

2026 PROGRAM · AGES 12+ · FOOTBALL SPECIFIC

Athlete+ Frequently Asked Questions

Everything you need to know before you register for the 2026 Athlete+ program. If your question isn't answered below, email us, but we think we've covered just about everything.

The Basics

1. What are the precise dates of the program?

Athlete+ 2026 runs for 14 weeks, from Sunday 6 September to Sunday 13 December. The program opens with benchmark testing on Sunday 6 September and finishes with final testing on Sunday 13 December, so every athlete ends the program with hard data on exactly how far they've come.

2. How many sessions are programmed each week?

Four. Three individual sessions completed at home in your own time, plus one coached Sunday group run. The individual sessions are deliberately low volume and high intensity (quality over quantity) so they fit comfortably around school, club training and match commitments.

3. Who is Athlete+ open to?

Anyone aged 12 and over who wants to improve their acceleration, top-end speed and running endurance. Most of our athletes are aged 12–18 and playing club or academy football, but the program is open-ended by design, and older players, including those pushing for senior and U23 selection, are very welcome.

4. Who is the coach, and are they accredited?

Athlete+ is designed and delivered by Malcolm Waddock, an Australian Athletics accredited coach of more than 10 years and an ALTIS-certified Sprint and Sport Speed Coach. Malcolm built the Athlete+ methodology specifically around the physical demands of the modern

game, and successfully ran the inaugural Athlete+ program in 2025, where every athlete who completed retesting recorded a measurable improvement.

5. Will there be an induction workshop that goes through all of the protocols used in the program?

Yes. An induction workshop will be scheduled (between Monday 31 and Friday 11 September) to walk athletes and parents through all of the protocols used in the program. The Northside program induction will be held at North Lakes United Football Club and the Southside program induction will be held at Olympic Football Club.

The Science

6. What is Anaerobic Speed Reserve, and why does it matter for footballers?

For footballers it's vital to have both a high Maximal Sprint Speed (MSS) and a high Maximal Aerobic Speed (MAS). In other words, to be fast *and* fit. The gap between the two is your Anaerobic Speed Reserve (ASR):

$$\text{ASR} = \text{Maximal Sprint Speed (MSS)} - \text{Maximal Aerobic Speed (MAS)}$$

For example, an athlete with an MSS of 27 km/h and a MAS of 17 km/h has an ASR of 10 km/h. We measure MSS with an electronically timed flying 30m sprint, and MAS with a 1200m time trial. Together, these two numbers tell us far more about a footballer's engine than either one alone, and they tell us exactly what kind of training each athlete needs most.

7. What are the four ASR quadrants, and how do you place each athlete?

Once we have your MSS and MAS from Week 1 testing, we place you in one of four ASR profiles, benchmarked against your age group:

- **Speed Dominant** (high MSS, lower MAS): training focuses on speed endurance and repeat sprint ability.
- **Endurance Dominant** (lower MSS, high MAS): training focuses on acceleration and maximal velocity (top-end speed).
- **Developmental** (lower MSS, lower MAS): training focuses on building both speed and speed endurance.
- **Elite** (high MSS, high MAS): training focuses on turning your strength into a superpower.

Your individualised program is then built around your quadrant, your age and your results.

8. What physical attributes are we actually developing?

Four things: **acceleration** (0–10m), **maximal velocity** (top-end speed), **high-intensity speed endurance** (the ability to repeat hard efforts late in games), and **mental and physical resilience**. Every session in the program serves at least one of these qualities.

9. Why is there such a focus on speed? Why is speed important for all footballers?

Five reasons:

1. **Sub-max efforts become easier.** A higher top speed means every run below it costs less. A player with a 33 km/h top speed cruises at paces that exhaust a 27 km/h player.
2. **Speed enhances your technical skills.** A well-executed skill followed by elite acceleration is almost impossible to defend.
3. **Speed fixes mistakes.** It dramatically improves your defensive capability. The confidence to win the ball back changes games.
4. **Injury prevention.** Weekly maximal-velocity running primes the central nervous system and closely approximates the demands of game day, making the body more physically resilient.
5. **It delivers a mental edge.** Players with elite speed have no fear. They take the game on and play with absolute freedom.

There's also a use-it-or-lose-it factor: *"If we don't intervene and attack speed as a quality, athletes will start to detrain that quality as they get older."*

10. Can you actually get faster? Isn't there a genetic ceiling?

Genetics set the outer limits, but almost no young footballer is anywhere near their ceiling, because speed is the most undertrained (and most poorly trained) quality in football. Much of what passes for speed work at club level is really conditioning dressed up as sprinting.

Last year's results are the proof. Every Athlete+ participant who completed retesting improved in at least one tested area. Across the group, 10m acceleration and flying 30m times improved by just over 4% on average, with our biggest improvers running 10–12% faster. That's in 14 weeks, simply by training speed properly.

11. How do you actually get faster?

There's no secret, just principles applied consistently:

- **Sprint when fresh.** The only way to get fast is to sprint at maximum intensity, 2–3 sessions a week, on recovered legs.
- **Quality reps count.** Very low volume, very high quality. Repetition trumps variety.
- **Consistency over a year.** Speed compounds. Athletes who string sessions together week after week see the biggest gains.

- **Resistance.** Hills, sleds, weighted vests and bands all assist.
- **Drills.** Bounding, wickets, high-cadence dribbles, skipping for rhythm and plyometrics build the mechanics of elite sprinting.

Testing

12. Where and when will the testing take place? How many testing days are there?

Benchmark testing takes place on Sunday 6 September. The Southside program testing will be held at either Goodwin Park in Yeronga or O'Grady Park in Fairfield (venue confirmed closer to the date). For Northside program testing will be held at Kinsella Sporting Complex. All athletes are tested with electronic timing across three tests: a 0–10m acceleration, a flying 30m sprint, and a 1200m time trial.

There are two formal testing rounds: the baseline on Sunday 6 September and final testing on Sunday 13 December. Every athlete finishes the program with a clear before-and-after picture.

13. What if I'm away on a testing day?

No problem. We'll make a limited number of catch-up testing times available, and we also provide a manual at-home testing protocol so you can record your benchmarks and stay on schedule with your program.

14. What do you do with the testing data? Will I get a report?

Yes. At the end of the program every athlete receives an individual Athlete+ Performance Report covering their baseline, their progression across both testing rounds, their personal bests, their percentage improvements, and how their results rank within their age group. (A sample report is available on our website so you can see exactly what you'll receive.)

Beyond your individual report, all testing data is aggregated anonymously. Individual results are never published or shared with names attached.

15. What sort of improvements were gained in last year's program?

Real, measured ones. Every athlete who completed retesting in 2025 improved in at least one tested area. Highlights from the data:

- **10m acceleration:** 29 of 32 retested athletes improved, by just over 4% on average, with the biggest improvers running 10–12% faster (one athlete went from 2.66s to 2.34s).
- **Flying 30m (top speed):** 29 of 31 retested athletes improved, again averaging over 4%, with the best improvement close to 12%.

- **1200m time trial:** athletes took as much as 28 seconds off their time, with multiple athletes improving by 15 seconds or more.

One featured athlete improved their 0–10m acceleration by 11.8% (2.54s to 2.24s), added 1.5 km/h to their top speed, and ran their 1200m time trial 19 seconds faster, all inside one program.

The Sunday Group Run

16. Where do the Sunday group run sessions take place?

For the Southside program various locations including the University of Queensland, Yeronga Memorial Park, Oxley Common in Rocklea, and O'Grady Park in Fairfield. Northside program locations will be determined and advised closer to the program commencement date. The location for each week is confirmed in advance through the program's WhatsApp group.

17. Is the weekly Sunday group run designed to be hard?

Yes, and that's the point. The Sunday session focuses on lactic-type speed endurance work: the kind of high-intensity running that's hard to push through alone. Doing it as a group makes it achievable, builds mental resilience, and turns the toughest session of the week into the one athletes look forward to most.

18. What if I get injured or feel a niggle during a session?

Consistency is the key to improvement, and nothing wrecks consistency like pushing through an injury. If you feel a niggle: stop, rest, and see a physio for professional advice before continuing. When you return, regress to a level your body is comfortable with and build back up slowly.

You can contact us for advice at any point during an injury period, and depending on the specific injury we can prescribe cross-training alternatives so you keep progressing while you recover.

19. Is there a support chat group?

Yes. All 2026 participants (and parents) join the Athlete+ WhatsApp group. It's where we confirm weekly session details and Sunday run locations, answer questions, and where athletes share their progress across the 14 weeks.

Registration & Payment

20. How do I register?

[Register online here](#) and pay through our secure Stripe payment portal. Early bird registration is \$199 until 15 August 2026; standard registration is \$249. Your place is confirmed as soon as payment is complete.

21. Do you have a refund policy?

Yes. We offer a 100% refund on request at any time up until the first day of testing has been completed. Once testing is underway and individual programs have been built, no refunds are available. Nothing in this policy limits your rights under Australian Consumer Law.