



In 2022 the Werribee Centrals Football Club began a pathway strategy, that focuses specifically on the expectations of both club and footballer, in relation to the selection process regarding current under 18 players potentially being selected in the senior team.

The process was created:

1. To build more positive relationships between the senior body & the Under 18's.
2. To have transparency in everything we do.
3. To become more professional across all levels of the football club.
4. To give genuine opportunities, at senior level, for high achieving & aspiring young footballers. We see this as vital in retaining these players once their time in the Under 18's is finished.
5. To reward both outstanding & consistently strong form by players at Under 18 level.
6. To be more respectful. All parties feel like they have (1) a voice & (2) are being listened to.
7. To develop a sustainable selection model for our football club. A model that strengthens our senior body. And equally, a model that empowers both our Under 18 players & coaches.
8. To protect the integrity of our Under 18 team.

Pathway Policy – Section A

For players who start the year in the Colts.

1. Identify talent, based on exposed form in the Under 18's home & away competition. This will be done in conjunction with both the Football Director and the Under 18 coach.
2. Football Director and Under 18 coach have consistent dialogue regarding Under 18 players who they believe are ready to make the step from Under 18's football into the senior team. (by-pass reserve grade football).
3. If deemed ready the Football Director then approaches the Under 18 player to see if they would be interested in playing senior football while still in their Under 18 year.
4. If the player says NO (or hesitant) no further dialogue will be had, at that time. The offer remains but the player will be encouraged to stay in the Under 18 program until such time that they feel they are ready to have another conversation.
5. If the player says YES, but is under the age of 18, the Football Director is then required to have a conversation with the player's parents/guardians to gain consent.
6. If the parents/guardians do not give consent, then it is pursued no further.
7. If the parent/guardian says YES, then the process for senior selection begins.
8. Football Director informs both Senior & Under 18 coach that player has agreed to play senior football & consent (if applicable) has been given by parents/guardians.
9. If the Senior Coach believes the Under 18 player is in the mix to be selected for the next round of football, both the player & under 18 coach is notified. The Under 18 player will then be required to train with the seniors, on both the Tuesday and Thursday night sessions, ahead of the next round of football.
10. **NOTE:** If selected, and the Under 18 player is making their first appearance in the seniors, the club will organise a jumper presentation with the Under 18 player & their parents/guardians, in the rooms, prior to the senior game.

11. **NOTE:** The Werribee Centrals Football Club will not cap the amount of games an Under 18 player can play in the seniors in any one season. **However**, once an Under 18 player has played **FOUR** senior games, the Under 18 player cannot play anymore senior games until an official meeting is held between the Player, the Football Director, the Senior coach & the Under 18 coach. If the player is not yet 18 it is advised that a parent/guardian is present at this meeting. It is the responsibility of the Football Director to organise & oversee these meetings.
12. **NOTE:** The Werribee Centrals Football club will not cap the amount of games an Under 18 player can play, in succession, in the seniors.
13. **NOTE:** Ideally we will plan to give under 18 player coming into the seniors for the first time two games in succession, however given the complexities of senior selection, this cannot be guaranteed.

PATHWAY POLICY - Section B

Special Consideration to join the senior program full-time.

Separate to the above, if an Under 18 player has a desire to join the senior program, on a full-time basis, it can only happen if:

1. The player has already played senior football at the Werribee Centrals Football Club. This could include full-scale senior practice matches against clubs that are not aligned to the Werribee Centrals Football Club. (This does not include reserve grade football).
2. The Under 18 player has trained consistently with the seniors, in the block of preseason training, prior to the Christmas/New Year break. This will also involve the player demonstrating a genuine commitment to the senior program.
3. The final decision is made, prior to the commencement of both the senior & Under 18 home & away season.
4. If the player has not yet turned 18, consent has been given by parents/guardians.

In consultation, with all parties concerned, the following must also be considered:

1. Will the player be able to commit fully to the senior program?
2. Is the player physically & mentally ready to join the senior program full-time?
3. Is the player capable of training with the senior group full-time?
4. Do the senior body believe the player is capable of being a regular in the senior team?

Furthermore, if it has been agreed that an Under 18 player will join the senior program full-time, the following must be discussed- with all parties concerned.

1. A plan of how the player will be monitored, in the senior program, throughout the season.
2. The options available to the player if:
 - (a) The Under 18 player changes their mind about being in the senior program full-time.
 - (b) The Under 18 player's form does not warrant selection in the seniors.
 - (c) The senior body believe the player is no longer showing the commitment required to be in the senior program full-time.

NOTE

The plan & options, will be fully discussed, in consultation with the Football Director, Senior Coach, Under 18 Coach, the Player & the Player's parents/guardians (if applicable).

To avoid misunderstandings, all the above people, need to be present when any official meeting takes place.

It is the role of the Football Director to organise & oversee official meetings.

The plan & options will take into consideration the individual needs of each player. Based on this, an outcome may be different for each Under 18 player.

WNCFC