



2026



*BUILDING FUTURE JETS*

# About Development Cup



Ironically, the Development Cup was born based on a theory belonging to NSW legend Phil Gould; If we find a level for every player, you never know who might find their way through the system.

The Development Cup has quickly proven itself as a vital pathway for aspiring rugby league players in Queensland's Western Corridor. Originally launched in 2023 by the Western Clydesdales, the Development Cup was created to support late-maturing under-17 boys who missed initial selection for Cyril Connell Challenge or Mal Meninga Cup squads. That first year saw four regional teams compete: Clydesdales City, Clydesdales Country, Roma & District, and Warwick & District.

The concept was improved in 2024, with stronger alignment to representative calendars and greater support for fringe players. Within two years of its inception, over 34 players had progressed from the Cup into Western Clydesdales Pre-Season Summer Squads for 2025, highlighting its effectiveness in identifying and preparing talent that may otherwise have been overlooked.

However, in 2025, the competition took a significant turn when the Ipswich Jets proposed a bold expansion introducing three Ipswich-based teams alongside three Clydesdales-affiliated teams. When the Western Clydesdales chose to step away from the concept, the Ipswich Jets stepped up and assumed full control of the Development Cup.

The 2025 edition featured three Jets teams (City, Country and Metro) and the South Burnett Eagles, continuing the mission of providing meaningful game time and development opportunities for young players outside traditional elite pathways. Timed to run alongside the Cyril Connell Challenge, the Development Cup allowed for flexibility enabling players who were in Cyril Connell squads but not selected for matchday teams to filter back into their Development Cup sides. This structure ensured no promising player was left without a chance to grow and compete.

The 2025 season much like its predecessors was filled with highlights. One being two young players who were lost to rugby union, before discovering they must be a registered participant to play in the Development Cup, seeing them re-sign to their local club for one more season. Another great story were the 5 players making their Cyril Connell Cup debut for the Jets this year after starting the season with their respective Development Cup teams; one of which, Treyden Koroheke, was not even a part of the original 45-man squad.

As it continues to evolve, the Development Cup remains focused on development over results, creating a lasting impact on Ipswich's junior rugby league nursery.

**Blake Mara - Pathways & Programs Manager - Ipswich Jets**



# Competition Model



## **Male Competition (U17)**

City Jets, Country Jets, Metro Jets  
selected via a 3-way draft by Ipswich Jets  
+ an external team appointed by RLI/QRL

- 3 Rounds + 1-Final

## **Female Competition (U16)**

City Jets, Country Jets,  
selected via a 2-way draft by Ipswich Jets

- Best of 3 Series

## **Staffing**

Each team will require a:

- Coach, League Safe, Sports Trainer, Manager

## **Draft Process**

The draft process that will be in play to select teams is outlined below:

- Country Draft Rule
  - To ensure a connection of Country clubs and players to the jersey, Country head coaches will be able to pre-select junior players from Country Club's prior to the beginning of the draft.
    - For example - The Country head coach could select 5-players deemed as country players prior to the beginning of the drafts, making these players ineligible to be drafted by City or Metro. However, once the draft begins, the Country coach would then begin the draft with the third overall pick and would only be able to draft 15 more players.
    - Rugby League Ipswich would be in charge of determining each junior player's eligibility.
  - The order of the draft will be determined by last year's results
    - Last place would receive first choice and so on.
  - Players from the Cyril Connell Cup squad of 25 would then be allocated to each squad by the Ipswich Jets Football Department.

## **Uniforms & Player Levy**

The player levy will remain \$100.00 per player.

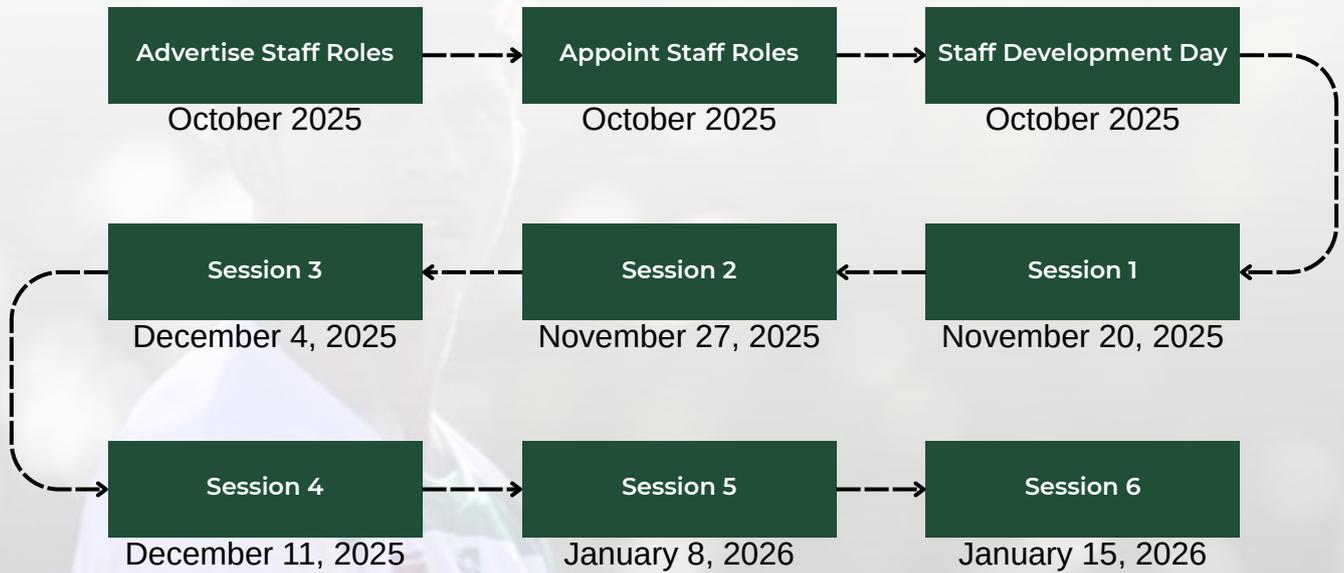
This year each member of the squad will receive a Development Cup training kit prior to the start of the competition with the Ipswich Jets to provide these playing kits.

Ipswich Jets will provide staff with uniform.

Playing Kits will be provided by the Ipswich Jets and retained by the club for future use.



# Schedule Overview



## Development Cup DRAFT

January 16, 2026



## Development Cup FINAL

March 1, 2026



# Draw



## Week 1 - February 7-8 - Venue TBC

U17 Boys



## Week 2 - February 14-15 - Venue TBC

U17 Boys



U16 Girls



## Week 3 - February 21-22 - Venue TBC

U17 Boys



U16 Girls



## Final - February 28 / March 1 - Venue TBC

U17 Boys



U16 Girls

