

METRO SOUTH JUNIOR FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ZONING RULES FOR UNDER 8's AND UNDER 9's

1. BACKGROUND

Players who are new to the Under 8's and Under 9's competition are often so excited by the experience of playing a "real game of footy" that they have a tendency to follow the ball wherever it goes, in the quest of getting a kick. In fact, it becomes more difficult for all players to get a kick if they are following the ball in close proximity to each other.

Some Leagues have already introduced a concept called "Zoning", which requires players to stay in their allocated sector of the ground during play.

"Zoning" has several positive impacts:-

- it allows the game to be more open, and flow better
- allows more opportunity for all players to get a touch of the ball
- teaches players the importance of the various roles of backs, centres and forward

2. EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

All Under 8's and Under 9's teams will need to have:-

- at least 4 low profile, soft and brightly coloured (yellow, blue) markers that will be used to define the 3 playing zones
- a maximum of 6 red wrist/arm bands that will be used to identify "centre" zone players

3. ZONES

The playing field is to be divided into three roughly equal size zones:-

- "backs"
- "centres"
- "forwards"

These 3 zones should be defined by placing at least two cones on the surface across the ground in the forward half, and another two in the back half.

4. RULES

Before the Game and at Quarter Breaks

- before the match the coaches should agree how many players from each team will play in the centre zone
- at the beginning of each quarter, each player will be told by the coach whether they are playing in the forward, centre or back zone
- players playing in the centre zone must be given an arm/wrist band before entering the field

During Play

- players designated as "forward" zone must stay in that zone, **unless in possession of the ball** – once they have disposed of the ball, they are to return to their zone immediately
- same for players designated "centre" or "back" zone players
- any player playing out of their zone (e.g. "centre" wearing band playing in forward/back zone, OR "forward"/"back" wearing no band playing in "centre" zone) will be deemed to be in breach of the rules
- if a coach, during play, wishes to change the numbers of players he/she has in each of the "forward" and "back" zones, players must not run across zones, they must move to their new Zone by coming off the ground at one end and returning to the field at the other end - same situation applies where interchanges are made during a quarter

5. BREACHES OF THE RULES

The primary mechanism for enforcement of the "Zoning" rules lies with coaches. As part of their coaching responsibilities, they should instruct players who they see playing out of their Zone to return to their designated zone immediately.

Continual breaches of the Zoning rules, by either individuals or teams, are to be penalised by umpires via a free kick to the opposition. The free is to be taken from either

- (a) the line that was crossed by the offending player, or
- (b) the position of the ball at the time of the offence – whichever most advantages the team with the free.