



**JUNIOR
DEVELOPMENT
CUP
APRIL 2026**

**Competition Rules
and Regulations**

April 16th and 17th, 2026

Valentine Sports Park



Football NSW are hosting the Junior Development Cup in April 2026, a tournament offered for affiliated clubs entered in the Football NSW Junior Development League and or equivalent competitions from other Member Federations.

The Junior Development Cup kicks off on **April 16th** with tournaments for the Mixed Under 10s & Girls Under 11s.

TOURNAMENT DETAILS

Dates: 16th & 17th April 2026

Age Groups: Mixed JDL U10s & Girls JDL U11s

Location: Valentine Sports Park

Time: Day 1 (16th April) 9am – 3pm; Day 2 (17th April) 9am – 4pm Format: 9 vs 9 format

Games: Minimum 6 games across both days

Fields: VSP #1, #2, and #3

Playing Format – Boys and Girls (Mixed JDL U10s + Girls JDL U11s)

PLAYER NUMBERS

There will be a maximum of nine (9) players per team on the field, with five (5) subs. Total of fourteen (14) players maximum in a team.

GOAL TYPE

5x2m portable goals will be used.

STRUCTURE OF THE TOURNAMENT

There will be **sixteen (16) teams** in each age group, they will be split into **two (2) separate groups** within each age group.

Eight (8) in each group, playing a total of **six (6)** group stage games. With the **top four (4)** from each group progressing through to the **Quarter Finals**.

Point structure:

- A win will award the team three (3) points.
- A draw will award the team one (1) point.
- A loss will award the team zero (0) points.

Any forfeits will result in the other team receiving **three (3) points and a 3-0 win**.

At the culmination of all group stage games, we will break into finals. With finals following the below structure:

Quarter Finals:

QTR 1 - 1st in Group A vs 4th in Group B

QTR 2 - 2nd in Group A vs 3rd in Group B

QTR 3 - 3rd in Group A vs 2nd in Group B

QTR 4 - 4th in Group A vs 1st in Group B

Semi Finals:**Semi 1 - Winner of QTR 1 vs Winner of QTR 3****Semi 2 - Winner of QTR 2 vs Winner of QTR 4****Final:****Winner of Semi 1 vs Winner of Semi 2****EXTRA TIME**

If a finals game ends in a draw after the twenty-five (25) minutes, the game will commence with two (2) halves of five (5) minutes. If the score is still tied, a penalty shootout will determine the winner. Rather than the usual five (5), we will have three (3) penalty kicks before sudden death begins.

GOALKEEPER

The goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball anywhere in the penalty area. To restart play after a save or gathering the ball with their hands, the ball must be thrown or rolled from the hands or played from the ground with their feet, within six (6) seconds. The goalkeeper is not allowed to kick or drop kick the ball directly from their hands. Opponents must be at least fifteen (15) metres from the goal line (behind the exclusion line) and cannot move inside the penalty area until the ball is in play. The ball is in play once it moves out of the penalty area or when the goalkeeper places the ball on the ground. An indirect free kick is awarded if the goalkeeper touches the ball with their hands after it has been deliberately passed to them by a teammate.

IF A GOALKEEPER KICKS THE BALL FROM THEIR HANDS OR PERFORMS A DROP KICK:**FIRST OCCURRENCE**

Reminder from the Game Leader and play restarts with the goalkeeper in possession (ball in hands).

**SECOND OCCURRENCE**

A direct free kick is awarded from the 15m retreat line.

BALL CROSSING THE TOUCH LINE (THROW IN)

Player faces the field of play, has part of each foot on the ground either on or behind the touch line, uses both hands and delivers the ball from behind and over their head. The thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

Opponents must be at least five (5) metres away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play once it enters the field of play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.

BALL CROSSING THE GOAL LINE AFTER TOUCHING THE DEFENDING TEAM LAST (CORNER)

A player from the attacking team places the ball inside the corner arc nearest to the point where the ball crossed the line.

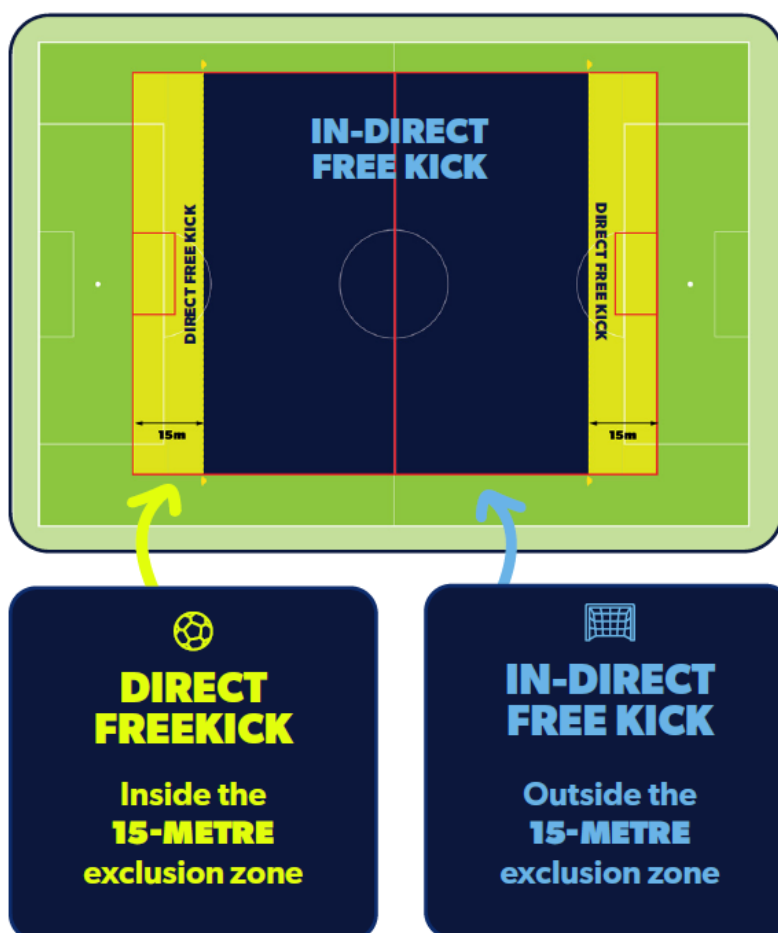
Opponents must be at least five (5) metres away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

BALL CROSSING THE GOAL LINE AFTER TOUCHING THE ATTACKING TEAM LAST (GOAL KICK)

Goal kick from 1-2m from the goal line. Opponents remain at least fifteen (15) metres outside the penalty area (behind the exclusion line) until the ball is in play. Game Leaders should not restart play until they are satisfied all opposition players are at least fifteen (15) metres outside the penalty area. The ball is in play once it is kicked directly out of the penalty area.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT + PENALTIES

Direct free kicks are permitted when awarded inside the 15-metre exclusion zone. This allows players to practise free-kick shooting techniques. Free kicks awarded outside the exclusion zone are indirect. A penalty shall be awarded if a foul listed below is committed inside the penalty area. No indirect free kicks are to be taken within the area, and play may continue if the referee applies advantage. For deliberate or serious acts of handball, or for fouls and misconduct committed inside the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded from the 8-metre penalty mark. All other players must remain outside the penalty area and at least in line with the retreat line (exclusion zone) until the ball is kicked.



Fouls and misconduct are:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges at an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent from behind to gain possession of the ball
- Contacts the opponent before touching the ball
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately
- Playing in a dangerous manner
- Impeding the progress of a player

OFFSIDE

The offside rule applies to encourage positional awareness and fair play; however, within the Junior Development Cup, it should be interpreted with flexibility to support player learning and enjoyment. An obvious offside shall be considered when an attacking player is clearly beyond the second-last defender - typically by 2 to 3 metres or more - at the moment the ball is played and is actively involved in play or gaining an advantage. Marginal or unclear situations, where a player is only slightly ahead of the defender (1m or less) will be allowed to maintain the flow of the game and spirit of the development of players.

CAUTIONS – YELLOW & RED CARDS

In small-sided football we do not typically issue yellow or red cards, however we encourage Game Leaders & Coaches to take responsibility for the safety and welfare of all players. If the Game Leader or Coach believes a serious foul has been committed that would warrant a caution in traditional football formats, we encourage them to utilise one of the following techniques.

- Substitute the player(s) from the match for five (5) minutes.
- Remove the player for the remainder of the game.
- Game Leader to hand over responsibility of the player management to the coach.

GOAL TYPE

To comply with Australian Safety Standards, portable goals must be anchored securely to the ground. The use of sandbags or pegs is recommended when using portable goals. For more information on Australian Safety Standards please visit the Product Safety Australia website: www.productsafety.gov.au.

FIELD MARKINGS

Cones, markers, or painted line markings will be used.

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play when the entire ball is over the goal line or the touch line on the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the Game Leader.

METHOD OF SCORING

A goal is scored when the entire ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar.

SHIN GUARDS

Shin guards must be worn by all players without exception.

CONCUSSION

Any player suspected of suffering from concussion should be examined by a medical practitioner before returning to play. As a general rule, "If in doubt, sit it out". Physio/Medics will be onsite to assist with any injuries.

SUBSTITUTIONS

Players may be rotated on and off the field at any time during the game. A coach/parent may make substitutions while the ball is in play, ensuring the player is off the field before the substitute goes on. Equal playing time should be a priority ensuring all players

regardless of age, gender and/or ability get to take the field. Regular rotation of players is key.

GAME LEADERS

Each game is to be controlled by one Game Leader. The main role of the Game Leader is to keep the game moving fluently, limit stoppages and assist players with all match re-starts. Most importantly, they must make every effort to create an environment that ensures that all players have fun, are learning the game and have maximum involvement.

FIELD SIZE

NUMBER OF PLAYERS	9v9
GOALKEEPER	Yes
FIELD DIMENSIONS	U10s + U11s 55m-65m x 34m- 40m
PENALTY AREA	10m x 20m
GOAL	5m x 2m (Portable)
BALL	Size 4
DURATION	1x 25min (no breaks)
RETREAT LINE/EXCLUSION ZONE	15m from the goal line and clearly marked by cones

