

## Accepted Manuscript

Title: A comparison of the physical and anthropometric qualities explanatory of talent in the elite junior Australian football development pathway

Author: Carl T. Woods Ashley Cripps Luke Hopper  
Christopher Joyce



PII: S1440-2440(16)30237-7  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.jsams.2016.11.002>  
Reference: JSAMS 1423

To appear in: *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*

Received date: 4-7-2016  
Revised date: 24-10-2016  
Accepted date: 15-11-2016

Please cite this article as: Woods Carl T, Cripps Ashley, Hopper Luke, Joyce Christopher. A comparison of the physical and anthropometric qualities explanatory of talent in the elite junior Australian football development pathway. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2016.11.002>

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2 Australian football development pathway

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4 **Woods T. Carl<sup>a\*</sup>, Cripps Ashley<sup>b</sup>, Hopper Luke<sup>c</sup>, Joyce Christopher<sup>b</sup>**

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6 <sup>a</sup>Discipline of Sport and Exercise Science, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia

7 <sup>b</sup>School of Health Sciences, The University of Notre Dame, Fremantle, Australia

8 <sup>c</sup>Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, Mount Lawley, Australia

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10 \*Corresponding Author

11 Carl Woods, Discipline of Sport and Exercise Science, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia.

12 Ph: +61 08 4781 6550 Mob: +61 421254329 Email: carl.woods@jcu.edu.au

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14 Running title: Talent identification in AF at the U16 and U18 levels

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## 16 **Abstract**

17 *Objectives:* To compare the physical and anthropometric qualities explanatory of talent at two  
18 developmental levels in junior Australian football (AF).

19 *Design:* Cross-sectional observational.

20 *Methods:* From a total of 134 juniors, two developmental levels were categorised; U16 ( $n = 50$ ;  $15.6 \pm$   
21  $0.3$  y), U18 ( $n = 84$ ;  $17.4 \pm 0.5$  y). Within these levels, two groups were *a priori* defined; talent  
22 identified (U16;  $n = 25$ ;  $15.7 \pm 0.2$  y; U18  $n = 42$ ;  $17.5 \pm 0.4$  y), non-talent identified (U16;  $n = 25$ ;  
23  $15.6 \pm 0.4$  y; U18;  $n = 42$ ;  $17.3 \pm 0.6$  y). Players completed seven physical and anthropometric  
24 assessments commonly utilised for talent identification in AF. Binary logistic regression models were  
25 built to identify the qualities most explanatory of talent at each level.

26 *Results:* A combination of standing height, dominant leg dynamic vertical jump height and 20 m  
27 sprint time provided the most parsimonious explanation of talent at the U16 level ( $AICc = 60.05$ ). At

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