



MEMO

DATE: Tuesday 18th February
TO: Northern Inland Football – Northern Affiliated Clubs
FROM: NNSWF CEO, David Eland
SUBJECT: Response to Club Forum - 11 February 2020

For Information or Action	Action required	When	NNSWF Contact
Action	Complete survey and commit to affiliation in 2020	Sunday 23 rd February	Liam Bentley lbentley@northernnswfootball.com.au

Dear All,

Thank you for attending the Club Forum conducted by NNSWF in Armidale on 11th February. The discussion identified several issues which need to be addressed to ensure our game remains united and continues to provide sustainable participation opportunities for communities throughout the Northern Inland. As agreed, I write to provide NNSWF's and NIF's initial response to the issues raised and to seek further feedback about the competition structure, which will underpin participation.

The most significant response to last week's meeting is that NIF has agreed that NNSWF will be overseeing the administration of competitions in 2020. NIF's General Manager, Julia Farina will report to NNSWF Football Operations Manager, Liam Bentley. This structural change will provide a direct line of oversight and administrative support to the Northern Inland. This will also provide NIF with direct access to the expertise and resources available through NNSWF's Football Operations Department.

Competition Structure

Please find below a link to a brief survey which will be sent to all clubs in the NIF region. The survey asks a couple of simple questions and subsequently asks clubs to rank aspects such as travel, competitiveness etc. in order of preference. This information will be essential to establishing a competition environment which meets the expectations of clubs competing in the Premier League as well as underpinning competitions. An open text box has been added at the end of the survey. We strongly encourage clubs to provide feedback which can be used to shape competitions in the region.

Time was clearly a factor at the forum. In response, all clubs are asked to complete the survey by this coming Sunday (23rd) midnight, to allow us to consider the responses and determine next steps, which will include a teleconference and/or Zoom online meeting before the end of the month. This will allow us to discuss and confirm the competition structure for the 2020 season.



Unfortunately, unanimous agreement is rarely achieved, however the proposed consultation process will ensure clubs have a voice and different perspectives are considered. All clubs are encouraged to complete the survey as a sign of their commitment to affiliation with NIF and NNSWF in 2020 and beyond.

Please note that the survey will be distributed throughout NIF to ensure all clubs have the opportunity to have input into the competition structure.

<https://form.jotform.com/NNSWFComps/NIF-Competition-Structure>

Communications Protocol

Communication is critical to effective governance and respectful working relationships. In response, NNSWF and NIF propose the adoption of the attached Communications Protocol, which ensures that all parties are aware of their responsibilities and expectations relating to communication. The protocols set out clear expectations in relation to not only how both parties should communicate with each other but also the timelines on which each party can expect a response.

Roles and responsibilities within Northern Inland Football will also be established and distributed to ensure everyone is aware of which staff member is responsible for which area and ultimately who is the most appropriate to follow up.

Northern Inland Football will also introduce a numbered memo system which will underpin formal communication with member clubs. All memos will be filed consistently, and a fortnightly summary of memos will be distributed to member clubs.

Communication in this regard is a two-way street. Clubs should be able to expect an acknowledgement swiftly and ultimately any required action in due course, and NIF should be able to expect attendance at meetings and responses to questions around competition issues from the clubs when appropriate.

By adopting the attached protocol, there should be clear guidelines for everyone in the region.

Disciplinary

As stated at the forum, it is important to reaffirm that all sanctioned competitions must adhere to the FFA National Disciplinary Regulations. Whilst the NDR's are broad ranging, they set down the key principals for disciplinary procedures in football. In 2020 NIF has adopted new procedures which were implemented by NNSWF in 2019. There are several key amendments to previous regulations.

Firstly, a minimum mandatory suspensions table has been incorporated into the regulations. This table in section 25.4 of the document outlines the minimum mandatory suspensions for relevant offences. For example, for any red card given for Violent conduct the following grading system is used based on the reports submitted by the match official:



R2	Violent Conduct (typically, but not limited to, serious foul play when the ball is not in play, and/or playing distance)	1. Minimal contact with an opponent or Club Associate	Auto +1
		2. Violent conduct and/or attempted violent conduct towards an opponent or Club Associate	Auto +1
		3. Serious and/or premeditated violent conduct towards an opponent or Club Associate	Auto +2
		4. Serious violent conduct that has caused bodily harm	Auto +3
		5. Violent conduct causing, or with the potential to cause, serious injury	Auto +4

This allows for much greater transparency, clubs and players are aware of what they can expect as a minimum for all red card offences.

Secondly, the hearing and appeals process has been detailed clearly in the Regulations, this shows all clubs and players the clear steps that can be taken in relation to any on or off field disciplinary issues. NIF will appoint an independent Disciplinary Chair who will conduct hearings, appeals and provide direction to the Competition Administrator. This procedure aligns with NNSWF's approach to discipline.

In relation to suspensions, clear guidelines have now been included with regards to what suspended individuals are, and are not, permitted to do on a match day. These clear protocols allow NIF to take further action on any suspended person not adhering to the terms of their suspension.

NIF's Competition Administrators will meet weekly with NNSWF's Football Operations Manager to discuss key incidents and ensure they are dealt with in a fair, transparent and timely manner. A streamlined process involving the use of templates will improve communication in relation to disciplinary issues.

The National Disciplinary Regulations ensure that all parties have access to a fair, transparent and robust disciplinary system with the right to appeal.

Access to Player Development Programs and Talented Player Pathways

Player Development in Regional NSW is a strategic priority for NNSWF. NNSWF is committed to working with NIF to identify and develop players who have the potential to represent NNSWF at the National Youth Championships and progress to National teams. As is the case with all team sports it is important to acknowledge that there is a point where centralised programs are necessary to ensure that talented players regularly train and play with their peers.

NIF has administered and managed Player Development Programs within the Northern region in the past which include:

- Under 9 SAP (Boys)
- Under 10 SAP (Boys)
- Under 11 SAP (Boys)



- Under 12 SAP(Boys)
- Under 12 SAP (Girls)
- Under 14 (Girls)

In 2020, NIF is administering, managing and supporting a SAP squad within the Armidale area for the U10 SAP. This squad comprises of both 9 and 10-year-old players and will participate in NNSWF's Regional SAP Gala Days held throughout the season.

2020 will also see NIF compete in NNSWF's Northern League One competition which underpins the National Premier League Youth structure. I am informed by NIF that players from Armidale are involved with NIF Northern League One squads across all age groups, however at this point training is centralised in Tamworth due to players also coming from Gunnedah and Tamworth. NIF is open to considering alternating training between the North and South if participation justifies.

NNSWF will be conducting a Talent Support Program in each Regional Zone in 2020 which provides opportunities for players who have the potential to represent NNSWF at National Youth Championships to get additional training at a higher level than they may get a club level.

NNSWF will assess the identified players within NIF and will position TSP training as appropriate to the players within the program. (i.e. share training between Tamworth and Armidale and other areas if there are enough players to justify it).

NNSWF Technical Director will prioritise NIF and the Armidale region (and its surrounds) by conducting an information seminar based around the Talented Player Pathway and access for Regional participants. A series of training sessions for identified age groups will be implemented in conjunction with the NIF TD. These sessions will form part of the Talent ID process for NIF's Northern League One program as well as the NNSWF Talent Support Program (TSP).

NIF has agreed that NIF's Technical Director will report to NNSWF's TD with respect to all technical matters.

NIF Festival of Football

In response to last week's forum, NNSWF and NIF have committed to implement a Festival of Football in the lead up to the next season. The festival will showcase the many benefits of affiliation to NIF, NNSWF and FFA. There will be opportunities for all stakeholder groups within the game to engage in participation opportunities, training, education and connection to the sport through football clubs generally.

The proposed Festival of Football could include activities such as:

- School gala day;
- Coaching masterclass;
- Referee course;
- Introduction to the new Laws of The Game for clubs;



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- Volunteer training workshop;
- Club Development seminar; and
- Club MiniRoos Gala Day.

An outline of an example Festival itinerary is below:

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
AM	AM	AM	AM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School gala day (Catchment Area 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School gala day (Catchment Area 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club MiniRoos Gala Day • Level 4 Referee course
PM	PM	PM	PM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching masterclass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer training workshop (e.g. Duty Officer, MPIO & WWCC training) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club Development seminar • Club LOTG Presentation 	

I am confident that our response indicates that we have listened and considered the issues raised by clubs at last week’s forum. Clearly this is just the start and we’re committed to work with NIF to better meet the needs and expectations of affiliated clubs. Affiliation to NIF, NNSWF and FFA ensures that your club continues to have access to a myriad of programs and services, underpinned by a robust governance framework, which facilitate the best possible football environment for all.

Yours in Football,

David Eland
NNSWF
Chief Executive Officer