture Guidelines), the CMC advocates:

**Equality**

The intent of Club Alliances is to enhance player pathways by pooling resources to create "win win" outcomes, with both Clubs benefiting from the sharing the scarce resources (players, volunteers, facilities, capital) they would otherwise be competing for. The best Club Alliance is a partnership of equals, with equal input into coaching, management, playing, training facilities, costs, and revenues.

**Club Alliance Name and Colours**

The Club Alliance name and colours ought to be unique, although they may take on part of the names/colours of the participating Clubs.

**Team Coaching & Management**

Team coaching and management should be shared to ensure equal input; control and decisions are made for the betterment of the team and equal player involvement and satisfaction.

Whilst there may be a need to have one senior coach, this should be balanced in the selection of the assistant coach and team management.

The coaches for each age group will need to be a currently accredited coach or be in the process of achieving coaching accreditation.

**Training and Playing Locations**

Training and playing locations may be challenging and it may come down to ground availability for either training or playing. Where possible, training and matches should be shared across the relevant home venues, to mitigate any travel disruption created by the alliance.

**Club Alliance Termination Advice**

A notice by way of Termination Advice is required to formally terminate and close the Club Alliance arrangements. This is an important communication as it has implications for player retention and transfer rules. This will be in the form of an Email communication supported by all participating Clubs.

This should be provided at the earliest possible time to enable participants to prepare for the following season.

As per AFL Sydney Juniors Rule 14.2, the formation of Club Alliances will only be allowed to proceed where they are in the best interests of the development of the game. Where an existing Club Alliance evolves such that, it is no longer deemed in the best interest of the development of the game, the CMC may dissolve the Club Alliance, or exclude existing teams from the Club Alliance arrangements, with an initial advice minimum of 12 months' notice. The CMC must review that decision mid-way through the initial advice notice period to ensure that the initial advice should stand.

Relevant triggers for such action may include recurrent competitive imbalances deemed detrimental to the overall competition, non-organic growth at the ongoing expense of other Clubs and not contributing positively to pathway growth as conceived. Should such concerns arise, the CMC will first attempt to work through the issues with the relevant Clubs, with Club Alliance dissolution (or team exclusion) reserved as a last resort action, given the potential pathway disruption involved.

**Appendix A - Sydney Football League Club Pathways**

| Sydney Football League Club (region) | Aligned AFL Sydney Senior Divisional Club/s | Aligned AFL Sydney Junior Club/s |
|---|---|---|
| **East Coast Eagles** (Western Sydney) | Parramatta Goannas Senior AFL Club<br>Hawkesbury Jets Senior AFL Club<br>Western Magic Senior AFL Club<br>Penrith Rams Senior AFL Club | Baulkham Hills Hawks Junior AFL Club<br>Hawkesbury Saints Junior AFL Club<br>Kellyville/Rouse Hill Magpies Junior AFL Club<br>Blue Mountains Junior AFL Club<br>Fairfield Falcons Junior AFL Club<br>Greystanes Goannas Junior AFL Club<br>Blacktown Suns Junior AFL Club<br>Emu Plains/Glenmore Park Junior AFL Club<br>Parramatta Lions Junior AFL Club<br>Penrith GIANTS Junior AFL Club |
| **Manly Warringah Wolves** (Northern Beaches) | N/A | Balgowlah Suns Junior AFL Club<br>Forrest Districts Junior AFL Club<br>Manly Bombers Junior AFL Club<br>Pittwater Tigers Junior AFL Club |
| **North Shore Bombers** (North Shore) | N/A | Lane Cove Cats Junior AFL Club<br>Mosman Swans Junior AFL Club<br>St Ives Saints Junior AFL Club<br>Willoughby Wildcats Junior AFL Club |
| **Pennant Hills Demons** (North West) | Macquarie University Senior AFL Club | Hornsby Berowra Eagles Junior AFL Club<br>North Ryde Dockers Junior AFL Club<br>Pennant Hills Demons Junior AFL Club<br>Westbrook Bulldogs Junior AFL Club |
| **South West Sydney Blues** (South-West) | Camden Cats Senior AFL Club<br>Wollondilly Knights Senior AFL Club | Camden Cats Junior AFL Club<br>Macarthur Bulldogs Junior AFL Club<br>South-West Tigers Junior AFL Club<br>Wollondilly Junior AFL Club<br>Bankstown Bullsharks Junior AFL Club<br>Ingleburn Magpies Junior AFL Club |
| **St George Dragons** (South) | Southern Power Senior AFL Club<br>Southern Dingoes Masters AFL Club | Bangor Tigers Junior AFL Club<br>Cronulla Sharks Junior AFL Club<br>Heathcote-Engadine Hawks Junior AFL Club<br>Miranda Bombers Junior AFL Club<br>Ramsgate Rams Junior AFL Club*<br>Penshurst Panthers RSL Junior AFL Club |

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|---|---|---|
| **Sydney University**<br>(City & Inner West) | Inner West Magpies Senior AFL Club<br>Balmain Tigers Senior AFL Club<br>Newtown Breakaways Senior AFL Club | Glebe Greyhounds Junior AFL Club<br>Leichhardt Cygnets Junior AFL Club<br>Newtown Swans Junior AFL Club<br>Concord Giants Junior AFL Club<br>Drummoyne Junior AFL Club<br>Inner West Magpies Junior AFL Club<br>Canada Bay Cannons Junior AFL Club |
| **UNSW Eastern Suburbs Bulldogs**<br>(East-Bayside) | Randwick City Saints Senior AFL Club | Maroubra Saints Junior AFL Club<br>Ramsgate Rams Junior AFL Club* |
| **UTS AFC Bats**<br>(East-Parkside) | N/A | Moore Park Tigers Junior AFL Club<br>East Sydney Junior AFL Club |

**Appendix B - AFL Sydney Divisional Club Pathways**

| AFL Sydney Senior Divisional Club | Aligned AFL Sydney Junior Club/s |
|---|---|
| **Balmain Tigers** | Leichhardt Cygnets Junior AFL Club<br>Glebe Greyhounds Junior AFL Club |
| **Camden Cats** | Camden Cats Junior AFL Club |
| **Hawkesbury Jets** | Hawkesbury Saints Junior AFL Club |
| **Inner West Magpies** | Concord Giants Junior AFL Club<br>Drummoyne Junior AFL Club<br>Inner West Magpies Junior AFL Club<br>Canada Bay Cannons Junior AFL Club |
| **Macquarie University** | North Ryde Dockers Junior AFL Club |
| **Newtown Breakaways** | Newtown Swans Junior AFL Club |
| **Parramatta Goannas** | Fairfield Falcons Junior AFL Club<br>Greystanes Goannas Junior AFL Club<br>Parramatta Lions Junior AFL Club |
| **Penrith Rams** | Penrith GIANTS Junior AFL Club<br>Blue Mountains Junior AFL Club<br>Emu Plains/Glenmore Park Lions Junior AFL Club |
| **Randwick City Saints** | Maroubra Saints Junior AFL Club |
| **Southern Power** | Miranda Bombers Junior AFL Club<br>Bangor Tigers Junior AFL Club<br>Heathcote-Engadine Hawks Junior AFL Club<br>Cronulla Sharks Juniors AFL Club |
| **Western Magic** | Blacktown Suns Junior AFL Club |
| **Wollondilly Knights** | Wollondilly Junior AFL Club |

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