



Maccabi FC Caulfield - Pre-Season and Trials 2026

A parent's guide to what to expect, and how to help your child thrive!

Our MiniRoos (U8 to U11) philosophy

MiniRoos at Maccabi is about development and enjoyment, not results. There are no ladders, no finals, and technically no scores kept. Equal game time and positional rotation are core principles.

Why we grade

We grade to place kids in the most suitable level of competition so they can learn, improve, and really enjoy their football. In MiniRoos, the leagues are Joeys, Wallabies, and Kangaroos. Getting the level right supports confidence, development, and fun.

Players develop at different ages

Kids grow and improve at different times. Being placed in a team this season does not lock a player into that level forever. A child can make big strides over an off season through maturity, confidence, training, and simply time.

For that reason, we do not aim to keep teams identical year on year. While continuity can be nice socially, it can limit opportunities for players who have developed and are ready for a new level of challenge. Grading each year helps us reset fairly and place players where they will enjoy football and keep improving.

Pre season and trial structure

Grading is based on observed performance across structured game formats and assessment criteria aligned to best practice player development principles.

Week 1: small sided games (3v3, 4v4)

Ball mastery, 1v1 ability, first touch, coordination, confidence in possession.

Week 2: medium sided games (5v5, 7v7)

Passing and receiving, decision making, movement off the ball, awareness, use of both feet.

Week 3: larger game formats (7v7 and 9v9 where applicable)

Position awareness, transition moments, teamwork, consistency.

Players are assessed relative to their age and developmental stage, not as finished products.

Weeks 4 to 6: provisional squads and team balancing

At the end of the initial three weeks, provisional squads are announced and teams begin training in those squads.

Teams are not final at this point!

Over the following three weeks, further assessment and team balancing may occur. This is where we



make sure each team is workable and appropriately balanced. For example, we may adjust teams to ensure a sensible spread of positions and roles, and to respond to changes in registrations or availability.

After week 6: teams confirmed

Teams are finalised after the additional three week training block and will be posted in the Stack Team App. Stability during the season supports team cohesion, confidence, and structured development within each group.

What we assess at trials

We assess players relative to their age and stage of development, not as finished products. Selection decisions consider holistic development rather than isolated performance moments.

Technical - First touch, dribbling, passing quality, shooting technique, ball protection.

Tactical and game understanding - Decision making, positioning, awareness, transition reactions.

Physical (age appropriate) - Coordination, balance, agility, repeat efforts.

Psychological and behavioural - Coachability, resilience, effort, positive team behaviour.

Friends and Family

We understand friendships and sibling connections matter, and we will try to accommodate requests where reasonably possible.

If two players want to be together and are assessed at different levels, they can be placed together at the level that best supports the player who needs a more supported environment. This helps keep the experience positive and fair for both players and the team.

All requests remain subject to registrations, team sizes, and overall balance across the age group.

Goalkeepers and positions (MiniRoos)

In U8 to U11, goalkeeper and outfield positions are rotated. We discourage fixed positions at these ages unless a player strongly insists on playing as a specialist goalkeeper and it supports their enjoyment and development.

Late registrations and missed sessions

Late registrations and players who miss trial sessions can be assessed during the additional three week training period after provisional squads are formed. This is one of the reasons teams are not finalised immediately after the initial three week trial block.

Commitment and participation expectations

By accepting a place in a team, families are making an implied commitment to show up, be reliable, and support the group. Football is a team sport, and consistent attendance affects not only development but also the experience of every teammate.



MiniRoos commitment and potential movement

For MiniRoos, players will generally remain in their team for the season once teams are finalised, because stability supports cohesion, confidence, and development.

However, movement may be required at MiniRoos level if there is a serious and ongoing lack of commitment that consistently impacts the rest of the team, for example repeated absences from training and matches, regular no shows, or patterns that repeatedly let teammates down.

In the first instance, the coach will discuss this with the parent or guardian, with the aim of understanding what is happening and agreeing on a path forward. If the issue continues, the matter may be referred to the Football Department for review and a final decision.

Where appropriate, the outcome may be that the player is moved into another team that better suits their availability and provides a more social and flexible experience, while helping protect the team environment for the group they were originally selected into.

Feedback and review

If you would like to provide feedback about grading or team placement, please email ccc@mfcc.com.au.

Every piece of feedback will be considered and reviewed objectively. Please treat all volunteers and employees of the club with respect. Sideline debate or personal criticism is not acceptable and does not support your child or the club community.

Final decisions on grading and team selection sit with the Football Department and CCC.

Fees and refunds

Maccabi FC charges:

- \$155 for pre season and grading
- \$550 for the season

Pre season and grading involves real costs and commitments. If a family chooses to leave the club due to disagreement with team placement, no refund will be offered on the pre season and grading fee.

While we will be disappointed to lose a player due to a grading disagreement, we will wish them well and will always welcome them back should they decide to return in future seasons.



A parent's guide to navigating the stress of trials

Trials can feel big for kids, and for parents too. Your job is not to manage the outcome. Your job is to help your child feel safe, supported, and proud of having a crack.

Do

- **Arrive early**
Aim to be at trials before the scheduled start time so your child can settle, warm up, and feel ready to perform at their best.
- **Praise effort and courage**
Notice the things they can control, attitude, work rate, bravery, giving things a go.
- **Normalise nerves**
Feeling nervous is part of it, it usually means they care.
- **Stay calm yourself**
Your steady presence helps them stay grounded.
- **Encourage balance**
Good food, enough sleep, hydration, and downtime away from football talk.
- **Listen, don't fix**
Be available if they want to talk, without over analysing every moment.
- **Reframe outcomes**
Whatever happens, treat it as learning and growth, another step in their journey.

Don't

- **Add pressure**
Avoid phrases like "This is your big chance", and avoid comparisons to other kids.
- **Over coach**
Leave instructions to the coaches, your role is encouragement and support.
- **Dwell on mistakes**
Everyone makes them. Trials are about the bigger picture.
- **Interrogate**
Instead of "Did you play well?" try "How did you feel out there?"
- **Treat a no as failure**
Selection outcomes do not define your child's future.
- **Let it dominate home life**
Keep perspective, your child is so much more than just a footballer.

The message we want every family to hear

Grading can be challenging, and it is also a chance to learn resilience, determination and confidence. Our job is to make the season enjoyable at every level across the club. Embrace the challenge, make new friends, connect, and have fun.



Juniors (U12 to U18)

Juniors philosophy

Juniors football builds on the same foundations as MiniRoos, development, enjoyment, resilience, and connection. As players get older, the game also becomes more structured and competitive, and expectations around roles, tactics, and performance increase.

Where there is only one team in an age group, the focus remains on building confidence, skill, game understanding, and love of the game, while competing in an appropriate competition.

Where there are multiple teams in an age group, grading is used to place players into squads where they will develop best and to create balanced teams across the age group.

Junior trials and selection

Trials and grading are based on observed performance in game based formats and assessment criteria aligned to best practice player development principles. Players are assessed relative to age and developmental stage, and selection decisions consider holistic development rather than isolated moments.

As age increases, additional weight is placed on:

- tactical understanding and decision making under pressure
- work rate, consistency, and commitment
- coachability, attitude, and being a good teammate

Game time in Juniors

In MiniRoos, equal game time is a core principle.

In Juniors, game time is managed fairly and thoughtfully, but it may not always be equal, particularly in competitive leagues where results affect ladders, finals, promotion, relegation, or advancement. Coaches will aim to develop the whole squad across the season, provide meaningful opportunities for improvement, and communicate expectations clearly, while also making decisions that reflect the competition environment.

Commitment in Juniors

By accepting a place in a Junior team, families are making an implied commitment to attend training and matches consistently, communicate early when unavailable, and support the group.

Where there are extended absences, repeated no shows, or patterns that regularly let the team down, the coach will address it with the parent or guardian first. If the issue continues, it may be referred to the Football Department for review and a final decision.

Feedback and review for Juniors

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