



North West Junior Soccer Association Inc.

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History Brief

While primary school soccer was played in the Port Adelaide area as early as 1925, the earliest record of organised school soccer under what would become North West Junior Soccer Association begins in 1973. At that time, Frank Ward, involved with the Port Adelaide Soccer Club and SAPSASA, appointed John Eldridge to organise and expand the program/competition in the region.

Initially known as the **Port Adelaide District Primary Schools Soccer Association**, the program/competition started with just 4 teams, from 3 primary schools, Largs Bay, Largs North, and two from Port Adelaide Primary School. Games were held at I.C.I Oval and Port Adelaide School Oval.

Growth and Development (1973–1980s)

- By 1976, the league expanded to 12 schools, using a home and away format.
- A Carnival Day was first held in September 1976.
- In 1978, the name changed to **Port Adelaide District Schools Association** to include high schools.
- The first formal committee formed in 1978.
- By 1979, the association had grown to 34 teams across 5 divisions.
- In 1980, a U14 High School competition began, and the first U7 "G Team" division was introduced with modified rules.

During the early 1980s, the association had a name change to encapsulate the area within the North West of Adelaide, due to its success schools were rapidly joining to be part of the program/competition, even High Schools were reaching out to the organisers to be part of the program/competition among other high school teams. The name was changed to **North West Junior Soccer Association (NWJSA)**. Leaders like John Eldridge, Rodger King and Dennis Price shaped the focus on modified rules and smaller-sided games for younger players (U6-U7), laying the groundwork for today's development programs.

Continued Expansion and Infrastructure

- The End of Season Carnival was revived in 1987 and continues annually, it marks the last day of the season.

- NWJSA introduced coaching programs in the 1980s and later partnered with Football Federation SA to support coach development.
- Due to challenges with the venue on Victoria Rd (now the Lefevre Rec Centre) and using school ovals as was dominated by Aussie Rules, NWJSA moved its operations in 1994 to Jubilee Reserve, West Lakes, within the Charles Sturt Council, this venue becoming the central venue for the program/competition weekly matches.
- Increase in number of players and teams, from existing and new primary schools joining, NWJSA expanded its program to another venue at St Clair off Woodville Road in 2003/2004.
- Over the years NWJSA has used various venues to enable the program to host weekly matches for its members, and those venues have included Underdale High School, Amateurs Headquarters at Grange, Barratt Reserve East (Adelaide Shores). Having continued access to these venues has been a challenge.
- In 2024 NWJSA re-configured their playing fields at Jubilee Reserve and St Clair to enable the creation of more fields to meet the demands of the increasing player and team numbers, as schools were increasing enrolment intake their sports curriculum was growing.
- In 2025 NWJSA were granted a 5 year lease for John Hart Reserve Ethelton with the Port Adelaide Enfield Council.

Referee and Player Development

- Through the late 1980s and 1990s, a structured referee program was introduced, prior to this parents would officiate the weekly matches.
- The Referee program would train and develop high school aged children offering them a pathway to referee higher levels through club soccer, or help prepare them for the workforce, providing them with skills such as communication, confidence and responsibility.
- As of 2025, NWJSA continues to register referees from 12 years of age, and remains a feeder program to the referee department of Football South Australia.

Representative Success and Competitions

- NWJSA actively participated in State Championships until 2018, often achieving champion or runner-up status. Several alumni progressed to the A-League, Socceroos, and Matildas.
- In 2022, the U11 and Senior Knock-Out Cup was renamed the Dennis Price Knock-Out Cup to honour his lasting impact.

Developments

- During the late 1980s and 1990s the program/competition was stream-lined in age group offering for Under 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and Seniors (Seniors would encapsulate the year 6 and 7s). High Schools were not apart of the playing program as venue availability was limited.
- In 2011, U6 small-sided games were officially introduced.
- In 2024, NWJSA reconfigured field layouts to align with the National Minirooms Guide, now offering:
 - 17 pitches at St Clair
 - 14 pitches at West Lakes
- Heavily involved in stakeholder and community consultation for St Clair Precinct, major contributing factor increasing awareness for proper traffic and car park management for the sporting precinct that is used by NWJSA, Woodville District Cricket, Adelaide United, Local Soccer Club, St Clair Rec Centre.

In 2025, NWJSA remains a thriving hub for school-based junior soccer, with 3,600 junior players and a strong developmental focus for players, coaches, and referees. Over the years, a range of developments, including streamlined age group offerings, the introduction of U6 age group in small-sided games, and alignment with national standards. These initiatives have not only elevated the experience for players but also fostered greater awareness and engagement among coaches and referees, with tailored programs supporting their growth and expertise. Importantly, the NWJSA's emphasis on community and involvement has driven a noticeable increase in players and volunteers across local clubs. This culture of engagement extends beyond soccer, empowering families and individuals to embrace leadership roles in various sports, ultimately helping children and young people thrive both on and off the field.