



American Football South Australia (AFSA)

Junior to Senior Transition Policy

Policy Owner: AFSA Board of Management

Date Approved: April 2026

Last Reviewed: April 2026

Next Scheduled Review: April 2028

Index

1. Policy Overview and Purpose
2. Underlying Principles
3. Scope and Application
4. Core Policy Requirements
5. Procedures / Processes
6. Breaches and Penalties
7. Enforcement and Responsibility
8. Related Policies
9. Policy Review and Approval

1. Policy Overview and Purpose

This policy outlines the eligibility rules and approval process for junior participants transitioning into senior competition within AFSA.

It ensures a structured, safe, and consistent pathway for player development while maintaining the integrity of both junior and senior competitions.

American Football SA's view is that generally players aged under the age of 18 should not compete in Senior American Football due to their physical development, maturity and experience. However we do acknowledge that there may be occasions where it is appropriate for a player under the age of 18 to participate in Senior American Football provided there is a robust procedure in place to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether it is appropriate for the player to participate at that level. Therefore, players that are under 18 years of age that wish to participate in Senior American Football must first gain approval through the Junior to Senior Transition procedure.

This procedure sets out the step-by-step process to consider participation for under 18s in Senior American Football and it applies to all registered players.

It is the responsibility of all Coaches, Club Officials and Parents/Guardians to follow this procedure which has, at its heart, the primary purpose of ensuring the safety of the participant and those that he/she is playing with and against.

2. Core Policy Requirements

2.1 Junior Competition Structure

- The junior program operates as an Under-19 (U19) competition

2.2 Age Eligibility

- Players must be 18 years or younger on 31 December of the relevant competition year to participate in junior competition

2.3 Junior Participation in Senior Competition

Junior players aged 17 or 18 may participate in senior competition under the following conditions:

- Maximum of one (1) half per match
- A half is defined as either:

- First two (2) quarters, or
 - Second two (2) quarters
 - Players must not participate in both halves of the same match
 - Participation must be declared to officials prior to the match
 - Clubs are responsible for monitoring compliance
-

2.4 Under 18 Participation Approval

Players under 18 at the beginning of the current season must receive AFSA Board approval before participating in senior competition:

- Applications assessed on a case-by-case basis
 - Player safety is the primary consideration
 - Official AFSA approval documentation must be completed prior to participation
-

2.5 Progression to Senior Competition

- Players aged 18 who have participated in senior state-level tackle football will be classified as senior players
 - These players are no longer eligible for junior competition
-

3. Procedures / Processes

3.1 Approval Process

- Clubs must submit an application for under 18 players with parent/guardian approval
 - AFSA Board reviews and approves for assessment
 - Assessment by independent coach appointed by AFSA on league specified date
 - Approval must be granted prior to participation in a Senior game
-

4. Breaches and Penalties

4.1 Exceeding Participation Limits

- Player: one (1) match suspension
- Senior Head Coach: one (1) match suspension

4.2 Ineligible Player Participation

- Player: five (5) match suspension
 - Team: match forfeiture
 - Additional penalties may apply
-

5. Enforcement and Responsibility

This policy is enforced by:

- AFSA Board of Management
- Competition officials
- Club administrators

Breaches may be escalated to the Tribunal where required.

6. Related Policies

- Game Day Policy
 - Competition Rules Policy
 - Member Protection Policy
 - Tribunal Policy
-

7. Policy Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years or earlier if required.

It will be assessed to ensure alignment with player safety, development pathways, and AFSA governance standards.