



**FERNTREE GULLY EAGLES FOOTBALL CLUB  
TOGETHER WITH  
FERNTREE GULLY EAGLES JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB  
PRESENTS:**

**THE BENDIGO BANK & THE TWO BLUES FOUNDATION  
*Junior Pathway and Development Program:  
Transitioning players, coaches, parents and families  
From Junior Club to Senior Club***



**MARCH 2014**

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**PURPOSE**

OVERALL - To:

- Enhance the Junior/Senior Club connection;
- Build synergies between Junior and Senior Club;
- Build a culture of learning, skill development and support;
- Further enhance and strengthen the formal relationship between the *Ferntree Gully Eagles Junior Football Club* and the *Ferntree Gully Eagles Football Club*;
- Drive the Club in a direction that the Committee wants based upon Club Strategic Planning.

PART #1 - Strategic List Management Framework based on Junior Pathway Program:

- Develop a player pathway from Junior to Senior Club;
- Building a pathway infrastructure to ensure that when players leave the Junior Club they have a clear pathway to the Under 19\$ of the Senior Club;
- Introduce a Strategic senior club list management process;
- Develop an Under 17\$-19\$ Development Squad.

PART #2 . Local Player Development Policy based on a Junior Development Program:

- Develop a Junior Development Program involving all teams at the Junior Football Club based on skill development;
- Build junior player skills.

PART #3 . Junior Coach Education & Development Program:

- Develop an ongoing and consistent Coaching education program;
- The more information, education and support is provided to Junior Coaches, the more junior players can be supported;

- Outline the Club's coaching philosophy, guiding principles and coaching requirements - based on a strong education framework which stimulates the players and leads to fun

## **BACKGROUND**

*Children are our future. In fact, a song has been specially written to highlight this fact, with lyrics by Andy Abraham and sung by the late Whitney Houston. The next time you hear the song, pay special attention to the opening lines. They go like this:*

*"I believe the children are our future, Teach them well and let them lead the way, Show them all the beauty they possess inside, Give them a sense of pride to make it easier, Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be..."*

*This is a reminder that Children need adults to show their future potential. At the same time, they also can teach us a thing or two about how interesting life can be.*

Similarly, the future of the Senior Football Club is based on a player pathway from the Junior Football Club. Let us teach the children, prepare them for the journey at Senior Football level, and develop a club culture based on local community

A more formal approach to the *Development Squad* will ensure a substantial and ongoing base upon which the *Ferntree Gully Eagles* product can grow, prosper and become a substantial entity in the local community.

**This strategy is quite complex and involved. We need to ensure we develop a plan that is achievable; measurable against objectives and goals we set; and implemented in a way that is sustainable.**

### **NAMING OF THIS PROGRAM:**

*The Two Blues Foundation* has long been associated with the fostering of Junior Development at the Junior Football Club, as well as the sponsoring of Junior Player Awards over many years. (Please refer to the program description of the *Two Blues Club* for more detailed information.)

Also, the *Ferntree Gully Community Branch of the Bendigo Bank* has been a long-time supporter and sponsor of both the Junior and Senior Football Clubs.

The Committee found it most fitting to name this Program after both *The Two Blues Foundation* and *The Bendigo Bank*.

## **THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS:**

### **STRATEGIC LIST MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**

Two key strategic options are recommended for implementation to ensure that the *Ferntree Gully Eagles Football Club* nurtures and grows a sustainable and competitive edge within the Eastern Football League (EFL):

1. A Strategic List Management Framework (SLMF); and
2. A Local Player Development Policy (LPDP)

Both of these strategies complement each other; are suitable to Clubs who strive to play at the highest possible level; and pertinent to Clubs who have a strong pipeline of players coming through from the Junior section through to its senior section (ie: players transitioning from Under 17's to Under 19's).

The SLMF strategy is a logical and systematic manner of assessing the merits of all players to ensure that a vibrant, balanced and competitive playing list is consistently maintained to increase the Club's chances of achieving sustainable on field success.

An over reliance on external recruitment of talented players in order to increase the chances of on-field success also significantly increases the financial burden and risk to the Club.

The SLMF and LPDP strategies are aimed at significantly reducing financial overheads whilst at the same time position the Club better strategically for the medium to long-term.

***The LPDP Strategy:***

One of the main benefits of the LPDP is that players who transition from the Junior to the Senior sections of the Club usually do not have an expectation of receiving high match payments; often local players develop and grow with their club and player match payments tend to increase gradually and commensurate and properly aligned with their merit and current levels of performance.

Clubs also need to recognise that if they do not appropriately acknowledge and reward the performance of local players then they run the risk of losing them to other clubs via the open market.

Another main benefit of developing local talent is that often the player's community of family and friends follow the player to the Club and they are usually local people. This often translates into a competitive financial advantage for the Club through increased membership sales, gate takings, sponsors, local networks, attendance at social functions, and the potential of recruiting new volunteers across a variety of levels at the Club.

***Establishing Strong Links between Junior and Senior Club:***

If we embark on these strategies and seek to develop and nurture the local talent, then we must be prepared to develop strong and positive links with the Junior Club. The Junior Club (including Auskick) must be viewed by us as a high priority and the essential blood and future of the Senior Club.

The partnership between the Junior and Senior Clubs cannot be overstated and must be one based on:

- Trust
- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Shared Commitment
- Strong Partners
- Agreement between the two Club Presidents and Committees

By embarking on these strategies, the *Ferntree Gully Eagles Football Club* understands that it needs to be patient; and that the passage of time is required for the fruits of the strategy to emerge. Strong Leadership is required to ensure that the Club does not veer away from this strategic approach. It is an ongoing journey which requires lots of hard work and energy by many through time.

Good people, processes, systems and structures; together with our Junior Development Program; are crucial to achieving and enhancing the quality of outcomes at the *Ferntree Gully Eagles Football Club* both on and off the field.

This document and Policy direction is the cornerstone and basis upon which to build the long-term sustainable, successful, high performance environment, and to change the culture to embed the future of the *Ferntree Gully Eagles Football Club*. When integrated with other strategies, this Policy provides the Club with a solid foundation to give it every opportunity and chance of being competitive and achieving success on and off the ground.

## **STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE PARTNERSHIP:**

### **A GENERAL OVERVIEW**

The focus of this document is targeted particularly at:

- entrenching a pathway from Juniors to Seniors (ie: for players, coaches, parents and families)
- skill and football development of all players . in particular at the Under 17\$ to Under 19\$ transition level (ie: the intersecting period in the players\$ football life from Junior Club to Senior Club)
- transparent process for all players and parents
- ongoing training of all Coaches.

This approach will ensure a better and stronger integration between the two clubs at a practical football level. It will further enhance a culture of learning and development, and enhance the Junior Club\$ reputation as ***'professional, progressive, innovative and inclusive'*** and the Senior Club\$ strategic planning of ***'proud, professional, inclusive, united'***.

### **PART #1:**

#### **Strategic List Management Framework based on Junior Pathway Program (to be implemented in 2013).**

This part has four (4) key components:

#### ***Component #1: Appoint to new Junior / Senior Co-ordinator position (Tim Beare has been appointed to this role in the inaugural year)***

**Pre-Season:** A Training/Development Program whereby rostered Senior Players attend Junior Training sessions on a Friday night.

**During-Season:** Roster Senior Players to attend at Junior Training.

#### ***Component #2: Establish Mentoring / Buddy Program for all players in the Under 17's and Under 19's (Tim Beare to co-ordinate)***

It is proposed that:

- Every Under 17\$ and Under 19\$ player will have a Senior Club player as a Mentor
- Each senior Player will be linked to 2 or 3 under 17 / under 19 players; it is expected that the senior player will attend a game to watch when their mentored player is playing; and that this will take place on at least two games per year plus at least one training session; the mentored Junior Player will be encouraged to attend a senior game where their senior player mentor is playing . be invited into club rooms pre-match, chat at half time, be given a membership card for entry, and encourage the Junior players\$ parents to also be involved.
- Ensure photos with mentors and their players are developed.
- Under 17\$ to train with seniors 2 or 3 times per year.
- Under 17\$ players to attend senior finals to watch their mentors; and senior players to attend Under 17 final matches.
- Senior Player(s) to address Under 17\$ before a game . as required.
- Under 17 players to attend senior games and be involved by going in to club rooms for pre-game coaches address; and at half time; and end of game.

- Rotate Under 17 players into Under 19 team throughout the year (akin to an Under 17-Under 19 Development squad).

**Component #3: Establish Sunday Night Junior Awards presented by Senior Club Players (Tim Beare to co-ordinate)**

**During-Season:** Four Senior Players rostered to attend Junior Sunday Nights to help with the presentation of player Awards

Other suggestions:

- Explore possibility of the under 15 to have a senior club player as their coach each year.
- Invite Under 11 to 15 as teams to attend a Thursday night dinner and selection meeting.
- Pie night for Under 15 and talk with senior players.
- Junior Coaches attend Senior Club functions
- Home game mascots . Auskick players as well as Under 8 to Under 11.
- Home game Auskick matches
- Other suggestions include:
  1. Under 17 to attend senior club camp . walk in and it all about them; walk out and it all about what we can do for the Club
  2. Under 17 to run sausage sizzle and gold coin donation and give \$\$\$ to under 8 or a charity.

**Component #4: Establish an Induction/Introduction pack to give to the transitioning players (Senior Club Committee to co-ordinate)**

It is proposed that the pack will be given to all Under 17 top age players due to transition the following year at a function held at Senior Club Rooms in July of each year. The function will be attended by all Under 17 top age players transitioning; and all Under 19 players will also be in attendance. The pack will include:

- Club History
- Current Club Structures, policies and systems
- Off field: Strategic Plan heading into the future
- On field: Player contracts outline

**Criteria to measure success:**

- Positive mood
- All on the same page and direction
- All in together

**PART #2:**

**Local Player Development Policy based on a Junior Development Program (to be implemented in 2014).**

This part has two (2) key components:

**Component #1: Football Clinics during School Holidays (Tim Beare to co-ordinate)**

Establish Junior and AllAbilities Football Clinics on a user pays system during the school holidays; senior players to be involved. Need to ensure that we are teaching correctly and is age appropriate.

**Component #2: Football Skill Development throughout the year (Tim Beare to co-ordinate)**

- Senior players to attend junior training sessions as arranged.
- Senior Players to attend Auskick clinics twice per year or as arranged.

Purpose of this component include:

- Make sure that senior players and senior coaches wear junior coaches hats on . it's about development and not winning; and messages need to be relative to ages of the players (TMG could help)
- Skill and football development
- All Coaches need support . Coaching development is a journey
- Sharing of resources sends a strong message of a shared partnership and a ONEqClub approach
- Running of Junior Football Clinics by Senior Players in pre-season

**Criteria to measure success:**

- Positive mood
- All on the same page and direction
- All in together

**PART #3:**

**Junior Coach Education & Development Program (To be implemented in 2014).**

This part has four (4) key components:

***Component #1: Under 8's to Under 11's***

Entirely focussed on football skill development; use of both sides of the body .

Coaches to be assisted with teaching their players correct skills.

The best educators/ teachers should be coaching at this level.

The foundation of the players' football skills are developed at these early years.

The main aim is to ensure the players enjoy their football.

Arrangements should be made for these players to run out on to the ground with the senior players on game day on a Saturday; and for pie nights to be held.

***Component #2: Under 12's and Under 13's***

Slowly start to introduce structures . for example, pick one structure to work on (eg: front position); be more positive than negative in discussion with players; start the conversation about Backline, Midfield, Forwards.

Senior players to run football sessions with these players.

***Component #3: Under 14's and Under 15's***

Introduce more 1:1 specific coaching in terms of developing each player . identify their strengths and learning needs and work with them on these.

Talk to the players about the History of the Club

***Component #4: Under 15's to Under 17's***

Preparing for Senior Football . key areas to cover include:

- Understand and accept the importance of good / strong training
- Knowledge of the game and game sense (eg: switching of play)
- Learn about football structures
- How to conduct themselves (Respect, Responsibility, Accountability)
- Focussed on football education and development
- Learn about club culture, club history.

**\*\*\*The Senior Coach is to meet with all Junior Coaches 2 or 3 times per year to undertake a facilitated discussion / training process. Specific topics can be developed; alternatively general questions and discussion can take place. This process will need to be trialled in season 2014.\*\*\***

**MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS PROGRAM**

This Policy and Program is to be regularly monitored, reviewed and assessed to ensure a rigorous Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) approach and to build on the gains made. It will be monitored by both football clubs . with the inaugural co-ordinator to be Tim Beare.

This Program has been developed by representatives of the junior (Tim Beare, Ian Connolly and Andrew Wright) and Senior Football Clubs (Sam Cavarra) as well as the appointed co-ordinator (???) . and is considered a sub-committee of both clubs, thereby requiring authorisation by both.

The day-to-day management of this document/policy will be delegated to the Co-ordinator who is responsible for its implementation; however the overall direction will be the responsibility of the sub-committee.

### **PROGRAM COMMENCEMENT**

This Program was discussed at a General Committee Meeting held in March 2014 and will take immediate effect in season 2014.

**Ferntree Gully Eagles FC  
General Committee  
March 2014**

**Ferntree Gully Eagles Junior FC  
General Committee  
March 2014**