



MACARTHUR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (TDP): PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW



Brief Introduction

The Macarthur Football Association (MFA) is passionate about nurturing talent and providing a clear pathway for players of all ages and abilities. We believe everyone deserves the opportunity to develop their skills and reach their full potential in the our game.

This document outlines the newly created football pathway available in Macarthur for players aged 12-18 years old, the Talent Development Program (TDP).

Purpose of the Talent Development Program (TDP)

The TDP aims to bridge the gap between grassroots and elite levels of football by providing a high-performance environment that will serve as additional high-quality training and games for club-based players. By selecting a group of talented players based in club football each term, it will become a program that not only supports player development in the region but also supports club development as this program will run alongside club football (rather than against it). The TDP therefore will act as both an individual player development focused program to strengthen club football, and as a talent identification process to strengthen player pathways in the region.

Through training that is delivered by experienced and qualified coaches, as well as through playing in higher-quality matches against other member associations and NPL clubs, the TDP will provide an increased number of talented players, an exposure to what a high-performance environment looks and feels like. Alongside our other player development programs, the TDP will become the crucial centrepiece in connecting grassroots and representative football together.

Key Features of the TDP: How It Will Work

FEATURE	A program delivered for both Boys Youth (U12-U18) and Girls Youth (U12-U14)
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- WHY
- ➔ Promoting both Boys Youth and Girls Youth talented player pathways
 - ➔ Build Girls Youth program from U12-U14 initially; expand in future

FEATURE	Players selected exclusively from Boys and Girls Macarthur Youth League (MYL)
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- WHY
- ➔ Further strengthen the Macarthur Youth League competition;
 - ➔ Recognise and reward local players from Member Clubs in Macarthur



FEATURE

Program to run on a term-by-term basis with a group of 18 players per age-group selected each term by TDP coaches

WHY

- ➔ Strengthen the overall talent pool of players across our Member Clubs
- ➔ More opportunities to experience high-performance environment

FEATURE

TDP coaches will regularly attend Boys Youth and Girls Youth MYL competition games throughout the season to observe and identify high-performing players

WHY

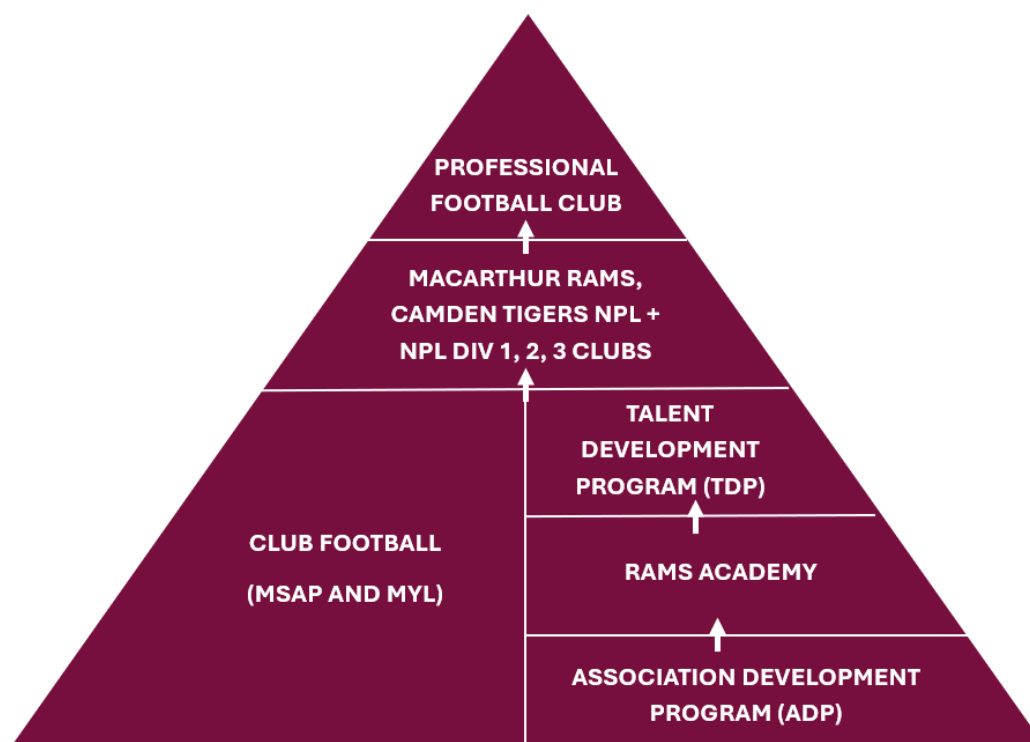
- ➔ Increased talent identification opportunities for local players
- ➔ Greater opportunity for players to progress from club football into representative programs

FEATURE

Develop a more connected Macarthur Football Pyramid

WHY

- ➔ A clear pathway from grassroots football into the elite space
- ➔ ALL programs support the development of better club football



Rams Academy:

This program is designed for players who want to elevate their skills and potentially compete at the elite levels of JDL, NPL, or TDP. The program is a collaboration between Macarthur Football Association and Macarthur Rams FC.

Association Development Program:

A term-based community program for boys and girls aged 5-13. It's designed to supplement club training and help young players develop skills in a fun and supportive environment.

Head of Program: Tim Aitken

The Talent Development Program (TDP) will be led by MFA Head of Football, Tim Aitken.

Tim brings over eight years of experience in elite football in Australia with a strong focus on player development in both the men's and women's programs.

From January 2019 to October 2024, he held dual roles at Macarthur FC—serving as the Assistant Coach for the A-League Men's First Grade team while also leading the club's NPL program as Technical Director. These positions highlight his ability to operate across professional and development environments simultaneously, delivering high standards both on and off the pitch.



Tim has also worked with Football Australia's Youth Boys State Teams at recent National Championships, helping identify and mentor emerging talent on the national stage. He was involved in the women's football environment through being assistant coach to Leah Blamey in both the Future Matildas program and the Young Matildas Asian Cup 2024 campaign. This further showcases his ability and commitment to advancing the game for all athletes. He has been with the Macarthur Football Association since October 2024 and has shown in the short time his commitment to developing the next generation of footballers.

Holding a Football Australia A Licence, Tim brings a wealth of technical knowledge and leadership. In his role, he will oversee the delivery of a high-quality Talented Player Development (TDP) program—guiding and mentoring coaches, shaping program standards, and playing a hands-on role in the development of players within the elite pathway.



Planned Delivery for 2025/ 2026

The TDP program will be run on a term-by-term basis with 18 players per age group selected by TDP coaches exclusively from the Macarthur Youth League (MYL). The following will be our planned delivery with specific age groups that will run from Term 3 2025 to Term 2 2026:

GIRLS	U12	U13	U14	*expand program to U15+ in 2027 and beyond		
BOYS	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U18

TERM 3 2025

Talent Identification for Term 3 2025 Program

TDP coaches or MFA staff to attend MYL Games: Saturday 28th June, Saturday 5th July and Saturday 12th July. All coaches have available scouting template to identify talented opposition players.

Term 3 2025 Talent Development Program

a 10-week program run on Monday evenings @ Lynwood Park, St Helen's Park
Monday 21st July – Monday 22nd September 2025

TERM 4 2025

Talent Identification for Term 4 2025 Program

September/ October 2025: School Holiday Trials (existing AYL players + Term 3 TDP + trialists)

Term 4 2025 Talent Development Program

a 10-week program run on Monday evenings @ Lynwood Park (artificial pitch), St Helen's Park
Monday 13th October – Monday 15th December 2025

TERM 1 2026

Talent Identification for Term 1 2026 Program

January 2026: School Holiday Trials (to be held late January)

Term 1 2026 Talent Development Program

a 10-week program run on Monday evenings @ Lynwood Park, St Helen's Park
Monday 26th January – Monday 30th March 2026

TERM 2 2026

Talent Identification for Term 2 2026 Program

April 2026: MYL Gala-Day (to be held in April school holidays)

Term 2 2026 Talent Development Program:

a 10-week program run on Monday evenings @ Lynwood Park, St Helen's Park
Monday 20th April – Monday 22nd June 2026

Player Selection Process

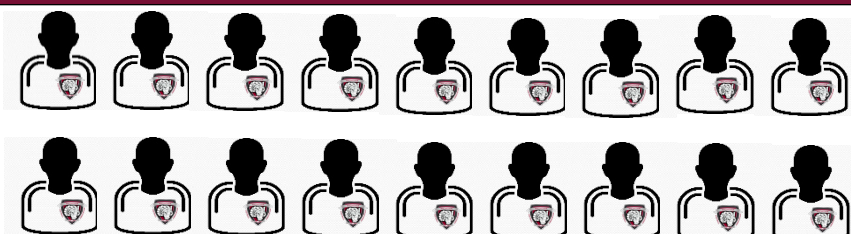
In-line with our other player development programs, the TDP will be a football player pathway opportunity made available for both boys youth and girls youth players in the Macarthur region.

The players for all age-group opportunities will be selected exclusively from the Boys and Girls Macarthur Youth League (MYL) competitions and will initially involve 18 players to be offered a spot per relevant age-group, with 6 extras players to be a standby selection. For future terms, the same selection process will take place however, a minimum of 6 new players must be selected.

INITIAL PLAYER SELECTION

18 players selected and offered spot in Talent Development Program each term

(selected from Macarthur Youth League competitions)



6 players picked as standby selection

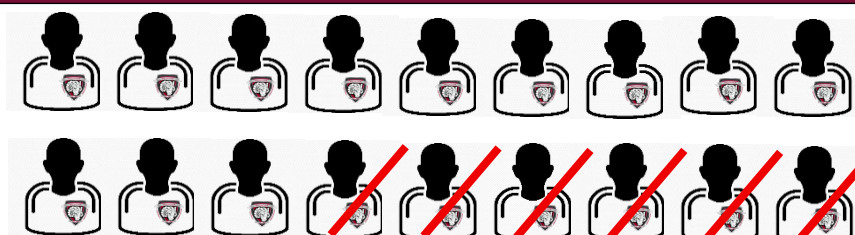
(to be offered spot if any selected players decline offer; if not included, offered spot in Rams Academy w/ price discount)



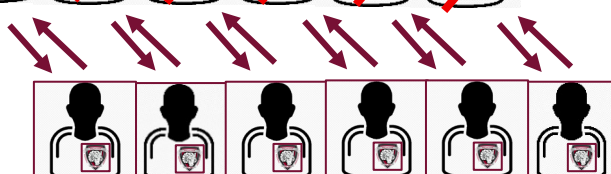
FUTURE TERM PLAYER SELECTION (*excluding Term 3 2026 selection)

18 players selected and offered spot in Talent Development Program

(selected from Macarthur Youth League)



However, a minimum of 6 players must be newly selected from MYL competitions



(6 players removed offered spot in Rams Academy for next term (price discount); chance to rejoin TDP in future term)

Macarthur Team of the Year: Term 3 2026

After the completion of the Term 3 2025 to Term 2 2026 cycle, TDP coaches and supporting technical staff will select a “Macarthur Team of the Year”. The Team of the Year for each relevant age-group will take part in a further term of training (Term 3 2026) and compete in an end-of-season tournament against other Member Associations and NPL clubs.

18 players selected as “Macarthur Team of the Year” - for each relevant age-group
(selected from Macarthur Youth League competitions/ previous term TDP groups)



“Team of the Year” take part in Term 3 2026 Talent Development Program

a 10-week program run on Monday evenings @ Lynwood Park, St Helen’s Park
Monday 20th July – Monday 21st September 2026

Compete as “Macarthur Team of the Year” at End-of-Season Tournament

End-of-Season Tournament against other Member Associations and/or NPL clubs
To take place in September/ October school holidays 2026 (full details TBC)

Future Delivery of Program

In the future phases of delivery of the TDP beyond Term 3 2026, the program will take place on a yearly cycle between Term 4 and Term 3 with the below as the planned delivery for each term (e.g., for next cycle between Term 4 2026 - Term 3 2027):

Term 4 2026 = Initial TDP for 2026/27 cycle; selected from Sep 2026 school holiday trials

Term 1 2027 = TDP #2; selected from Jan 2027 school holiday trials

Term 2 2027 = TDP #3; selected on MYL Gala-Day

Term 3 2027 = TDP #4 w/ Macarthur Team of the Year + End-of-Season Tournament

Program Offering: What is Included in the TDP?



TRAINING DELIVERED BY
EXPERIENCED AND
QUALIFIED COACHES



HIGH-QUALITY GAMES w/
MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS
and/or NPL



HEAD OF PROGRAM TO
SUPPORT TDP AND
MYL COACHES



TALENT ID PROCESS FOR
LOCAL PLAYERS
(AT MYL GAMES)



RAMS ACADEMY AS
SUPPORTING PROGRAM
(DISCOUNTED RATE)



GIOCA TALENT
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
TRAINING KIT



MACARTHUR TEAM OF THE
YEAR RECOGNITION



MYL COMPETITION
SUPPORT



INDIVIDUAL PLAYER
DEVELOPMENT
(WORKSHOPS)