

# Community Club Sustainability Program

## Overview

September 2018



## The background to the Community Club Sustainability Program ....

AFL NSW/ACT believes that ensuring competitions are competitively balanced is critical to safeguarding the ongoing viability and sustainability of competitions and clubs. Even and fair competitions lead to increased interest and provide a better experience for stakeholders, which leads to stronger competitions and clubs.

The future sustainability of community football will be built upon highly competitive leagues, where costs are controlled and are within the fundraising means of volunteer administrators.

Competitive balance measures already exist in some leagues in NSW/ACT, however with AFL Victoria investing significant time and energy into the development of a state-wide system, AFL NSW/ACT are now implementing a similar regime to achieve improved competitive balance outcomes and also consistency across the states.

While more relevant to some leagues than others, the significant movement of players between community clubs and the lack of focus on junior/ senior alignment and youth development across community leagues, has been identified as a key issue affecting the sustainability of community football.

## The national direction to ensure the future sustainability of competitions and clubs ...

- In 2015, the AFL undertook a national Future Directions of Australian Football project which, amongst other things, made a series of recommendations to drive future growth and sustainability of state and community football.
- The Future Directions of Australian Football report (2016) recommended the implementation a competitive balance framework for state and community football competitions across Australia to address sustainability, youth development and competitiveness issues.
- In South Australia and Victoria, all community leagues have adopted a standard Community Club Sustainability Program which includes a player points system and a salary cap.
- Given the relatively significant differences between community leagues across NSW and the ACT, the player points system embedded in the Community Club Sustainability Program has been gradually and successfully implemented across NSW/ ACT regions and leagues.

## Safeguarding the interests of Community Football

The general philosophy behind the Community Club Sustainability Program is based on the following four objectives in the best interests of Community Football:

- 1) Assisting the equalisation of community competitions
- 2) Promoting and rewarding player loyalty and junior development
- 3) Improving the sustainability of Community Clubs by minimizing player movement
- 4) Supporting the role volunteers undertake in managing their clubs by:
  - a) Reducing the need to recruit new players annually
  - b) Providing a more competitive environment on field, that encourages more volunteers to support at club level
  - c) Providing resources and education

## The introduction of the Community Club Sustainability Program across NSW and the ACT

The player points system embedded in the Community Club Sustainability Program has been gradually and successfully implemented across NSW/ ACT regions and leagues as follows:

- 2016: AFL Canberra First Grade, Riverina FNL Seniors, Farrer FNL Seniors
- 2017: Hume FNL Seniors
- 2018: AFL South Coast Division 1, Black Diamond Cup, AFL Sydney Women's Premier Division, AFL Canberra Women's First Grade
- 2019: AFL Sydney Premier Division

AFL NSW/ ACT has not mandated the implementation of a player points system across NSW/ ACT, but any competitive balance mechanisms must align to the AFL NSW/ ACT model. Player points systems operate within a standard AFL framework with local variations approved by AFL NSW/ ACT.

AFL NSW/ ACT has three standard player point systems as follows:

1. Senior Men's Competitions in ACT/ SNSW – aligned to the AFL Victoria system to ensure a regional approach
2. Senior Men's Competitions for all other NSW competitions – which acknowledges the varied standards of community competitions across NSW and the ACT
3. Senior Women's Competitions – which takes into account the unique aspects of female football

## The success of the Community Club Sustainability Program ...

- In 2017, AFL NSW/ACT conducted a survey with Southern NSW and AFL Canberra Clubs which was completed by 35 clubs and confirmed that:
  - 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the clubs believed that the player points system was improving the competitiveness of competitions after only 2 years of operation.
  - 86% of clubs believe that the Player Points System has been easy to understand and manage at club level.
- AFL Victoria conducted a survey at the end of the 2016 season which was completed by 325 clubs in the state and highlighted support for the framework including that:
  - 60% of clubs believe that the Player Points System is easy to understand and not overly onerous to administer;
  - 61% of clubs agree that the framework helps develop relationships between junior and senior clubs.

## Player Points System Explained

The Player Points System was identified as a potential method to reduce the movement of players between clubs, improve player loyalty and the enhance the sustainability of community clubs.

The Player Points System is designed to:

- ✓ Better manage player movement
- ✓ Reward player loyalty
- ✓ Encourage the development of junior players at an existing club

The Player Points System is also designed to differentiate between certain levels of community football. It is acknowledged that community football is made up of players at different levels and an effort has been made to categorise these community footballers based upon their playing history and achievements.

The overall aim of the Player Points System is to assist clubs in managing their recruitment strategies and to provide them with a tool that encourages player retention and also minimises the freedom of movement currently enjoyed by players, which is often at the expense of even competitions and sustainable clubs.

The Player Points System has been designed to provide a consistent approach across competitions and at the same time recognise and accommodate the varying standards between leagues. Accordingly it is seen as a system which will assist in the equalisation of competitions.

**To administer the Player Points System each League has formed their own League Equalisation Panels, which will adjudicate on matters relating to player and/or club points within stipulated timeframes.**

# Player Points System Explained ... standard AFL NSW/ ACT model

PLAYER POINTS SYSTEM – CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS			
Category 7	7 points	AFL Player	Minimum 1 AFL game in any of the previous 3 seasons.
Category 6	6 points	State League Tier 1 - VFL, WAFL, SANFL	Minimum 5 senior games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons.
Category 5	5 points	TAC Cup	Minimum 5 games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons.
		State League Tier 2 - NEAFL, TASFL	Minimum 5 senior games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons.
Category 4	4 points	Premium Community Player	Minimum 5 senior games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons in a Tier 1 Community League
Category 3	3 points	Senior Community Player	Played the same or more senior than reserves (or non-highest division) games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons (excluding Tier 1 Community Leagues.) For clarity, this includes any players from AFL Sydney Platinum Div. Played more reserves than seniors games in a Tier 1 Community League
		Transferred Junior	Player recruited from an U19's or younger competition and does not meet the home club definition.
Category 2	2 points	Development Community Player	Played more reserves (or non-highest division) than senior (or highest division) games in the previous season (excluding Tier 1 Community Leagues.)
Category 1	1 point	Home Player	Played 40 or more games at the aligned junior club up to and including U18 competition or younger.
			Player who has only played at that club.
			Player who has not played any football for 2 or more full seasons

Definitions	
<b>Tier 1 Community Leagues</b>	AFL Sydney Premier Division, AFL Canberra 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade, Farrer FL Seniors, Riverina FL Seniors, Hume FL Seniors, Black Diamond Cup, QAFL, QFA Division 1, NTFL and any senior community competition affiliated to AFL Victoria, the SANFL or the WAFL.
<b>Junior Aligned Club</b>	Where seniors and juniors exist under the same constitution, or where there is a memorandum of understanding in place between standalone senior and junior clubs that is approved by a League Equalisation Panel. Senior clubs can have multiple MOU's with junior clubs and junior clubs could have multiple MOU's with senior clubs. All MOU's must be approved by League Equalisation Panels to ensure appropriate player pathways exist.





## Player Points System Explained ... standard AFL NSW/ ACT model

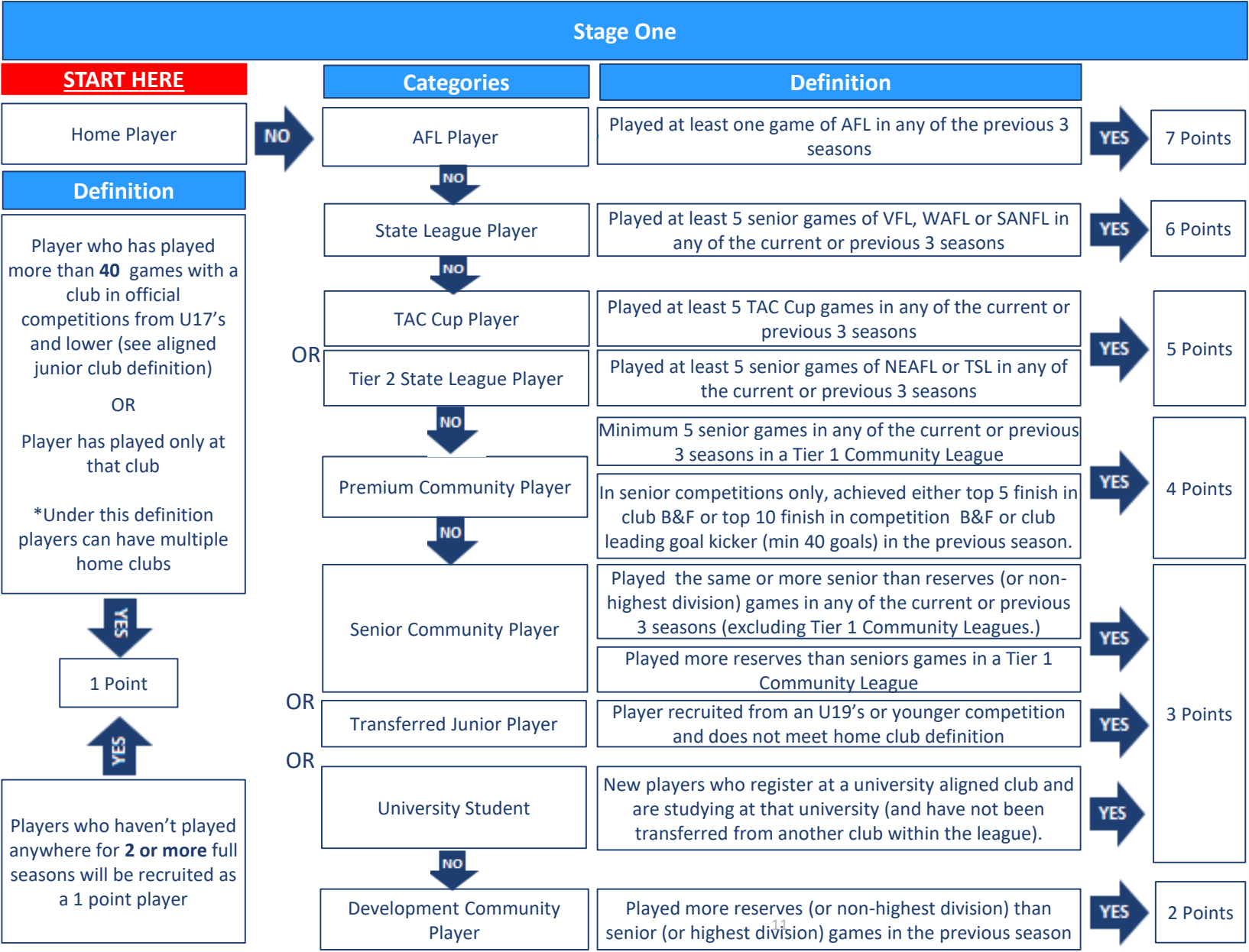
ADDITIONS & DEDUCTIONS – POINTS ALLOCATION		
ADDITIONAL PENALTY PLAYER POINTS	Additional 1 point	If player transferring from another community club and will be competing against their former club (does not include Category 2 Development Community Player)
		If player transferred to three or more community clubs in past 36 months. Does not include players moving on permit (e.g.: VFL, TAC Cup, NTFL or Local Interchange).
DEDUCTIONS FOR PLAYER POINTS	Deduct 1 point	For each season of service to the club (minimum 5 senior or reserves games per season), even if not in consecutive years, until the player reaches 1 point. #Note: if the player is eligible for underage football at that club, it must be 5 senior games to meet the criteria for a year of service.
	Revert to 3 points	New players who register at a university aligned club and are studying at that university (and have not been transferred from another club within the league), where such club does not have a junior/ youth pathway in comparison to other clubs.
	Revert to 1 point	Where player is returning to their home club.
Where player has not played in the previous 36 months.		

## Player Points System Explained ... standard AFL NSW/ ACT model

### ADDITIONS & DEDUCTIONS – LEAGUE EQUALISATION PANEL ASSESSMENT

- 1) League Equalisation Panels may reassess an individual player's points classification where the Panel deems in its ultimate discretion that the prescribed points allocation is inappropriate based on the player's playing history.
- 2) Where a player qualifies in more than one category based on their playing history in the previous 3 seasons, the category with the highest points will apply, hence the use of the flow chart (Note: Home players are excluded).
- 3) Any player that does not meet any of the prescribed point categories will need to apply to the League Equalisation Panel who will determine the appropriate points allocation in its ultimate discretion.
- 4) The League Equalisation Panel may take into account the following in determining whether or not the imposition of the additional point is appropriate in the circumstances:
  - The nature and location of the player's employment;
  - The principle place of residence of player's family members;
  - The principle place of residence of the player's partner or spouse;
  - The player's previous history and/ or relationship with the Club; and
  - Any other factors deemed appropriate by the assessment panel in its absolute discretion.

# Player Points Calculation Flowchart



### Stage Two

ONCE STAGE ONE HAS BEEN COMPLETED, SHOULD A PLAYER MEET EITHER OF THE CONDITIONS BELOW, ONE ADDITIONAL POINT WILL BE ADDED TO THE PLAYERS POINTS ALLOCATION FOR EACH CONDITION MET AS DETERMINED BY THE PANEL

- If a player transfers to a community club and will be competing in the same competition and against their former community club, (does not include Category 2 – Development Community Players).
- Three or more different community clubs in past 36 months.

**Note:**  
A player that does not meet any of the categories will need to apply to the League Equalisation Panel who will determine the appropriate points allocation.

## Points allocation for existing players of a community club

In order to determine the points allocation for a club's current senior players (already existing players who will be going into at least their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of service for the club) for the upcoming season, clubs will need to assess all those players against the previous flow chart. This will allow clubs to determine what a player's points allocation would have been in the year they arrived. You will only need to do this for players who haven't provided clubs with 5 years of service already, as they are guaranteed to now be a 1 point player based on the deduction system.

Once clubs have gone back to work out what a player's points allocation would have been when they first arrived at your club, **deduct one point off for every year of service the player provided to the club** until they are down to the minimum allocation of one point.

*Note:* The player must have played at least 5 senior or reserves games for the club in that season for a point to be deducted the following season, or if the player was eligible to play junior football, they must have played a minimum of 5 senior games.

While the allocation of points to existing players may be time consuming to begin with, once this process has been completed in preparation for the 2018 season, clubs will only have to allocate player points to any new players each year.

*Note:* Most clubs have approximately 30 players who come into contention to play senior football. Given many of these players will meet the home club criteria immediately, it is estimated that clubs should only need to review 10-20 players in the first season and 3-8 players each season.

## Examples of points allocation for existing players of a community club

### Example:

UTS Bats AFC (in AFL Sydney Premier Division) recruit a player in 2015 from Canberra Demons in the NEAFL, where he played 16 games the previous season and was therefore worth 5 points.

**Solution:** Having played at least 5 games in each of the following seasons for UTS Bats AFC, he was eligible for the following deductions –

2015 – 5 points

2016 – 4 points (1 point deduction from 2015)

2017 – 3 points (1 point deduction from 2016)

2018 – 2 point (1 point deduction from 2017)

### Example:

Northern Districts AFC recruited a player from Figtree AFC (both in AFL South Coast Division 1) in 2016. He played more seniors than reserves in the previous season (2015). Note: he has not played at a higher level in the previous 3 seasons.

**Solution:** Given he was recruited as a senior community player he is worth 3 points. However given he is transferring from another club in the same competition, an additional penalty point will be applied.

2016 – 4 points

2017 – 3 points (1 point deduction from 2016)

2018 – 2 points (1 point deduction from 2017)

### Example:

Belconnen FC from AFL Canberra First Grade recruit a player in 2017 who played 9 games with the Murray Bushrangers in the TAC Cup in 2016. He also played 10 senior games for Lavington in the seniors that same season.

**Solution:** Given a TAC Cup player is worth 5 points and a senior community player is worth 3 points, he must be allocated the highest possible points which is 5.

2017 – 5 points

2018 – 4 points (1 point deduction from 2017)

## Examples of points allocation for existing players of a community club

### Example:

A player who plays for Cronulla U17's in AFL Sydney Juniors in 2015 transfers to Bomaderry AFC (U17's) in AFL South Coast 2016 and is then selected to play senior football for Bomaderry in 2017.

**Solution:** Having not played over 40 games in Bomaderry's junior teams (U17's and lower), the player is not eligible to be classed as a 'home player'. He also didn't play any senior Bomaderry AFC games as an underage player, so can't have been classed as providing a year of service. The player falls into the category of 'transferred junior'.

2017 – 3 points

2018 – 2 points (1 point deduction from 2017)

### Example:

A player who finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the club best and fairest at Figtree in the AFL South Coast Division 1 Seniors in 2015, transfers to Wollongong Bulldogs AFC in the same competition in 2016. This player was also at Wollongong Lions in the same competition 2014.

**Solution:** When the player arrives at Wollongong Bulldogs he will be allocated 4 points because they are a premium community player, 1 extra point because they are transferring to another club in the same competition, and a further point because it is their 3<sup>rd</sup> club in 36 months. Total points allocation is therefore 6 points.

2016 – 6 points

2017 – 5 points (1 point deduction from 2016)

2018 – 4 points (1 point deduction from 2017)

### Example:

A player moves to Pambula FC in AFL Sapphire Coast in 2017 from Wyong Lakes in the BDAFL's Black Diamond Cup competition. He had played more lower division games than highest division games the previous season (2016) at Wyong Lakes.

**Solution:** The player will be considered a development community player (2 points).

2017 – 2 points

2018 – 1 points (1 point deduction from 2017)

## Total Team Points Allocations

The allocation of total points caps for each community club team will be assessed and determined by the League in consultation with AFL NSW/ ACT.

In considering the total points allocation for each team, the following may be taken into account:

- The location of a club and the size of the population within its region vis a vis other clubs (which may impact a clubs ability to be competitive against other clubs).
- The level of success a team has achieved e.g. (multiple premierships) including their ability to retain players with players attracting a one point deduction each season with the club.
- A team's lack of competitiveness over a sustained period of time a (e.g. low ladder finish over multiple seasons).

Note: some of the above considerations may not apply to competitions who have promotion / relegation.

- Additional points may be added to teams where a club is unable to field a competitive youth side due to geographic and demographic factors.

Each League will implement a process in relation to assessment of club's submissions regarding a team total points cap and an individual player's points allocation.

## Total Team Points Allocations

When allocating **total team points caps**, the League may apply any of the following variations to the relevant base total team points cap due to unique local considerations:

TOTAL TEAM POINTS ALLOWANCES / REDUCTIONS #	Small population base	Additional points to team allocation where the club is located in a region with low population base.
	Ladder Position	Additional points to team allocation if team did not qualify for finals in previous season or has been promoted from previous season.
		Reduction in points to team allocation for multiple premierships in defined number of seasons.
		Additional points to team allocation if finished in bottom three of competition and not relegated.
	Junior Pathway	Additional points to team allocation, or a cap on individual players points where a club has no U17/18 or younger underage sides aligned (MOU in place) to it, and not capable of developing a junior program due to reasons outside of its control, or if a club is <u>formally aligned</u> with a university and the team is based around players coming and going over a 3-4 year period.



# Compliance – Footyweb Administration & By-Laws

## Footyweb

Each club must submit the proposed points allocation for each Player to the League by the date as prescribed by the League for verification and assessment by the League Equalisation Panel. Each Player's final points allocation will be uploaded into Footyweb by personnel appointed by the League.

Footyweb will automatically calculate the total points for the team as part of the team selection and team sheet process. The team sheets will need to be printed by each competing club and provided as part of the normal match day paper work.

Footyweb will not allow a team to be selected if the total points allocation exceeds the cap applicable for that team. All team sheets may be subject to audits. In addition, the points that are allocated to each player will be displayed in the fixtures/results section of the league's websites to further enhance the transparency of the program.

## By-Laws

The League By-Laws will expressly state that clubs must comply with the Player Points System (and annexed to the By-Laws). A club who does not comply with the Player Points System may be subject to disciplinary sanctions.

A new column will be created to display a players allocated points figure

The screenshot shows a match report for Lilydale vs North Ringwood. At the top, there are tabs for 'Match Centre', 'Selected Teams', and 'Play By Play'. Below this is a table showing the match score by quarter (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4) for both teams. Lilydale's scores are 1.6-12, 4.8-32, 6.11-47, and 10.15-75. North Ringwood's scores are 1.3-9, 6.4-40, 9.8-62, and 11.11-77. Below the scores, there are sections for 'LILYDALE' and 'NORTH RINGWOOD' listing goal kickers and best players. The main section is 'PLAYER MATCH STATS', which is split into two columns: 'LILYDALE' and 'NORTH RINGWOOD'. Each column has a table with columns for '#', 'PLAYER', 'G', and 'BST'. A red box at the top right contains the text 'A new column will be created to display a players allocated points figure'. Two red arrows point from this box to the 'G' column in the player stats tables for Lilydale and North Ringwood.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Lilydale	1.6-12	4.8-32	6.11-47	10.15-75
North Ringwood	1.3-9	6.4-40	9.8-62	11.11-77

**LILYDALE**  
Goal Kickers: L. McCombe 4, J. Hughes 2, D. Carswell, F. Smith, B. Clark, L. Wilson  
Best Players: D. Baldwin, J. Depace, B. Clark, A. Preston, N. Mende, M. De Franceschi

**NORTH RINGWOOD**  
Goal Kickers: J. Dean 3, N. Murphy 2, D. Wood 2, T. Wills, J. Vanunen, A. Sharp, D. Powell  
Best Players: A. Sharp, J. Blake, C. Dunne, J. Dean, T. Jones, D. Powell

**PLAYER MATCH STATS**

LILYDALE				NORTH RINGWOOD			
#	PLAYER	G	BST	#	PLAYER	G	BST
2	L. McCombe	4	0	3	J. Dean	3	4
35	J. Hughes	2	0	44	D. Wood	2	0
1	B. Clark	1	3	4	N. Murphy	2	0
2	L. Wilson	1	0	17	D. Powell	1	6
11	F. Smith	1	0	2	A. Sharp	1	1
13	D. Carswell	1	0	24	T. Wills	1	0
	M. De Franceschi	0	6	8	J. Vanunen	1	0
8	N. Mende	0	5	14	T. Jones	0	5
29	A. Preston	0	4	21	C. Dunne	0	3
32	J. Depace	0	2	20	J. Blake	0	2
10	D. Baldwin	0	1	18	J. Ellison	0	0



## Home Player Quota

- The 1 point deduction for seasons of service has in some instances seen clubs ‘recruit’ talented youth players who then become 1 point players whilst relatively young
- AFL NSW/ ACT has implemented a ‘Home Player Quota’ rule to protect the pathway by ensuring a minimum number of club juniors in senior teams
- In 2018, the rule has been introduced in AFL Canberra Senior Men’s (9 Home Players) and Black Diamond Cup (12 Home Players)

### AFL Canberra Case Study – Home Players Per Club

	2016	2017	2018
Ainsle	5.6	7	9
Belconnen	16	18	18
Eastlake	6	8	9
Gungahlin	4	4	10
Queanbeyan	6	8	12
Tuggeranong	21	21	21
<i>Average</i>			

## Next steps of implementation of the Community Club Sustainability Program

- The Community Club Sustainability program requires a consistent regional approach in order to be effective
- Following the successful implementation of a regional Player Points System across Southern NSW and ACT, the relevant leagues (AFL Riverina, AFL Canberra and Hume FNL) will introduce a “soft” player payment framework in 2018
- The Salary Cap will not be strictly enforced in 2018, but instead will focus on education and reporting throughout the 2018 season ahead of proposed implementation for the 2019 season
- In doing so, AFL NSW/ACT will utilise some of the existing frameworks and key learnings from Victoria and South Australia