



# Highfields Football Club (HFC)

## Club Vision and Player Development Philosophy

### Our Club's Vision for the Future

***We equally value our female and male players*** - we will endeavour to provide development pathways so every player has the opportunity to reach their full potential both as a footballer and person.

***We are not results focused*** – our success as a club is not determined by how many trophies and premierships we win.

***We are process focused*** - our success as a club will be measured on how well we structure our approach to properly develop our coaches, players and teams. Winning games is an outcome that is driven by our long term approach to proper coach and player development.

***We value and support our local communities by:***

- ✓ providing opportunities for anyone to participate in and enjoy playing football in a safe and supportive environment.
- ✓ promoting and supporting our local businesses and sponsors.
- ✓ proudly representing our region by modelling the highest standards of player behaviour and commitment both on and off the field.
- ✓ being the premier football club in the FQ Darling Downs region, recognised for our progressive approach to:
  - promoting the game of football;
  - developing our players and coaches;
  - providing the necessary club equipment and facilities to ensure success; and
  - effective club administration and management.
- ✓ collaboratively working with our peak sporting bodies and local and state governments to develop further footballing opportunities for all across our region.

***We are a proud and ambitious football club*** – we will always do our best both on and off the field to grow our game and promote our club as the “Club of Choice” for all aspiring footballers.

### Our Club's Football Focus

Football Australia's National Curriculum contains the vision and philosophy for Australian Football. HFC has adopted the curriculum as the focus for our club's development of coaches, players and administrators.

Our coaches are encouraged to read the curriculum and we will support them to attend training courses based on the curriculum.

Our coaches are encouraged to not only develop players in the technical, tactical, physical, and psychological components of the game, but also teach the importance of commitment, good sporting behaviour, teamwork, respect for self and others, and an ability to learn from both winning and losing.

Our club's objective is to create a positive learning environment which is safe and fun and provides our players with the greatest opportunities to enjoy the game and strive to reach their full potential on and off the pitch.

We will do this by:

- ✓ Always encouraging the passing of the football as opposed to kicking it long;
- ✓ Beginning our play from defense to create exciting attacking opportunities (“playing out from the back”);
- ✓ Focusing on a short passing game, with longer passes when appropriate (“looking for the killer pass”);
- ✓ Defensively, as a team, quickly winning the ball back with clever coordinated pressure (“pressing”);
- ✓ Encouraging flair, creativity and improvisation on the football pitch (“match winning moments”);
- ✓ Using the goalkeeper in the defensive line and to change the point of attack (“playing back to the keeper”);
- ✓ Focusing on the long term development of young footballers, as opposed to a short term results;
- ✓ Encouraging players to make decisions and learn for themselves (“perceive, decide, execute”) – our coaches should avoid constantly instructing players during games;
- ✓ Encouraging and rewarding the core skills and a positive attitude; and
- ✓ Ultimately, playing attacking and entertaining football using effective possession.

Our club recognises the importance of developing all our players regardless of gender, age or ability. We will strive to develop the necessary core skills so our players can compete to the best of their ability and achieve their footballing goals whether it be at club or representative level.

## **Our Player Development Philosophy**

### **Discovery Phase (U6 – U7) - Small sided games without a goalkeeper**

Just let them play! Create an environment that allows them to discover how the game works in a safe, fun and positive way.

Let them develop a passion for the game without the pressures of winning.

### **Skill Acquisition Phase (U8 - U12) - Small sided games with a goalkeeper**

Build the essential ball skills to maintain strong and organised ball possession.

The following core skills need to become automatic and natural;

- First Touch - Controlling the ball in a purposeful direction, learning to receive the ball with the “furthest foot”;
- Running with the ball - ‘dribbling’, protecting and changing direction with the ball;
- Striking the ball - short and long passing; shooting and crossing; and
- 1 v 1 - moves and feints to get pass or away from an opponent and the defensive skills to win the ball back.

Being able to perform these core skills unconsciously will allow the player look up, scan and make smarter decisions.

Coaches should plan purposeful training that closely resembles game play. Training or exercises should always be conducted with a ball. The coach’s focus in this age group is as a ‘skill teacher’.

### **Game Training Phase (U13 – U17) - 11v11 Competitive Junior Games**

Learning to apply the core skills in the different moments of the game. Allow players to discover and learn team positions and the required tasks to support the 1-4-3-3 playing/team formation and structure.

Team structures and formations can vary amongst teams and clubs based on the ability, skill and understanding of players but we are focused on using a 1-4-3-3 as an introductory formation for our Junior Competitive teams. FA considers 1-4-3-3 the most appropriate formation to develop an understanding of team play in young players. However, the fundamental principles of controlled possession, structured build-up from the back, a focus on core skill execution and good game awareness and decision making will always underpin the way our teams play.

The coach’s focus in this age group is about creating intelligent footballers who are aware of their individual and team roles and can make good decisions to benefit the team both on and off the ball in order to play a dynamic brand of football. This development of players in this age group should be based on a Growth Mindset and is all about game awareness and team play – it is still based on enjoyment with a focus on the process of improvement rather than results.

## Performance Phase (U16+) - transitioning to Senior Football

This phase is about preparing players and teams for a competition environment where winning becomes the main aim.

The coach's focus in this phase is very much about getting results through:

- physical conditioning and improving core strength and stability of players; and
- a focus on developing intelligent footballers and dynamic team performances by identifying and addressing individual player and overall team tactical improvement opportunities through analysis of match performances.

However, it is important to note the development and motivation differences that emerge as players transition from Junior football to Youth football and ultimately Senior football. Our club will offer a range of football and development opportunities for players in the Performance Phase as follows:

### Youth Football (U16 – U18)

This is a transition age group where players start to bring their core skills and game awareness together to build strong performances on the field. As players in this age group may still not be emotionally or mentally mature to cope with the pressure of performing to “win”, it is still important for us, as a Club, to continue to focus on developing a Growth Mindset in these players and use a process driven approach which focuses on improvement over the course of the season and from game to game.

The coach's focus in this phase is about nurturing players to develop confidence and build team cohesion by praising effort rather than outcomes and focusing on learning from both wins and losses.

### Senior Football (Community League Men and Women)

HFC teams at this senior competitive level provide a number of opportunities for our youth and senior players.

- A pathway to develop as a player and move into the FQPL3 competition.
- A way to keep fit and enjoy playing football in a more social environment.
- An opportunity to continue playing football whilst mentoring emerging players.

The coach's focus at this level is about developing players at different ability levels and providing a positive team environment that allows players with differing motivations and priorities in life to enjoy playing football for our club.

### Senior Football (FQPL3 Men and Women)

HFC teams at this senior competitive level represent the pinnacle of our club's development process and pathway. Our FQPL3 teams will be led by progressive coaches who analyse the game and team performances to get the most from our players in a positive and constructive team environment. Our player development focus through to this level is all about creating intelligent and skilled footballers who can successfully compete in our region's premier competition and, most importantly, love representing and playing for our club.

## Our Club's Expectations

### Female Participation

- ✓ All female football participants are to be treated as equals to their male counterparts.
- ✓ Female players should be afforded the opportunity to play any position on the field and be provided with same proportion of game time as any other player on a team.
- ✓ Female football participants should NOT be subjected to disrespect or abuse in terms of their ability and place in the team. They should be respected as integral members of any HFC team.
- ✓ Any abuse or disrespect towards female football participants should be immediately reported to a HFC Executive Committee member or Ground Official regardless of whether they are a HFC or Opposition player. (This applies to any form of disrespect or abuse towards players or officials regardless of gender or other basis).

- ✓ HFC will always seek to provide opportunities for all female football participants to be involved in our game. We will form “All Female” teams wherever possible and encourage female football coaches and administrators to get involved in our sport.
- ✓ HFC will promote female football carnivals and other representative opportunities wherever possible across our club and region.
- ✓ HFC will always seek to provide safe and appropriate facilities (changerooms, etc) to support female football participants at our club.

Our club has proposed a ***Female Football Development Strategy*** which it will seek to implement, in conjunction with other clubs in our region and FQ Darling Downs, to further grow female participation and provide greater opportunities for our female players. This Strategy can be found on our HFC website.

## Coaches

- ✓ Know what their role and focus is relative to the development phase their players are in;
- ✓ Are prepared and ready to coach before each training session;
- ✓ Read, understand and abide by our Club’s Vision and Player Development Philosophy and the underlying intent of Football Australia’s National Curriculum;
- ✓ Are willing to grow and learn by expanding their knowledge and expertise through training and mentoring; and
- ✓ Always focus on good sporting behaviour and player development by adopting a positive process driven rather than a results driven approach to coaching.

## Care Givers and Supporters

- ✓ Understand our club’s philosophy and help to support it;
- ✓ Make sure players are equipped for training and games and arrive on time;
- ✓ Let players “play” by only offering positive encouragement or applause from the sidelines;
- ✓ Give players the opportunity to develop to their potential by supporting their football commitments; and
- ✓ Focus on good sporting behaviour and player development rather than results.

## Players

- ✓ Understand our club’s philosophy and do your part to achieve it;
- ✓ Make sure you arrive at training and games on time and prepared with the appropriate equipment (football boots, socks and shin pads, with no watches or jewellery on) and please be SunSmart;
- ✓ Always come to training prepared to learn and work as a team. HFC players are expected to model good behaviour at all times; and
- ✓ Focus on good sporting behaviour and skill development rather than results.

## Respect

A lack of respect, vilification and/or abuse directed towards anyone will not be tolerated by our club. Everyone associated with our club is expected to show Respect towards:

- ✓ Game officials including Referees and designated Ground Officials – without them there would be no game;
- ✓ Team coaches and managers (your own and the opposition’s) – they are volunteers who give up their time to help develop players and the game;
- ✓ Players (team mates and the opposition) regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion or ability level – they should be allowed to enjoy playing the game in safe and positive environment;
- ✓ Club Officials and Sponsors – they support and keep the club running so we can provide football opportunities for our community;
- ✓ The Club grounds and facilities – we have some of the best facilities in our region. Let’s appreciate them and keep them looking great!

**“We want our players to love playing football at Highfields FC and the club will do its part to unlock each player’s potential.”**