

No. 5

Want to join a sports club?

Tips for newly arrived young people who want to join a club

Overview

Sport represents an integral part of Australia's cultural identity and social structure. For young people in particular, sport provides an opportunity to improve your health and fitness, mix with people of similar age and develop friendships.

For young people who have arrived in Australia from overseas, and for those whose first language is not English, participating in sport provides an opportunity for you to learn about Australian society and can help to improve your English skills.

Research has shown that young people who participate in sport often concentrate better at school and are less likely to get into trouble.

Using this tip sheet

Newly arrived young people can find it difficult to know how to join a club or even where to begin looking. This information sheet is designed to provide some basic information and tips on how to join a sports club in your local area.

Choosing a sport

In Victoria you can play almost any sport you can think of. Some of the most popular sports are:

- Australian Rules Football (or AFL)
- Football (Soccer)
- Basketball
- Netball
- Tennis
- Volleyball
- Cricket

These are called structured sports. This means that they are governed by a State Sporting Association (SSA). The role of the SSA is to organise competitions, support the local clubs and organise programs and events.

Most sports clubs belong to a SSA and will need to pay an affiliation or registration to their SSA. This fee allows the SSA to cover the cost of running competitions.

Sport – access for all cultures.



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How are sports structured?

Not all sports are structured in the same way. Here are two examples of how they might look:

Football (Soccer)

The peak body for football (soccer) in Australia is Football Federation Australia (FFA). FFA is responsible for national teams and the national domestic league. Each state then has its own state federation.

In Victoria, this is Football Federation Victoria (FFV). FFV is the governing body of soccer in the state of Victoria. It is responsible for all aspects of the game including junior and elite development programs, state teams, school development, coaching, referees and women's soccer.

Football Federation Victoria divides its sport into two regions in Victoria - North West of Melbourne and South East of Melbourne.

The FFV then divides its competition into leagues. These include:

- Men's premier league
- Men's provisional leagues
- Men's state leagues
- Women's premier and state leagues
- Thirds and Masters
- Junior boys and girls (under 17 years of age) and sub junior (under 8, 9 and 10 years of age)
- Wheelchair league

Clubs fall into one of the metropolitan regions and will put teams into the different leagues to play in the competition. Some clubs will have teams in each league and other clubs may only have teams in particular leagues. For example, some clubs will only have juniors or they may only have teams in the Thirds league.

Therefore, if you want to play at a state level you need to join a club that has a premier league team. Most players will start at a junior level or the Thirds level and work their way up to a premier league team. To play in a premier league team you need to have had a lot of match experience and practice, as well as attend regular training sessions.

FFV also runs a number of programs that you can join without being a member of a club or part of a team. These include the *All Nations Program*, a competition for newly arrived and refugee young people, and the *GoalKick Program*, a junior development and participation program designed to introduce young boys and girls aged between 5 and 12 to the game of football.

You can contact the Community Programs Coordinator at FFV on (03) 9474 1830 to find out more about these programs. If you have access to the internet you can find out more about FFV and their programs by going to www.footballfedvic.com.au or www.onsidesoccer.org.au

Australian Football

Australian Football is played in every state in Australia and is played during the Winter months from March until September.

At the national level, Australian Football is administered by the Australian Football League (AFL). There are 16 teams in the national league: Adelaide Crows, Brisbane Lions, Carlton Blues, Collingwood Magpies, Essendon Bombers, Fremantle Dockers, Geelong Cats, Hawthorn Hawks, Melbourne Demons, North Melbourne Kangaroos, Port Adelaide Power, Richmond Tigers, St Kilda Saints, Sydney Swans, West Coast Eagles and the Western Bulldogs.

Football Victoria (FV) is the Victorian co-ordinating body for Australian football. FV oversees the Victorian Country Football League as well as the Metropolitan Football League. It also delivers schools programs, female participation initiatives, Auskick, Recreation Football and Multicultural programs.

There are 13 Metropolitan Football Leagues. The Leagues oversee local clubs and competitions. For example, the Western Region Football League is responsible for all the clubs in the Western region of Melbourne. If you are interested in playing Australian football, then this is the level that you can start at.

For more information about the AFL Multicultural Program, go to:

<http://afl.com.au/default.asp?pg=community&spg=multicultural>

Finding a Club

One way to find a club to join is to contact your council and ask to speak to the Recreation Officer. The Recreation Officer is in charge of sporting grounds and clubs in the local area. They will be able to give you the contact numbers for the clubs in your area.

You can also contact the *Go for your life* information line on 1300 73 98 99.

Joining a Club

Once you have found a club in your area, ring them up and find out any information that you need to know. For example, you may want to ask:

- When are the training sessions?
- Where is the training ground?
- What time does training start and finish?
- When are games played and where?
- How much is the membership fee?
- What does the membership fee cover?
- Are there extra costs for training sessions?
- Are there extra costs for uniforms?
- What equipment do I need to participate?
- Is equipment supplied?
- Can I still play even if I haven't played before?

Why does sport cost money?

It is true that sport in Australia can be expensive. The reason for this is that most clubs have expenses that they need to cover so they can keep operating.

When you join a club you most likely have to pay a membership fee. Most football clubs will charge between \$200-\$350 per year for membership. This is so the club can cover cost such as affiliation fees to the relevant State Sport Association, insurance in case of accidents or injuries, competition fees, rent and maintenance of grounds, power, water, gas, phone, electricity and equipment.

In most clubs the coaches, trainers, administrators and other staff are not paid. Most are volunteers who give up their time to help the club.

Some clubs will supply uniforms but you may have to purchase your own uniform and equipment. Make sure you ask about what you need to supply before joining so you know what costs you need to budget for.



Useful organisations to contact

Your local council

Contact details for local councils in Victoria can be found at www.mav.asn.au. Follow the link to 'Council Contacts'

Go for your life

The *Go for your life* website and help line features a community directory of sport and recreation opportunities in your local area.

1300 73 98 99

www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au

Sport and Recreation Victoria

03 9666 4200

www.sport.vic.gov.au

VicSport

03 9654 3755

www.vicsport.asn.au

Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues

Sport and Recreation Program

03 9340 3705

www.cmyi.net.au/MulticulturalSport

State Sporting Associations

Football Federation Victoria (Soccer)

03 9474 1807

www.footballfedvic.com.au

Tennis Victoria

03 9286 1285

www.tennisvic.com.au

Volleyball Victoria

03 9521 4800

www.volleyballvictoria.com.au

Netball Victoria

03 9321 2222

www.netballvic.com.au

Basketball Victoria

03 9927 6666

www.basketballvictoria.com.au

Football Victoria (AFL)

03 8663 3000

www.footballvic.com.au

Other options

You may have a group of friends that just want to play in a team together and don't want to join a club. If this is the case, you may want to think about registering your team in an indoor competition.

Contact your council and find out if there is an indoor sports centre in your area. Indoor centres run competitions for most sports all year round.

You may have to pay a small registration fee when you join and an entry fee to the sports centre each time. However these are often cheaper than a club membership.

Have fun!

Whatever sport you choose to play, remember that sport is about having fun. Try to get a friend to join with you. Sport should be fun and safe for everyone.

ENJOY YOUR SPORT!!!

