



AFL EUROPE

HOW TO START AN AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL CLUB

This guide is designed to be used by individuals or small groups that want to:

- Start a brand new Australian football club
- Revive a folded club

The guide is in the form of a checklist and we advise you to go through from start to finish and check off each of the items in order to set up a club that is successful and sustainable. On first look it may seem like a lot of steps, however the main tasks have been broken down in to smaller steps to make the process easy to follow.

On the first page is the full checklist of each of the steps to be worked through. On the subsequent pages there is more information on each of the steps detailed in the full checklist.

If you need any support with the process of setting up/reviving a club, alongside this guide, do not hesitate to ask the AFL Europe team by emailing admin@afleurope.org.

Setting up a new club should be an enjoyable and rewarding experience and we want to congratulate you for taking the initiative to do so. We are excited that you want to share our fantastic sport across the continent.

RESOURCES

- 1 – Constitution Template
- 2 – First General Meeting Agenda Template
- 3 – Roles & Responsibilities within a Club
- 4 – How to Organise and Run an Australian Football “Come & Try” Session

STEP 1 - BEFORE YOU START

- 1.1 Establish a need/desire for the club
- 1.2 Inform the AFL Europe Team
- 1.3 'Meet' with Country President
- 1.4 Look for others in the area that may be keen to support the development of a club

STEP 2 - IN THE BEGINNING

- 2.1 Establish the role of the interim committee – create communication method
- 2.2 Develop a draft constitution for the club¹
- 2.3 Contact the local Australian Embassy
- 2.4 Secure equipment
- 2.5 Set a date for the first official meeting and invite prospective members
- 2.6 Prepare Agenda for the inaugural General Meeting²
- 2.7 Host an Initial 'Kick'
- 2.8 Create Email Address
- 2.9 Create social media pages
- 2.10 Contact closest clubs

STEP 3 – NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Establish a Committee
- 3.2 Review and update Constitution
- 3.3 Develop a club name, logo and colours
- 3.4 Agree on the culture of the club
- 3.5 Register Club
- 3.6 Secure a training ground
- 3.7 Apply for Funding
- 3.8 Find a Sponsor
- 3.9 Find a Sponsor Pub
- 3.10 Decide on training days and times
- 3.11 Contact Club in Australia*
- 3.12 Create an Action Log/Task list
- 3.13 Arrange a 'Come & Try' Session⁴
- 3.14 Recruitment Plan
- 3.15 Membership & Membership Fees
- 3.16 Open a Club bank account
- 3.17 Insurance
- 3.18 GDPR/Data Protection

STEP 4 – RECRUITMENT (& RETAINEMENT)

- 4.1 Design Poster
- 4.2 Contact other sports clubs nearby (that will have different playing seasons)
- 4.3 Contact Local University
- 4.4 Contact Local Colleges/Secondary Schools
- 4.5 Post in EVERY relevant Facebook Group
- 4.6 TAKE PHOTOS
- 4.7 Social Media
- 4.8 Facebook Marketing
- 4.9 Handing out Flyers
- 4.10 Contact local newspapers/online news pages
- 4.11 Use other online networking/advertising sites
- 4.12 Organize a social
- 4.13 Follow up Messages & Ask for Feedback
- 4.14 NEVER GIVE UP

STEP 5 – FUTURE STEPS (Once club is more established)

- 5.1 Organize First Fixture
- 5.2 Build a Website
- 5.3 Organize a fundraiser
- 5.4 Design and Order a Kit
- 5.5 Integrate in to your nearest League
- 5.6 Attend a Tournament

STEP 1 - BEFORE YOU START

1.1 Establish a need/desire for the club

Are you confident you are in an area where you can establish a club? Are there enough people in the area that you could potentially recruit? Are you committed to the work entailed?

If yes to all, then let's do this!

1.2 Inform the AFL Europe Team

Send an email to lisa.wilson@afleurope.org and inform of your plans. We may be able to put you in contact with others in the area that have previously contacted us and we will be able to provide other support. We will also put you in contact with the relevant Country President, when applicable and put you in contact with the Presidents of any nearby clubs.

1.3 'Meet' with Country President

It is important that you have a chat with the country president to ensure that all details and plans are exchanged to avoid any issues in the future. Items to discuss should be: what support can the President provide, what steps need to be taken to register the club as an official sports club (this will vary country to country)

1.4 Look for others in the area that may be keen to support the development of a club

Check Facebook for an Aussies in X group or Expats in X and make a post to see if you can hunt out any Aussies that would be keen to support, or anyone who has previously played the sport.

STEP 2 - IN THE BEGINNING

2.1 Establish the role of the interim committee – create communication method

Don't worry if at this stage you are on your own! However, if you have managed to recruit 1 or 2 other people then assign them an interim role and delegate tasks to them (these can be any of the below tasks). Our advice would be to create a WhatsApp group or Facebook group that will be used for the committee to make plans and communicate updates. If you would like the support of AFL Europe, you can also request for the Game Development officer to join the group.

2.2 Develop a draft constitution for the club¹

What are the objectives of the club? How will the club committee be structured? How will finances be managed? How often will you have committee meetings? The structure of the committee etc.

Template Constitution can be found in the resources section

2.3 Contact the local Australian Embassy

Click the following link to see if there is an Australian embassy/consulate in your city. If so, check with the country president first to see if they have previously been contacted. If not, give them a call or send them an email to see if there is any support they can provide.

2.4 Secure equipment

You can't train without balls! As balls are expensive, they can be a real blocker to starting a club. Hopefully you have access to at least one or 2 balls to start with an initial kick. To obtain more if you need them, firstly contact AFL Europe and we will see if we can help with any balls, though unfortunately we are not often able to help in this area. At AFL Europe we do also sell balls, so once you have. A few more members, it may be that they each need to put money in which could then form part of their memberships. This will also be in the Agenda for the first meeting.

2.5 Set a date for the first official meeting and invite prospective members

It is important to sit down to discuss all the elements for the club, even if this is just with one other, and to have them documented. Set a date & location for a meeting (most likely in a pub so you can have a drink after) this could also be after the initial kick (see below).

2.6 Prepare Agenda for the inaugural General Meeting²

See below an example agenda for the first meeting. Edit as you see fit and send out to the attendees.

2.7 Host an Initial 'Kick'

In either the WhatsApp or Facebook group you have created for members, organize the initial kick. Encourage those interested to bring a friend(s) along with them, organize for some beers & BBQ afterwards (or some sort of social aspect). Host the kick in a public area where you may attract the attention of passersby.

2.8 Create Email Address

Create a temporary address using a free service

2.9 Create social media pages

To make the initial recruitment easier, you may consider creating social media pages with a placeholder name until the Club name is decided. For Example, use “<City/place name> Australian Football Club”. In the about section make sure you include “Aussie Rules” and “AFL” for anyone that may search on Facebook.

2.10 Contact closest clubs

On initial contact with AFL Europe we will give you the contact details of any nearby clubs. Get in contact with them to see if they are happy to support with any initial events you may host.

INAUGURAL GENERAL MEETING

It is important to host an Inaugural General Meeting as this gives the right impression to prospective members and also means that you start sharing the responsibility (even if it is with only 1-2 other people) which makes the workload much easier.

Depending on the nature of the club, this may be a formal meeting or may be a meet up in a pub!

However; it is important that everything that is discussed is noted down and saved for future use, should it be needed. You can find an example Agenda² in the resources.

STEP 3 –NEXT STEPS

A lot of the items in this section are what will be discussed, and in some cases decided on, in the general meeting.

3.1 Establish a Committee

Decide on who will take over which position in the committee and note down the roles & responsibilities³ of each member.

3.2 Review and update Constitution

It is important that the other committee members agree with what is in the document as once the club becomes more established it can (and should) influence many decisions

3.3 Develop a club name, logo and colours

3.4 Agree on the culture of the club

Have a quick chat to make sure everyone is agreed on what the culture of the club should be (fun, serious, community, family, fitness, friendly, etc...)

3.5 Register Club

This step will depend on the country that you are in as many countries will have different processes.

Discuss with your country president as mentioned in Step 5 as to what should be done. Also discuss with any other clubs in your country that will have had to do the same.

3.6 Secure a training ground

Contact the local council/government to see where you can train, or choose a public area you know is open to sports clubs.

3.7 Apply for Funding

Search online for any available funding for new sports teams

3.8 Find a Sponsor

Contact local businesses in the area (phone and email) to see if they can support the club financially to get started you could offer up in return; promotion on social media, their logo on your flyers or kits (depending on stage of club) etc

3.9 Find a Sponsor Pub

Contact a few pubs/restaurants close to where you agree on a training ground and ask if they can offer any food and/or drink discounts to members of the club. It is always good to build a relationship with a local pub/restaurant and it's great for the club community to have their 'clubhouse'.

3.10 Decide on training days and times

Most clubs will go for 2 sessions a week as this means you don't risk having someone not able to attend as they can't make that one session a week. However, in the start you may only want to stick to one session a week.

3.11 Contact Club in Australia*

Many clubs in Europe have contacted the club in Australia that they have named themselves after (or if you decide to go with a different name, you can still contact a club) and asked for support, be it a social media shout out, or requesting old kit.

3.12 Create an Action Log/Task list

An easy way to keep track of who is doing what

3.13 Arrange a 'Come & Try' Session⁴

Many clubs have been successful in the past when hosting 'Come & Try' Sessions. By hosting one of these sessions you can put a lot of energy in to one large recruitment push. It also attracts more people to come along as they know there will be other beginners there. It is also a good opportunity to host a social and start building the community around the club.

3.14 Recruitment Plan

As recruitment is the biggest part of getting the club going, a lot of effort needs to go in to it. Write down all the people & places you will contact for recruitment (see STEP 4) and assign each to a person so the effort is shared.

3.15 Membership & Membership Fees

How much will you charge for membership and what will it entail? Will you ask for money per session or will the membership cover everything? This will depend on what you see your outgoing costs to be.

3.16 Open a Club bank account

This will be the responsibility of the newly appointed treasurer.

3.17 Insurance

This step will depend on the country that you are in as many countries will have different processes.

Discuss with your country president as mentioned in Step 5 as to what should be done. Also discuss with any other clubs in your country that will have had to do the same.

3.18 GDPR/Data Protection

Item pending – will be updated soon

*Please contact AFL Europe before completing this step.

STEP 4 – RECRUITMENT (& RETAINEMENT)

Recruitment is one part of the battle; however, the next step is retaining the players that come along to session. Below are some steps and ideas on how you can be successful in both areas.

4.1 Design Poster

If you need help with this step, contact AFL Europe Team.

4.2 Contact other sports clubs nearby (that will have different playing seasons)

4.3 Contact Local University

4.4 Contact Local Colleges/Secondary Schools

4.5 Post in EVERY relevant Facebook Group

Some examples below, post in both English speaking/expat groups and groups in the native language.

Expats in <your city>, New in <your city>, Sport in <your city>, Australians in <your city>

4.6 TAKE PHOTOS

Photos are a great way to attract people to the club. Make sure you take some at training and post them on social media!

4.7 Social Media

Update your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (whichever you use) pages with your updated name and logo.

After training sessions or events, make sure you post pictures or updates to engage with your community.

4.8 Facebook Marketing

If you can find a budget for it, Facebook marketing can be very effective. For more advice on how to use this properly, contact AFL Europe.

4.9 Handing out Flyers

If you can find the budget for it, perhaps from a sponsor, then flyering can be very successful. Putting them up in local shops, pubs/restaurants/bars, gyms, schools etc.

4.10 Contact local newspapers/online news pages

4.11 Use other online networking/advertising sites

Meetup, Gumtree, Internations, etc....

4.12 Organize a social

The best way to get people engaged!!! Many people join sports clubs to meet new people so offer up socials to allow this.

4.13 Follow up Messages & Ask for Feedback

It's important to engage properly with people new to the sport – get a feel for what they are looking for! Some might only come along for fitness some want contact some want socials etc get a feeling of the people you are working with.

4.14 NEVER GIVE UP

Numbers will start small however you need to be committed to make things grow. Every club in Europe started somewhere. Stick at it and if you make sessions enjoyable, even if only 3-5 people then they will come back and bring friends.

STEP 5 – FUTURE STEPS (Once club is more established)

5.1 Organize First Fixture

It is always good to have a game to work towards. Even if you think you aren't ready numbers wise it is important to get a Test Fixture locked in as playing games is really what gets players addicted to the sport. Speak to the clubs closest to you and see if any of them can come over for a day for a test game (you may need to mix up teams).

5.2 Build a Website

Example easy site builders: Wix.com, WordPress, squarespace

5.3 Organize a fundraiser

Ideas include Raffles at games/events, pub quizzes, family days

5.4 Design and Order a Kit

AFL Europe are partnered with O'Neills as a kit supplier. There are a number of other suppliers used by the various clubs across the continent.

5.5 Integrate in to your nearest League

This should be one of your key aims when the club starts. Speak to the country president and right from the start have the expectations set of what will be required for the new team to enter the league.

5.6 Attend a Tournament

Created by Lisa Wilson.

For support or more information contact admin@afleurope.org