

BARWON SOCCER CLUB



# JUNIOR FOOTBALL GUIDE



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# INTRODUCTION



## BARWON SC: JUNIORS

Our club

The aim of this document is to inform players, families and coaches of our methodology regarding training, team selection and player pathways. Whilst we are a community club, we also want to provide players with a comprehensive program to develop their individual and team skills and set them up for their future playing soccer.

One of the Club's strategic goals is to develop more of our own junior players to for the senior teams of the future. With pathways open to play local senior men or women's competitions, or currently State League men, we can cater for those junior players who show the necessary attributes to be Barwon players for many years to come.

Formed in 1992, Barwon Soccer Club has grown from humble beginnings to our current position as the largest community soccer club in the Geelong Region. In 2024, we have 615 registered players, with our juniors' program having a reputation for being well structured, organised and inclusive to all.

We currently have 46 junior teams, ranging from Under 7s to Under 17s. These include 10 girls' teams, the most in our history. We have 390 boys registered and 116 girls, with our female numbers representing 23% of our junior players. Most of these teams compete in the Geelong Region community competitions, but we have an Under 17 Boys and Under 16 Girls teams competing in the top division of the Metropolitan competitions also.

# 46

Junior teams active

# 615

Registered players

# 23%

Percentage of female players



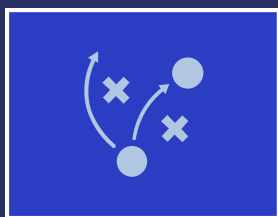
# PILLARS OF FOOTBALL ENJOYMENT

Our Junior program goals are to provide a physically and mentally stimulating developmental program based on the foundations of technical skills that attribute to the game's tactical awareness.



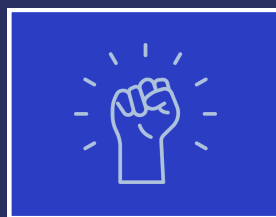
## TECHNICAL

- First touch
- 1 v 1
- Run with the ball
- Striking the ball
- Dribbling
- Control
- Receive



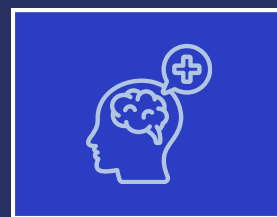
## TACTICAL

- Game knowledge
- Awareness
- Anticipation
- Vision
- Speed of play
- Transitioning



## PHYSICAL

- Speed
- Agility
- Power
- Endurance
- Balance
- Strength



## SOCIAL

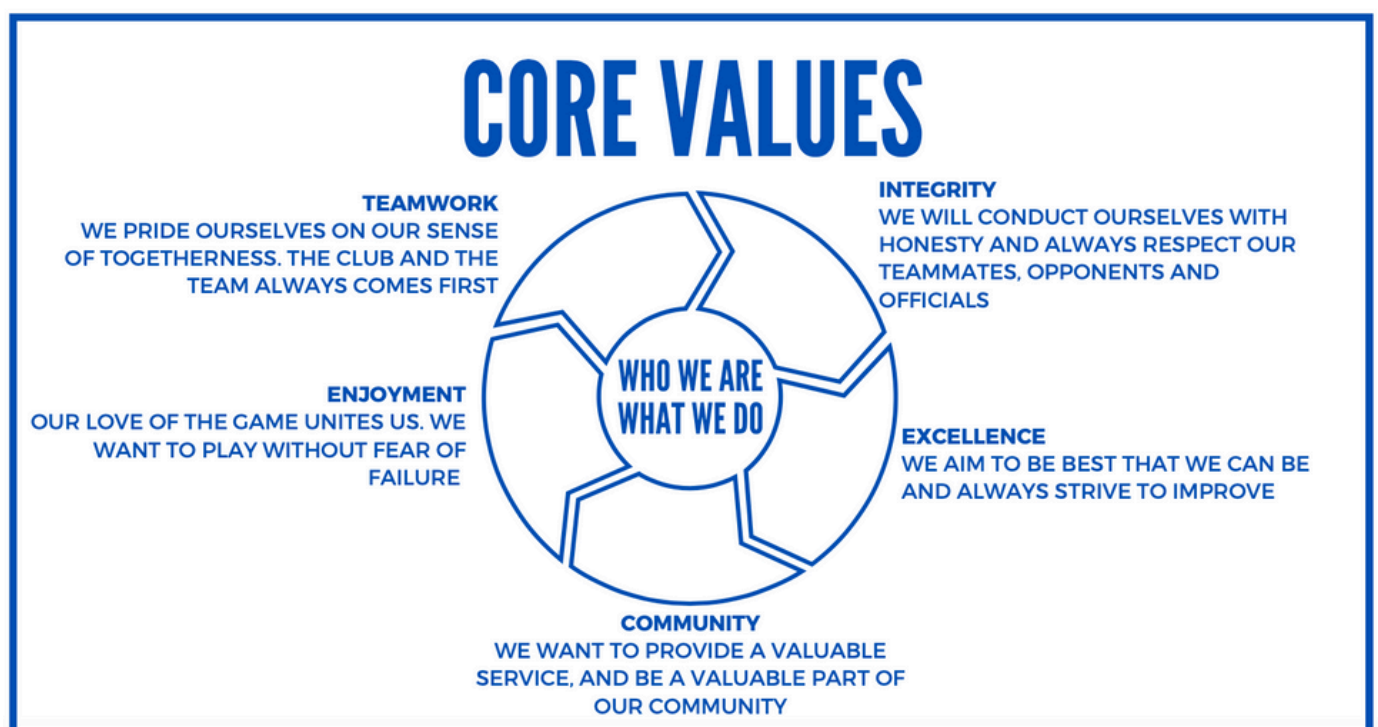
- Attitude
- Resilience
- Work ethic
- Self-motivation
- Good habits
- Self-talk
- Group talk



# OUR CORE VALUES: STRATEGIC PLAN



Barwon's current strategic plan was developed to embody our members' vision for the Club's future. Our core values continue to guide us in our decision-making.



# COACHING PHILOSOPHY



- Inspire players to perform independently of you.
- Communicate at their level - come to their eye level to talk with them.
- Patiently develop technically and tactically confident players with a desire to work and learn in the development from children to adulthood.
- Technical competence, a player's skills and abilities on the field. They should progress to good ball control, passing accuracy, shooting proficiency, and other technical aspects of the game.
- Mental strength is crucial in sports. It includes resilience, focus, determination, and the ability to stay calm under pressure or during challenging situations.
- Confidence is key for a player to perform at their best. A confident player believes in their abilities, takes initiative on the field, and isn't afraid to take calculated risks.
- Encourage independent decision making. This indicates a player's ability to make decisions on their own, read the game, and adapt their strategies based on the situation without constant instructions from the coach.
- Football intelligence refers to a player's understanding of the game, including tactics, positioning, game awareness, and the ability to anticipate movements.

## FOOTBALL PHILOSOPHY

Football development occurs when:

- There is a plan;
- Enthusiasm to learn exists;
- Players are in like-for-like settings to enhance their learning;
- Players and their supports have a clear picture of what is expected at each age group;
- We feel like a community.

- Physically ready: being physically ready means the player is in good shape, has the required stamina, strength, speed, and agility to compete at the desired level.
- Develop coachable players: players receptive to coaching, listening to feedback, implementing suggestions, and working on improving their skills based on guidance from the coaching staff. Discourage finger pointing and a 'win at all costs' mentality.
- Learner: a player who is motivated to improve, seeks opportunities to develop new skills, studies the game, and stays updated on the latest strategies and techniques. Not every player will do this at the same rate, your job is to inspire it.

Combining all these traits creates a well-rounded and effective football player who can contribute significantly to their team's success and be a great ambassador for Barwon SC.





# FAMILY

The most important part of your learning, where the *Love of The Game* is first nurtured, and where love grows.

This becomes a reflection on your child and how they deal with the wins and the challenges. How you support players out of the game to reinforce learning and promote the enjoyment and overcoming the obstacles as part of that enjoyment.

- Leave the coaching to the coaches, trust that the children are in our supervision;
- Be supportive but keep a distance, players and coaches need to make decisions;
- Refrain from giving information. That is for the coaches or technical staff;
- Encourage the learning path and avoid commenting on players going through tougher or easier periods.
- No direct contact during the training session. Trust in the coach and the process.

# TRAINING AND SQUAD SET UP

Training is aimed at performing (how you want to play), sessions should be fun, engaging and above all else challenging to stimulate learning.

We set up squads in like for like settings as much as possible to achieve the best learning environment for players and the team. This reduces large skill gaps in teams where a reliance on one or two players often comes out and overcomes the players who are not at their level.

Reducing skill gaps between players is crucial for team development in football. This fosters cohesion, pushing developing players to improve and challenging stronger ones.

Focusing coaching on top performers sets standards, motivating others and enhancing overall team performance. Multiple teams based on skill levels (like A, B, C teams) offer appropriate challenges, aiding player growth. Placing players in teams with similar abilities ensures they receive suitable coaching and encouragement. This doesn't refer to Team B being lesser than Team A, it is a point in time where a player's ability is at, coach to high standards and get the best performance with learning and enjoyment.

High standards across teams inspire continuous improvement, creating a culture of successful development. Overall, creating an environment where similar-level players train together, with specific coaching, promotes the full potential and enjoyment for every player in a football club.





# FACTORS IN TEAM SELECTION

## Skills, physicality, and game awareness.

**Skill level:** Grouping players with similar skill levels together is vital for effective training sessions. This approach ensures that all players receive appropriate challenges and can focus on mastering skills without anyone being left behind.

**Physicality:** A player's physical capacity is crucial, especially in grassroots phases. If a player's physical condition limits them from executing skills like dribbling or passing on larger fields, it hampers skill development.

**Game awareness:** While individual skill development is important, understanding team dynamics and executing roles within a team is equally crucial in football. Players with similar game sense should be grouped together to learn and improve their understanding of team play.





# SESSION PLANNING

You can use just about any method you feel works best for you. The essence to today's youth in terms of teaching and then learning is bite sized parts to your plan. The essence of a sessions should contain Skill Introduction, Skill Training, and a Skill Game at a minimum.

This can expand further as you gain more experience to have a Skill game with and without a coach intervention. 10 mins where you intervene for coachable moments and corrections, ask questions, encourage Q&A. Then 10 mins where you just watch, assess, and take notes.

Always inspire players to perform actions at home and provide them a task to perform at home.



**PRE SESSION** – Provide a challenge, such as 10 or 20 keep ups or other ball mastery moves. You can use just about any method you feel works best for you. The essence to today's youth in terms of teaching and then learning is bite sized parts to your plan. The essence of a sessions should contain Skill Introduction, Skill Training, and a Skill Game at a minimum. Always inspire players to perform actions at home and provide them a task to perform at home. Examples - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmWJ-lu8DuU>

**SKILL INTRO** – Up to 10 mins. Whichever the skill choice of your session, make the introduction group related with lots of football specific movements. Example 1st touch, two small grids with a half way line and encourage players to lift the ball over the line (like tennis or volleyball) and the receiving player to perform a good 1st touch in controlling the ball.

**SKILL TRAINING** - Up to 20 mins. This a positioning game where the team is involved in game related activities that resemble the match in a controlled environment to explore the chosen feature skill but not a match itself. Example, positioning game 4 v 4 with 4 wall/bouncer players in a 20x30m grid (depending on player's ability). Team in possession uses wall players to keep possession, they pass to wall players and when receiving back use 1st touch to move away from opponent, encourage scanning and off the ball movement. Defending team works to win possession and if they do they use the wall players to perform the passing interchanges. Swap wall players and use progressions (introduce challenges and scores if you make 5 passes you get a goal).

**SKILL GAME** – Rest of your session. Here you can allow a game to occur with some limitations at first to allow you to intervene (when necessary) to encourage the actions or to help correct them. Limitations might be, can't score unless 5 passes have occurred. Allow this to become a free-flowing game where you don't coach, referee if you need to. Use that time to assess and analyse the behaviours and skills.

# FOOTBALL PILLARS: TECHNICAL



## TECHNICAL

First touch

1 v 1

Run with the ball

Striking the ball

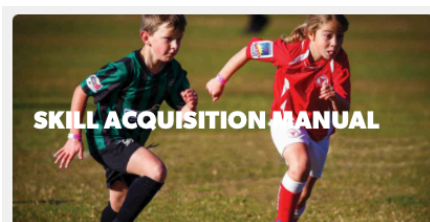
Dribbling

Control

Receive

Here we explore the learning process of core skills that embody a happy and healthy footballer.

- Choose a skill to focus on each session, keep the core of the session based on that skill.
- Choose heroes both male and female that embody that skill. Example – Striking the ball, Sam Kerr and Tim Cahill.
- Use visual aids to reinforce the skill. YouTube or other video-based apps that allow you transport your message.
- Make all sessions to be game related.
- Always finish with a game.



View Manual



View Session



Click Here



Football Australia has a good array of sessions to leverage off and use to trigger your own thoughts of what to bring to a session. Use [this link](#) to begin your journey.

In here you will find a manual that also explores the playing formats and coaching guidelines. Read through and take it on board for your learning.



# GUIDE TO PLAYER FUN-DAMENTALS



L/R  
foot  
pass

Dribble

Run  
with  
ball

Body  
position

**AGE 5-7**



Turning  
in and  
out on  
L/R

Kicking  
with  
lace  
L/R

Protect  
the ball

Defend  
/attack

**AGE 8-10**



Positional  
awareness

Transitions

Crossing/  
set piece

Finishing

**AGE 11-13**



Physical,  
fit, fast &  
strong

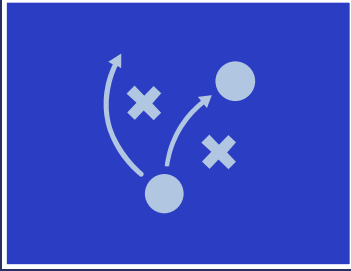
Technical,  
balanced  
on both  
feet

Tactically  
aware of  
positions  
and changes  
to phase of  
play

Mental  
resilience and  
concentration  
to learn and  
overcome  
challenges  
enjoying the  
wins

**AGE 13+**

# FOOTBALL PILLARS: TACTICAL



## TACTICAL

Game knowledge

Awareness

Anticipation

Vision

Speed of play

Transitioning

Using the [same link](#), access pages 12 to 23 to find playing formats and pitch sizes, match requirements.

Use your awareness of your squad to determine how to set up your team for enjoyment and success (conversion of learning to performing). If there is a format you wish to play ensure you train that way also.

Explain how you wish your team to look when they have the ball (do you want them high and wide with open body stances to receive on back foot and play forward) and when they don't have the ball (do you want them to transition quickly with as many players behind the ball as possible, delay the opponent until the opportunity to win the ball presents, don't dive in).

Inspire players to think about anticipating the ball whether the team is in or out of possession.

- Are they scanning the entire field continually to paint a picture in their head of who is the likely next pass?
- Are they too close or too far from each other?
- Are they offset or standing square to each other?
- What is the speed of action and reaction?



# FOOTBALL PILLARS: PHYSICAL

Coaches should be mindful of the rapid growth and maturation occurring in this age group. Individualise training to address player's developmental needs and avoid overtraining or specialisation too early



## PHYSICAL

Speed  
Agility  
Power  
Endurance  
Balance  
Strength

Here are the key physical aspects that football coaches should focus on for players aged U9-U13 years:

### Speed

- Develop acceleration, deceleration, and change of direction speed through agility drills and small-sided games. This can come out naturally in your sessions.
- Avoid isolated high intensity sprinting drills as players may be prone to growth-related injuries during this stage. Encourage it to come out naturally from their desire in playing football. In turn helps with ball control in possession and displaying running with the ball vs dribbling

### Agility

- Improve change of direction, balance, and coordination through ladder drills, cone drills, and other agility-based activities
- Emphasise proper technique and body control rather than pure speed.

### Power

- Develop explosive power through plyometric exercises like jumps, hops, and bounds. Good to build up from warmups through to specific exercises.
- Focus on technique and landing mechanics to prevent injuries during this rapid growth phase.

### Endurance

- Build aerobic capacity through small-sided games and interval training. Ask the team to lift tempo and drop tempo for different amounts of time. Perform and recover.
- Avoid isolated excessive endurance training as players may be susceptible to overuse injuries.

### Balance and Coordination:

- Incorporate balance, stability, and proprioceptive exercises into training. Example ([link](#)).
- Address any deficiencies in gross motor skills and overall coordination. Provide options (you tube) of how to work on it at home with supervision.

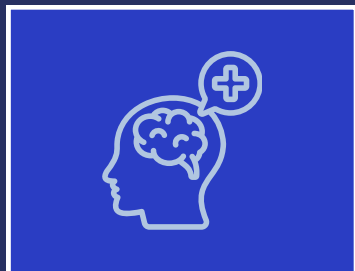
### Strength:

- In the traditional terms, not recommended until players reach teenage years. Sub teenage years can do general body weight exercises like lunges, squats, push-ups ,etc... Think how you can incorporate these exercises in a football manner. Suggestion ([link](#)).
- Alternatively, how can you use lunges/push-ups/sit up in a drill? 1 v 1 challenges. Grid where half the players are on each end of the pitch. You ask the players about to enter a 1 v1 to do 5 push-ups and then enter the 1 v 1. It's a fun challenge with hidden learning.
- At these ages try to avoid isolated heavy resistance training as players' musculoskeletal systems are still developing



# FOOTBALL PILLARS: SOCIAL

Coaches should aim to create a supportive, player-centered environment that empowers young players to develop the social skills needed to thrive both on and off the pitch.



## SOCIAL

Attitude  
Resilience  
Work ethic  
Self-motivation  
Good habits  
Self-talk  
Group talk

Here are some key social aspects that football coaches should focus on for players aged 9-13 years old:

### Attitude

- Encourage a positive, growth-oriented mindset focused on improvement rather than outcomes.
- Emphasise the importance of effort, determination, and a willingness to learn.

### Resilience

- Help players develop coping strategies to deal with setbacks, mistakes, and failures.
- Teach them to view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than threats.

### Work Ethic

- Instil a strong work ethic and commitment to training and skill development.
- Recognise and reward players who demonstrate consistent effort and dedication.

### Self-Motivation

- Encourage players to set their own goals and take ownership of their development (work in their own time).
- Provide positive feedback and reinforce intrinsic motivation.

### Good Habits

- Promote healthy habits like proper nutrition, hydration, sleep, and recovery.
- Teach players to develop pre-game routines and mental preparation rituals. Visualisation techniques. See yourself doing it before you try to do it. Say to yourself you're doing it and know what to do before you go and do it.

### Self-Talk

- Guide players to use positive self-talk to boost confidence and manage emotions.
- Demonstrate how to reframe negative thoughts into constructive self-talk.

### Group Talk

- Foster open communication and encourage players to support one another.
- Teach players how to provide constructive feedback and uplift their teammates.



BARWON SOCCER CLUB

# PLAYER POSITIONS & PROFILES







# GOALKEEPER

Our goalkeepers are seen as the first point of attack and an essential player in their team's defensive strategy.

Possess a combination of technical and physical skills. They are confident with their feet and have excellent ball control, allowing them to contribute to the team's possession-based style of play by acting as an additional outfield player when necessary. Their ability to pass the ball accurately and confidently under pressure allows their team to build attacks from the back and maintain control of the game.

In addition to their technical skills, this goalkeeper is also incredibly agile. They possess quick reflexes and are able to make acrobatic saves to keep the ball out of the net. Their agility and quick reactions also make them a formidable opponent during penalty shootouts, where their ability to read the shooter's body language and react quickly can make all the difference.

Finally, this goalkeeper is also strong in the air. They are able to dominate their penalty area during crosses and set-pieces, using their height and jumping ability to punch or catch the ball out of the air with confidence. This skill is particularly important during corner kicks, where the goalkeeper's ability to command their area and make decisive decisions can prevent opposition goals and provide a valuable counter-attacking opportunity.

Overall, this goalkeeper's technical ability with their feet, agility, and strength in the air make them a valuable asset to any team. They are able to contribute to the team's play beyond their role as a shot-stopper, and their athleticism and skill set make them a formidable opponent for any striker.



# FULL BACKS

Solid defensive player who neutralises the opposition's attacking threats effectively.

They are positionally aware, possess excellent tackling skills, and are adept at reading the game, which allows them to anticipate and intercept the opposition's passes effectively. Their strong defensive abilities make them a reliable option for their team, as they are able to provide defensive cover while also contributing to their team's attacking play.

In addition to their defensive abilities, a full-back also possesses the ability to overlap down the flanks, providing width to their team's attacking play. Their speed and stamina enable them to make overlapping runs repeatedly throughout the game, which helps to create openings in the opposition defence. Their ability to cross accurately from wide positions also makes them a potent attacking threat.

This full-back also has a range of passing skills, which allows them to launch counterattacks and switch the play effectively. Their ability to play incisive through-balls and crosses from wide positions also makes them a potent attacking threat. They are also able to combine effectively in midfield, helping their team to retain possession and move the ball up the field.

Overall, this full-back's solid defensive abilities, overlapping skills, range of passing, speed, and ability to combine in midfield make them an important player for any team. They are able to contribute to the team's attacking play while also providing strong defensive cover, and their versatility and well-rounded skill set make them a valuable asset to any team.





# CENTRE BACK

Complete defender with a well-rounded set of skills that make them an integral part of their team's defence.

They possess excellent tackling skills and are able to win the ball back from opposition players effectively. Their strength and positioning on the field make them difficult to bypass, and their ability to anticipate the opposition's attacking moves allows them to intercept the ball effectively.

In addition to their defensive abilities, this centre back is also confident with their feet and able to contribute to their team's attacking play. They are able to distribute the ball effectively from the back and can launch attacks with accurate long passes. Their ability to carry the ball forward also allows them to combine through the midfield and create opportunities for their teammates.

This centre back is also strong in the air, making them a valuable asset during set pieces for and

against. They possess excellent heading abilities and are able to score goals or create scoring opportunities from set pieces. Defensively, they are able to clear the ball effectively from danger areas and can neutralise opposition threats.

Furthermore, this centre back is also strong in possession and able to play out from the back confidently. They are comfortable with the ball at their feet and can initiate attacks from the back. Their ball control and passing abilities are also key to their team's possession-based style of play.

Overall, this centre back's combination of defensive strength, technical ability, and attacking prowess makes them a valuable asset to any team. Their versatility and ability to contribute to both defence and attack make them a well-rounded player, and their tough-to-beat defensive qualities make them a nightmare for opposition attackers.



# MIDFIELDERS

Dynamic player with an exceptional engine, able to cover large areas of the pitch with their strong running and high energy levels.

They possess excellent ball-winning skills, able to make confident tackles and interceptions to regain possession for their team. They also have a great range of passing, able to distribute the ball accurately and efficiently to teammates in all areas of the pitch.

In addition to their defensive and passing abilities, this midfielder has the skill to bypass opponents with their dribbling and ball-carrying abilities. They can beat defenders with their quick feet and quick changes of direction, creating space for themselves and their teammates.

This midfielder is also a threat in attack, contributing to goal efforts with their passing and shooting abilities. They are able to read the game well, making intelligent runs into the box and providing a goal-scoring threat from midfield.

Defensively, this midfielder is quick to recover and block passing lanes to help their team regain possession. Their high energy levels allow them to cover ground quickly and close down opposition players effectively.

Another strength of this midfielder is their ability to use both feet equally well. This makes them more versatile and unpredictable, allowing them to pass, shoot, and dribble with ease on either side of the pitch.

Overall, this midfielder is a complete player with a wide range of skills that make them a valuable asset to any team. Their tireless work rate, strong tackling, and great range of passing make them a key player both defensively and offensively.





# WINGERS

Explosive player, blessed with incredible speed and agility.

They have excellent dribbling skills, able to take on defenders with ease and create space for themselves and their teammates. They also have great crossing abilities, able to deliver accurate and dangerous crosses into the box.

Defensively, this winger is not afraid to put in a shift and help out their full back. They have the ability to track back and defend, as well as the skill to recover and get back into attacking positions quickly. They can also swap through the midfield, providing additional support for the central players.

This winger is a significant attacking threat, with a keen eye for goal and an ability to shoot from distance. They are not only a great provider of assists but also a goal-scoring threat themselves.

They have a knack for cutting in from the opposite side and creating opportunities for themselves to score or set up their teammates.

Furthermore, this winger has a high level of energy and is very durable, able to keep up their speed and skill levels throughout the game. This allows them to maintain a high level of performance throughout the match and make an impact on the game until the final whistle.

Overall, this winger is a complete package, combining speed, dribbling skills, great crossing abilities, the ability to recover and help the defense, an attacking threat with shots on goal, cutting in from the opposite side, and durable energy. They are a valuable asset to any team, providing an attacking outlet and an additional defensive presence on the flanks.



# CENTRE FORWARD

Versatile player, possessing excellent ball control and dribbling skills.

They are able to combine well with midfielders and wingers, creating dangerous attacking opportunities for the team. They are also useful if handy in the air, able to contest aerial duels and hold up play to bring other players into the game.

Confidence to take on opponents is a significant trait of this striker, creating movement to displace opposition defenders and provide options to open up the defence. They use their quick feet and explosive speed to create separation from defenders, allowing them to get into dangerous positions to take shots on goal.

Powerful and accurate shots and headers are a strength of strikers. They are a clinical finisher, able to strike the ball with both power and precision with both feet.

Their heading ability is also impressive, able to direct headers towards goal with accuracy.

Defensively, this striker is the first line of defence, pressing opposition defenders and forcing them into mistakes. They use their speed and energy to close down defenders and make life difficult for the opposition's backline. They are also not afraid to track back and defend from the front when necessary.

Overall, this striker is a complete package, combining good feet, the ability to combine with midfielders and wingers, aerial prowess, ability to hold up play, confidence to take on opponents, creating movement to displace defenders, powerful and accurate shots and headers, and the first line of defence. They are a valuable asset to any team, providing both attacking and defensive contributions on the pitch.

# PATHWAYS



This high-level map helps identify the pathways at Barwon Soccer Club and the key aspects of the progression of growth and learning.



Currently Barwon Soccer Club programs extend to local Geelong competitions, Metro Juniors and State League levels. We pride ourselves on being able to offer a suite of options and will continually review the offerings based on club participant numbers and their needs.

We are considering an Advanced Player Program for players identified by our lead coaches, who display a growth and maturity in game awareness, individual skills and personal attributes can work in extra sessions to progress their football opportunities.

Barwon Soccer Club has an aim to promote players from within its program to stronger competition levels that will one day perform in our Women's and Men's teams and beyond. This doesn't detract from our existing programs and is a consideration as an additional program for players assessed as suitable.





# GOING FORWARD



Our club is community minded, focussed on enjoyment and positive learning experiences. The opportunities for growth are for us also and Barwon Soccer Club requires it's members and families to invest their time with us and enjoy the rewards of personal and community development.

Our home at Grovedale Recreation Reserve is facilitated with two full size floodlit pitches and one 9v9 size artificial surface.

We will continue to work with the City of Greater Geelong to identify opportunities to explore other training venues to accommodate for the 600 plus participants we cater for.

For now as a family and a community we operate from Grovedale Reserve exclusively.

It's your club, your home and we encourage our members and supporters to freely share their views and experiences whilst at Barwon Soccer Club, with the Sport and Recreation department of the City of Greater Geelong and their local elected political members from all tiers of government. With your backing we will be able to hold constructive discussions.

## PLAYER ASSESSMENT TEMPLATES

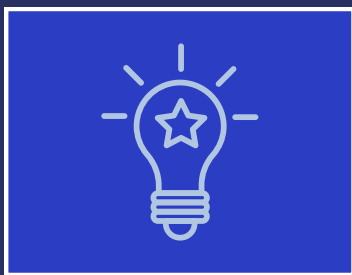
Attached: for the use of coaches and technical director to provide feedback, and development plans for players. Can be used as pre-season squad grading for individual's best fit.

If you wish to discuss your ideas or suggestions with a Coaching Support team or better yet, wish to join the team behind the teams, please feel free to drop an email to:

[president@barwonsc.com.au](mailto:president@barwonsc.com.au)

and we will arrange a time to discuss with you.

# SUGGESTED LINKS



Difficulty accessing any of the links? From time to time the video hosts move the online location of their content. Use the information here to search the video title or host in your chosen search engine.



<https://www.playfootball.com.au/coach/skill-acquisition-phase-sessions>  
PlayFootball Skill Acquisition Phase Sessions



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmWJ-lu8DuU>  
20 Best Basic Ball Mastery Skills  
YouTube channel @proformanceglobal



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yNAVuCf\\_GU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yNAVuCf_GU)  
Drills to Improve Balance Coordination and Reaction Time  
YouTube channel @firafootballfitness5048



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkbHvRISik>  
Strength Training For Youth Footballers u7, u10, u13  
YouTube channel @ArmasStrength

