



# Hurlstone Park Wanderers Small Sided Football (SSF) Under 6, Under 7 and Under 8

## **General Information about the SSF program**

Hurlstone Park Wanderers supports the Small Sided Football format for our younger players. The format allows children to develop their skills and confidence in the sport without the competitive pressure of inter-club games. The children are organised into “houses” of up to 20 players, and each house trains as single squad. On game day, each house is divided into teams to play against teams from other houses. The house teams will vary each week, so your child will not always play with the same players, but will always play with others from their house. The houses play against each other on a rotating roster.

As the games are played in-house between fellow Hurlstone Park teams, we are better able to track and support the progress of players and teams through the season, and to assist coaches, parents and players. The format also discourages specialisation (for instance, there is no goalkeeper for U6 and U7 teams), so players develop a sense of the game overall and of the different roles and responsibilities that are required in a team.

The format of small sided football relies on us having house managers and coaches who are willing to assist with coaching on weeknights and organising teams on Saturdays. We need parents to volunteer for these roles, which are very rewarding, and give you a chance to get involved in your child’s sport. Even if you have never played football or watched football before, your skills and experience as a parent will be perfect for this role. We provide coach support and training for the house managers.

## **Houses and team formation**

The age co-ordinator will be responsible for the initial allocation of children to houses, keeping in mind the information that you have given us about your training preferences and friends in the club. Within the club, the houses are identified by the night that they train and by the colour of their match shirts. e.g. Thursday Red or Wednesday Purple. If your house wants to be Slytherin (or anything else), that’s fine, but let us know.

Under 6s and 7s play in 4-a-side teams with no goalkeeper. U8s play 7-a-side and have a goalkeeper. We would expect that all U8 children will have a go at goalkeeping throughout the season.

## **Games: where and when?**

The season runs from the first week in April until the last week in August - we will circulate the exact dates closer to the season starting. Games will be at Ewen Park (Tennant Parade, Hurlstone Park), with Under 6s kicking off at 8.30 and Under 7s at 9.15. U6 and U7 games comprise two 15 minute halves with a short break between halves. U8 games will start at about 10.30, and comprise two 20-minute halves. The referee is in charge of the duration of the halves.

We are a winter sport, so will play in the rain. Please assume that games are on unless you hear from the club that the ground is closed.

The Saturday Morning Coordinator and the referees are responsible for running the games, and will rely on parents to assist with setting up the fields.

## **Training**

Training is at Ewen Park on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday from 5:00pm-6.00pm.

Children should not be left at training without an adult who is responsible for them. The coaches will be running training for 20 children, and cannot be expected to search for any one child’s water bottle, or to accompany them to the bathroom. We recognise that the 5:00pm slot can be tricky for parents and the Club encourages carpooling and parents sharing responsibility. This is one of the major benefits of the House system.

Bring your own water bottle. Bottle sharing is not permitted.

Each child must wear shin pads to training and games. Shin pads are worn underneath the socks, not

over the top. Football Boots are not compulsory at this age, strong sports shoes are a reasonable substitute. Please be punctual to training. Try to aim to be there about at the latest 5 minutes beforehand, ready to go so that the session can start on time. Older age groups will start training at 6.00pm, so starting late limits the time available to you. If you cannot make it, please notify your House Managers. Remember that some training activities rely on an even number of players, or groups of three etc, so the person running training needs to know how many players to expect.

### **Saturday Gameday guidelines**

Be at the ground at least 20 minutes before your designated kick off so that the game day teams can be organised and parents can set up the fields. When all the fields are set up, space between the fields is quite limited- please comply with requests from our ground managers about where to stand.

The Club's values are based on fairness, participation and enjoyment. Let the children play, and please leave the coaching to the coaches.

There is a copy on the website of the rules under which the games will be played and our expectations of spectator behaviour.

### **Mini referees program**

Hurlstone Park runs a Mini-referees program. Junior players - 11 to 14 year olds - will be refereeing your children's games. Their role is really as 'game leaders' and includes explaining the rules of the game as well as refereeing. This means that there may be more interaction between the referee and players than you may be used to in adult competitions, and from time to time players may be allowed to have 'another go' at some skills such as free kicks. This is not an error, this is the job of the mini referee at a junior game.

It is possible that during a game the mini-referee will do something that you do not understand or disagree with. Please ignore it- it does not matter in the context of the game. If you feel that a mini referee is consistently making an error in interpreting a rule, please raise the issue with the Saturday Morning Co-ordinator, who is also the coach and mentor for the mini referees. Do NOT raise it with the referee directly- these are children and fellow Hurlstone Park members and we have a duty of care to protect them from anything that could be perceived as harassment or bullying. The Club has a zero-tolerance approach to inappropriate conduct towards match officials at all levels.

### **Parent volunteers: we need parents in each house to take up the following roles.**

- 1) **House Manager.** The Club needs a contact person in each house who will be provided with contact numbers for all members of the house. The Age-coordinator will let the House Manager know if, for example, games have been washed out or the house is playing an away game. As decisions about washouts are often made late on Friday or very early on Saturday morning, the House Manager will need to be easily contactable by mobile phone. The House Manager could be one of the coaches...
- 2) **Coaches.** As the houses train together but play as several different teams, we need 4-6 people from each U6 and U7 house who are able to assist with training and games, and 2-3 from each U8 house. At this level, a lot of your 'coaching' will be about making sure the children are running the right way and not wandering off the pitch, singing, 30 seconds into the game. The only skills you need are skills you already have as a parent. We will provide support and some activities for coaches as the season goes on
- 3) **All parents.** Set up, pack up, jersey washing and orange rosters. We are a volunteer club, and we rely on our members to assist. All parents are required to assist with set up and pack up of fields. The playing jerseys are returned to the bag each week, and the house manager will organise a roster for washing them. Your house may also like to organise half time oranges on the same roster.

Welcome to the Club for 2017, and have a fantastic season!  
Steve Cumming (U6,U7 and U8 Mixed teams Age Coordinator).