

Standing Committee Recommendation

To: Chief Executive Officer
From: Womens Standing Committee
Date: 27/09/21

Recommendation: Women's State League and Amateur forming State League Divisions

For the 2022 and moving forward that the Women's State League and Amateur League be amalgamated into State League with multiple divisions.

Current (2021)

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| State League: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Division, 9 Teams • No Entry for NPLW Clubs • No Promotion or relegation • Clubs have asked to be added 2022 | Amateur League: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Division, 11 Teams • Freemantle 2 teams (u18 exemption) • 4 teams are NPLW clubs • No promotion or relegation |
| Metro League <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 North and South Divisions • Promotion and Relegation active. | |

Recommendations for 2022: (State and Metro League's only)

State League:

- Multiple Divisions (Preference to highest State League division having even numbers and working down. Ideal numbers seem to 8 or 12 as this leads to 21/22 games season
- Promotion and Relegation between divisions
- Top 4 Cup to be reinstated at end of season (In line with mens - either cup or promotion relegation competition)
- NPLW Clubs allowed to enter State League (* This will need some rules clarifications)
- FW to ask for applications from all existing State and Amateur League teams and any new teams wishing to play in a statewide league
- Entry to SL is by Application / Applications to take into account finishing positions in Metro Leagues and or u16/18 competitions
- New clubs / teams to enter at the bottom divisions

Metro Leagues:

- To continue in current format (North / South) divisions to be even and balanced from top divisions (Division 1) and then worked down
- Top 4 cup introduced in some form

Logistics to be decided:

- How many divisions and teams per divisions (FW have said that 8 or 12 seem to be preferred numbers: 8 teams = 21 games / 12 teams = 22 games or 21 games if all teams play through once and then split into top 6 / bottom 6)
- Number of teams allowed in competition (different divisions and same divisions)
- Sorting of teams into divisions, some Amateur teams stronger than SL teams (NPLW clubs)
- Promotion / Relegation system (1 or 2 up // playoff system?)
- Promotion into NPLW would fall under a different discussion and subject to requirements
- Rules to deal with clubs who serially forfeit or pull out of leagues
- Player Eligibility requirements (Particularly those of NPLW clubs that are in State League)

Describe the Issue or Idea

Women's football was split into State and Amateur league in the wake of NPLW to separate NPL clubs from the 2nd tier and provide a clear runway for State League clubs to prepare for NPL.

In reality:

- It has resulted in two competitions with highly contrasting standards between the top and bottom teams.
- The NO-NPL club clause has resulted in clubs in Amateurs being stronger than many of those in the State League.
- Lack of promotion/relegation mechanism leaves perennially uncompetitive teams at the bottom of the divisions.
- 3 clubs withdrew from the State League in 2021 reintroducing the boom and bust nature of WA women's football where clubs enter leagues they aren't capable of competing in.
- Uncompetitive clubs forfeited multiple games throughout the last two seasons which is more characteristic of a Metropolitan league competition than a 2nd tier competition.
- The lack of levels doesn't allow for clubs to move up and down and settle where their abilities lie.
- Top clubs in the State League continually complain that the weak competition isn't a good preparation for any future push to be ready for NPLW.

With opening up of the State League to NPL teams there are concessions that will need to be looked at such as player movement, with NPL rules and juniors requirement this could possibly mean a no player movement policy between NPL and State divisions.

This would keep Divisional integrity, it would also mean that NPL clubs need to do the right thing in selection and keeping player lists. Players could move once but be locked to a team same as transferring to another club in essence.

Player and Club eligibility as well as having dual teams would need further discussion.

Competitions below NPL/State League have a history in WA Women's football of clubs "gaming" the system and asking to withdraw to a lower division and then winning that division convincingly as well as leaving lower divisions with large numbers and high divisions with low numbers of teams (Metro North Division 1 currently has 5 teams whereas Metro North Division 3 has 12 teams). Divisions in State League would force the best teams up and the highest divisions would be given first consideration ie i.e. if there are 28 clubs wishing to play state league then there would be an even divide where Div 1 is first consideration, Div 2 next and it flows down Div 1 8 teams, Div 2 8 teams, Div 3 12 teams.

Describe the benefits of Football West implementing the Recommendation

Having a single competition of multiple divisions in the State League would see it more competitive and would also allow a better indicator for clubs wishing to enter the NPL if it is expanded or Promotion / Relegation is introduced at a later date.

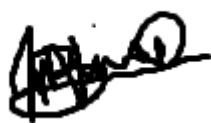
Player retention at higher and lower levels would be easier if teams play at a level that is at their own skill level while also improving the standard of leagues.

Clubs that aren't elite but also aren't purely social currently have no indication of where they sit in the football WA women's football pyramid, this system would allow them to gauge better where they are and what they have to do to progress up the pyramid.

NPLW clubs tend to be clubs who have significant depth in player quality with teams that want to play competitively but not play in those clubs NPLW sides. Clubs like Fremantle City for example have had one of the best teams outside of the NPLW/Premier League for almost a decade, none of those players have any intention of playing NPLW and the side has remained consistent for many years. Under the changes they would be able to compete with teams at their level and not be forced into the Amateur League.

List the Clubs or Club Associates that have been consulted in reaching the recommendation

Women Standing Committee Suggestions



Signature

27/9/2021

Date

Matthew Burnie - Deputy Standing Committee Chair