

AFL (NSW/ACT) COMMISSION LIMITED

&

AFL NORTH COAST



2023 RULES

Version 1.0

Version	Date	Rule	Update

Contents

PART A - GENERAL	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 APPLICATION	1
3 OBJECTIVES	1
4 AFL NSW / ACT OBLIGATIONS	1
5 DEFINITIONS & INTERPRETATION	1
5.1 Definitions	1
5.2 Interpretation	4
6 GOVERNING POLICY & COMPLIANCE	4
6.1 The Policy Handbook	4
6.2 The Rules	4
6.2.1 Rules Management Committee	4
6.2.2 Interpretation of Rules	5
6.2.3 Generic Rules	5
6.2.4 League Variations to the Rules	5
6.2.5 AFL NSW/ACT Amendments	6
6.2.6 Suspension of Rules	6
6.3 Code of Conduct	6
6.3.1 Establishment of Code of Conduct	6
6.3.2 Application of Code of Conduct	6
6.3.3 Objectives of Code of Conduct	6
6.3.4 Agreement to Code of Conduct	7
6.3.5 Club Code of Conduct Responsibilities	7
6.4 Compliance	7
6.5 Prohibited Conduct	8
6.6 Child Safe Standards	8
6.6.1 AFL Commitment	8
6.6.2 Minimum Standards for Leagues & Clubs	8
6.7 Public Health Compliance	9
6.8 Matters Not Provided For	9
PART B - STAKEHOLDERS	10
7 LEAGUES	10
7.1 League Governance Structure	10
7.2 AFL Managed Leagues	10
7.3 Affiliated Leagues	10
7.3.1 Affiliation & Services Agreement	10
7.3.2 Affiliation & Services Fee	10
7.3.3 Incorporation Requirement	10
7.3.4 Application of Rules	10
7.3.5 Refusal or Cancellation of Affiliation	10
7.3.6 League Contact Details	10
7.3.7 Club Contact Details	10
7.4 League Insurance	11
7.5 League Sponsorship / Marketing Agreements	11
7.6 Establishment of a Competition Management Committee ('CMC')	11
7.7 Club Participation Agreements	11

7.8	League Disbanding or Amalgamating	12
7.8.1	Notice of Intent to Disband or Amalgamate	12
7.8.2	Player and Club Transfer on League Disbanding	12
7.9	League Colours	12
7.10	League Awards	12
8	CLUBS	12
8.1	Club Affiliation	12
8.1.1	Affiliation of a New Club	12
8.1.2	Affiliation of an Existing Club	12
8.1.3	Affiliation Application Fee	13
8.1.4	Determination of Affiliation Application	13
8.1.5	Termination of Affiliation Agreement	13
8.2	Club Incorporation & Governance	14
8.3	Club Fees	14
8.3.1	Club Affiliation Fee	14
8.3.2	Other Fees or Charges	14
8.4	Club Finance	14
8.4.1	Club Budget	14
8.4.2	Financial Statements	15
8.4.3	Outstanding Accounts	15
8.4.4	Dishonoured Payments	15
8.5	Club Insurance Requirements	15
8.5.1	Insurance Coverage	15
8.5.2	Insurance Fees	16
8.6	Club Name & Logo	16
8.7	Club Uniform	16
8.7.1	Club Uniform Obligations	16
8.7.2	Approved Club Uniform	16
8.7.3	Approved Suppliers	17
8.7.4	Logos on Playing Uniforms & Club Merchandise	17
8.7.5	Legal Approval for Artwork, Logos & Images	17
8.7.6	Jersey Design	17
8.7.7	Shorts Design	18
8.7.8	Socks Design	19
8.8	Club Contact Details	19
8.9	Attendance at League Meetings	19
8.10	Club Integrity Officer	19
8.11	Club Alcohol Compliance	19
8.12	Club Transferring	20
8.12.1	Club Preliminary Request to Transfer	20
8.12.2	League Request for Club to Transfer	20
8.12.3	Club Application to Transfer	21
8.12.4	Determination of Application to Transfer	21
8.13	Club Amalgamating	22
8.14	Club Disbanding	22
8.15	Proof of Communication	22
8.16	Disputes Within a Club	22
9	OFFICIALS	23

9.1	Conduct of Officials	23
9.2	Disqualification – Persons Not to Act	23
9.3	Coaches	23
9.3.1	Coach Eligibility.....	23
9.3.2	Coach Code of Conduct	23
9.3.3	Coach Identifiable.....	23
9.3.4	No Dual Team Official Role.....	24
9.3.5	Coaching in an Under 10 Match	24
9.4	Ground Officials.....	24
9.4.1	Ground Manager	24
9.4.2	Timekeepers	26
9.4.3	Umpire Escort	27
9.5	Team Officials / Staff	28
9.5.1	Number Allowed on Bench.....	28
9.5.2	Team Officials Attire	28
9.5.3	Team Manager	28
9.5.4	Trainers / First Aid / QMP	29
9.5.5	Runners	29
9.5.6	Water Carriers	30
10	UMPIRES.....	30
10.1	Umpire Accreditation	30
10.2	Minimum Age	30
10.3	Appointment of Umpires.....	31
10.4	Number of Field Umpires for a Match	31
10.5	Number of Goal Umpires for a Match	32
10.6	Club Umpires.....	32
10.6.1	Club Field Umpires	32
10.6.2	Club Goal and Boundary Umpires	32
10.7	Umpire Match Report	33
10.8	Umpire Responsibilities.....	33
10.9	Umpire Fees & Payment	33
10.10	Umpire Uniform Branding	33
10.11	Powers & Duties of Umpires	34
10.12	Emergency Umpires	35
10.13	Approaching Umpires.....	35
10.14	Abuse of Umpires.....	35
10.14.1	Umpire Welfare & Safety	35
10.14.2	Definition of Abuse.....	35
10.14.3	Action Against a Person for Umpire Abuse	35
10.14.4	Action Against a Club for Umpire Abuse	36
10.15	Club Feedback Report on Umpiring.....	36
11	PLAYERS	36
11.1	Player Registration	36
11.1.1	Registration Requirements.....	36
11.1.2	Junior Player Registration with a Senior Club.....	37
11.1.3	Registration Period	37
11.1.4	Matchday Registration	37
11.1.5	Proof of Player Identity	37

11.1.6	Multiple Registrations or Profiles	38
11.2	Player Eligibility	38
11.2.1	Junior Player Age Eligibility.....	38
11.2.2	Dispensation to Play Up	39
11.2.3	Dispensation to Play Down.....	40
11.2.4	Gender Eligibility & Diversity	40
11.2.5	Player Eligibility to Move Between Senior Grades	40
11.2.6	Club Request for Proof of Player Eligibility	41
11.3	Transfers	41
11.4	Permits.....	42
11.4.1	Local Interchange Agreements.....	42
11.4.2	Season Permit (formerly Local Interchange Permit)	42
11.4.3	Game Permit (formerly Match Day Permit)	42
11.4.4	Student Permit	43
11.5	False or Misleading Information	43
11.6	Ineligible Players	44
PART C – COMPETITION MANAGEMENT		45
12	COMPETITIONS	45
12.1	Minimum Standards	45
12.2	Competition Management Committee (CMC) Decisions	45
12.3	Competition Equalisation	45
12.3.1	Player Points / Player Payments System	45
12.3.2	Restricted Player List – Reserve Grade.....	46
12.3.3	Intra-League Player Recruitment.....	47
12.4	Conduct of Junior Competitions.....	47
12.4.2	Bouncing the Ball.....	47
12.4.3	Kicking off the Ground.....	47
12.4.4	Marking	47
12.4.5	Modified Tackle	47
12.4.6	Minimum Game Time.....	48
12.4.6	Under 10 Zones	48
12.4.7	Ball Ups.....	49
12.4.8	Rushing a Behind	49
12.5	Competition Grades	49
12.6	Regrading of Teams	50
13	FIXTURE	50
13.1	Preparation of Fixture	50
13.2	Club Requests for Fixture Changes	50
14	TEAMS	51
14.1	Team Nominations	51
14.2	Joint Venture Teams	51
14.3	Club Entering Multiple Teams in a Junior Competition	52
14.4	Number of Players in a Team - Senior Competitions	52
14.5	Number of Players in a Team - Junior Competitions	54
14.6	Even On-field Numbers – Junior Competitions	55
14.7	Even Up Rule – Junior Competitions	55
15	MATCHES.....	56
15.1	Laws of Australian Football.....	56

15.2	AFL NSW/ACT Match Laws	56
15.2.1	Kick-in Rule	56
15.2.2	50 Metre Penalties	56
15.2.3	Starting Positions at Centre Bounces	56
15.2.4	Location of Mark at Kick In	57
15.2.5	Player Standing the Mark	57
15.2.6	Out of Bounds.....	57
15.2.7	Removing a Team from the Field of Play.....	57
15.2.8	Mercy Rule - Junior Competitions	58
15.2.9	Supporter Distance from Boundary & Goals	59
15.2.10	Persons Allowed on Field of Play.....	59
15.3	Player Match Attire & Protective Equipment.....	60
15.3.1	Match Uniform	60
15.3.2	Uniform Clashes	60
15.3.3	Undergarments & Other Items.....	60
15.3.4	Protective Equipment.....	61
15.4	Host Club Match Day Responsibilities	61
15.5	Ground Preparation & Setup	62
15.5.1	Ground Marking	62
15.5.2	Ground Size	63
15.5.3	Goal / Behind Posts	64
15.5.4	Scoreboard	64
15.5.5	Timekeeping Facilities / Equipment	64
15.5.6	Change Rooms.....	64
15.6	Match Footballs	65
15.7	Match Day Paperwork / Records	66
15.7.1	Team Sheets	66
15.7.2	Recording of Match Results.....	67
15.7.3	Umpire Matchday Records.....	68
15.7.4	Club Retention of Match Day Paperwork.....	69
15.8	Match Times & Duration	69
15.8.1	Match Start Times	69
15.8.2	Match & Quarter Duration	70
15.8.3	Time On	70
15.8.4	Match Unable to Commence.....	70
15.8.5	Significant Delay in a Match	71
15.9	Ground Closures.....	72
15.10	Postponed Matches	73
15.11	Cancelled Matches	73
16	MATCH RESULTS	73
16.1	Determination of Match Results.....	73
16.2	Ladder	74
16.3	Match Wins.....	74
16.4	Loss of Points for Breach	74
16.5	Forfeits	74
16.5.1	Notice of Forfeit	74
16.5.2	Unable to Commence or Complete Match.....	75
16.5.3	Forfeit Results.....	75

	16.5.4	Entry of Team Sheets.....	75
	16.5.5	Multiple Forfeits by a Club in a Season	75
	16.5.6	Forfeit of a Higher Grade.....	76
	16.5.7	Additional Costs for Forfeiting Club	76
	16.6	Results of an Incomplete or Delay-impacted Match	76
17		FINALS.....	76
	17.1	Finals Structure.....	76
	17.2	Venue Selection	77
	17.3	Provision of Officials	77
	17.4	Catering & Gate Receipt Rights	77
	17.5	Match Conditions.....	77
	17.6	Drawn Finals Match.....	77
	17.7	Finals Match Unable to be Played	78
	17.8	Club Finals Eligibility	78
	17.9	Player Finals Eligibility	78
18		OTHER MATCHES INCLUDING PRACTICE MATCHES	78
19		REPRESENTATIVE FOOTBALL	79
	19.1	Player Eligibility	79
	19.2	Player Selection and Participation.....	79
	19.3	Match Venue & Catering	80
	19.4	Cost of Representative Event.....	80
	19.5	Representative Team Uniform.....	80
	19.6	Offences.....	80
		PART D – HEALTH & SAFETY	81
20		RISK MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST	81
21		INJURY MANAGEMENT.....	81
	21.1	Injury Management Policy.....	81
	21.2	Matchday Injury Treatment Resources	81
	21.3	First Aid Equipment & Ambulance Access	82
	21.4	Concussion	82
	21.5	Active Bleeding	82
22		PREGNANT PLAYERS	82
23		EXTREME WEATHER	82
		PART E – DISCIPLINARY & APPEALS	83
24		MATCH OFFENCES.....	83
	24.1	Order Off Rule.....	83
		24.1.1 Yellow Card.....	83
		24.1.2 Red Card	84
	24.2	Melees.....	85
25		REPORTABLE OFFENCES	86
	25.1	What is a Reportable Offence?.....	86
	25.2	Making a Report (of a Reportable Offence).....	87
		25.2.1 Methods for Making a Report	87
		25.2.2 Umpire Report.....	87
		25.2.3 Club Citing	88
		25.2.4 Review of Footage	88
		25.2.5 Executive Officer Report.....	89
		25.2.6 Reporting of Junior Players.....	89

25.3	Assessing a Reportable Offence	89
25.3.1	Initial Assessment of a Report	89
25.3.2	Match Review Panel ('MRP')	89
25.3.3	Further Investigation	89
25.3.4	Dismissal of a Report	89
25.4	Classification & Grading of Reportable Offence	90
25.4.1	Classification of a Reportable Offence	90
25.4.2	Low Level Offence	90
25.4.3	Classifiable Offence	90
25.4.4	Classifiable Offence (Auditory)	90
25.4.5	Direct Tribunal Offence	91
25.4.6	Reportable Offence in a Grand Final	91
25.4.7	Other Considerations in Classifying a Reportable Offence	91
25.4.8	Multiple Offences in One Match	91
25.5	Notice of Charge	91
25.5.1	Purpose of a Notice of Charge	91
25.5.2	Issuing and Form of a Notice of Charge	91
25.5.3	Withdrawing a Notice of Charge	92
25.6	Early Guilty Plea	92
25.6.1	Early Guilty Plea Offer	92
25.6.2	Response to an Early Guilty Plea Offer	92
25.7	Reportable Offences Record Keeping	92
25.7.1	Documents	92
25.7.2	Record of Reportable Offences	92
26	POLICY BREACHES	93
26.1	What is a Policy Breach?	93
26.2	Reporting a Policy Breach	93
26.2.1	Complaint for Breach of the Rules or Code of Conduct	93
26.2.2	Complaint for Vilification or Discrimination	94
26.2.3	Complaint for Breach of National Policy	94
26.2.4	Offending Party Right to Respond to Complaint	94
26.3	Assessing a Policy Breach	94
26.3.1	Initial Assessment of a Complaint	94
26.3.2	Investigation of a Complaint	94
26.4	Determining a Policy Breach	95
26.5	Notice of Breach	95
26.5.1	Issuing a Notice of Breach	95
26.5.2	Direct Referral to Tribunal	96
26.5.3	Withdrawing a Notice of Breach	96
26.5.4	Response to a Notice of Breach	96
26.6	Record of Policy Breach	96
26.6.1	Documents	96
26.6.2	Record of Sanctions	96
27	TRIBUNAL HEARINGS	96
27.1.1	Scope of the Tribunal	96
27.1.2	Appointment of Tribunal Panel	97
27.1.3	Tribunal Procedure and Evidence	97
27.1.4	Tribunal Decision	97

	27.1.5	Appeal of Tribunal Decision.....	97
28		APPEALS.....	97
	28.1	Appeal Board.....	97
	28.1.1	Function of Appeal Board.....	97
	28.1.2	Appeal Board Panel.....	97
	28.2	Appeal Lodgement.....	97
	28.2.1	Grounds for Appeal.....	97
	28.2.2	Notice of Appeal.....	97
	28.2.3	Timeframe for Appeal.....	98
	28.2.4	Appeal Fee.....	98
	28.3	Appeal Hearings.....	98
	28.3.1	Appeal Hearing Date & Place.....	98
	28.3.2	Composition of Appeal Board for Hearing.....	99
	28.3.3	Representation and Costs.....	99
	28.3.4	Attendance at Appeal Board Hearing.....	99
	28.3.5	General Conduct of Appeal Board Hearing.....	99
	28.3.6	Review of Evidence by Appeal Board.....	99
	28.3.7	Onus and Standard of Proof.....	99
	28.3.8	Adjournments.....	99
	28.4	Appeal Outcomes.....	99
	28.4.1	Decision of Appeal Board.....	99
	28.4.2	Person to Serve Sanction Until Appeal is Determined.....	99
	28.4.3	Abandoning an Appeal.....	100
	28.4.4	Validity of Appeal and Hearing.....	100
	28.4.5	Exhaust Appeal Rights.....	100
29		PROHIBITED CONDUCT.....	100
	29.1	Contact Intended to Mislead.....	100
	29.2	Public Comment.....	100
	29.3	Criticism of Decision.....	100
	29.4	Prohibited Conduct Breach.....	100
30		DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS.....	101
	30.1	Sanctions for Reportable Offence.....	101
	30.2	Sanctions for Policy Breach.....	101
	30.3	Suspension of a Person.....	102
		PART F - MISCELLANEOUS.....	105
31		AFL MARKS AND LOGOS.....	105
32		APPROVED SUPPLIERS.....	105
33		BROADCASTING RIGHTS.....	105
34		SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA STATEMENTS.....	106
35		RECORDING & USE OF IMAGES.....	106
		FORM / TEMPLATE LINKS.....	107
		APPENDICES.....	107

Part A - GENERAL

1 INTRODUCTION

- (A) These Rules form part of the AFL's regulatory structure and operate alongside AFL national policy, including:
- (i) the *National Community Football Policy Handbook* ('the Policy Handbook');
 - (ii) the *Australian Football Match Policy* which overarches the conduct of Junior football; and
 - (iii) the *Laws of Australian Football* which establishes the laws for the conduct of Competition Matches.
- (B) The Rules provide for:
- (i) regulation of matters at a state / territory level or League level that are not otherwise covered by national policy;
 - (ii) variation to national policy where such variation is necessary for the proper conduct of community football at a State / Territory level or League level; and
 - (iii) inclusion of State / Territory level or League level procedural requirements that support aspects of, and compliance with, national policy.

2 APPLICATION

- (A) AFL NSW/ACT is responsible for the organisation, promotion and administration of Australian Football throughout NSW and the ACT and accordingly has jurisdiction over all Affiliated Leagues in NSW and the ACT including the relevant Competitions.
- (B) These Rules have been made by AFL NSW/ACT and by AFL North Coast pursuant to its role to administer Competitions in the North Coast region of NSW.

3 OBJECTIVES

- (A) The Rules intend to:
- (i) promote, develop and protect Australian Football in NSW and the ACT by ensuring that the appropriate standards and conduct apply;
 - (ii) ensure that the Leagues and Competitions are regulated in a consistent and co-ordinated manner across NSW and the ACT;
 - (iii) operate congruently with national policy and align Leagues and Clubs to this.

4 AFL NSW / ACT OBLIGATIONS

- (A) AFL NSW/ACT will:
- (i) comply with the Rules;
 - (ii) ensure that the Rules operate congruently with AFL national policy;
 - (iii) ensure compliance by Leagues with the Rules; and
 - (iv) provide appropriate education and training to those who manage and implement the Rules.

5 DEFINITIONS & INTERPRETATION

5.1 Definitions

- (A) Definitions relevant to the Rules are in Table 1.
- (B) Unless otherwise defined in Table 1, or elsewhere in these Rules, terms used in these Rules have the same meaning as defined in the *Policy Handbook*.

Table 1 – Rules Definitions

TERM	MEANS
ACT	The Australian Capital Territory
Academy	GWS GIANTS Academy or Sydney Swans Academy
Affiliation Agreement	The agreement between AFL NSW/ACT and a League outlining the rights and obligations of the parties including the benefits and services provided to a League of affiliation with AFL NSW/ACT and AFL NSW/ACT’s requirements for affiliation.
AFL Marks	AFL logos, AFL Club logos, the AFL NSW/ACT logo, trade names and other Intellectual Property, registered or unregistered owned by the AFL and/or AFL NSW/ACT (whichever is applicable).
AFL NSW/ACT	AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Ltd (ACN 086 839 385)
Age Group	Any or all of the nine (9) to eighteen (18) years age brackets, as the case may be.
Aligned Junior Club	Where Seniors and Juniors exist under the same Constitution, or where a League approved pathway exists between separate Senior and Junior Clubs that establishes a clear pathway for junior players to transition to senior grades.
Appellant	The Person or party seeking to appeal a decision under Rule 28 , and where applicable, includes an Appellant’s representative.
Appendix	An appendix to these Rules.
Child	All children and young people under the age of eighteen (18)
Child Protection Legislation	Legislation covering child protection and child wellbeing services nationally and in NSW or ACT (as the case may be), including the <i>Children’s Guardian Act 2019</i> in NSW and the <i>Children and Young People Act 2008</i> in ACT.
Club Integrity Officer	A person appointed by a Club in accordance with Rule 8.10
Club Participation Agreement	The terms and conditions agreed between both a Club and a League with respect to a Club’s participation in the League’s Competitions in the form as prescribed by AFL NSW/ACT.
Chairperson	The Chairperson of the Appeals Board as appointed in accordance with Rule 28.1.2
Code of Conduct	The AFL NSW/ACT Code of Conduct in Appendix One or as issued from time to time.
Community League Club	All teams directly comprising Clubs within an Australian Football Competition, other than the AFL Competition or State Leagues.
CMC	A Competition Management Committee established in accordance with Rule 7.6 .
Competition	Any Australian Football Competition conducted and organised by AFL NSW/ACT or a League
Competition Management Platform	PlayHQ
Constitution	The constitution of an incorporated association as required under the <i>NSW Associations Incorporation Act 2009</i> or the <i>ACT Associations Incorporation Act 1991</i> .
Controlling Body	A League or AFL NSW/ACT
Delegate	A member of a Club who has voting rights on behalf of the Club at a League meeting (generally a member of the Club’s Executive Committee)
Destination League	The League to which a Player or Club is Transferring
ERC	Emergency Response Coordinator
Executive Officer	The Head of AFL NSW/ACT or their delegate.

Fixture	The official schedule of matches established by the League in accordance with Rule 13.1 .
Grade	A defined level of a Competition, based on gender and age for Junior Competitions (e.g. Mixed Under 13's) or based on gender and the standard of football for Senior Competitions (e.g. Women's Division 1).
Host Club	The first named Club or Team in each Round of the official Season Fixture.
Intellectual Property	All company and business names, trade names, trademarks, logos, symbols, emblems, designs or other indicia, inventions, patents, trade secrets, processes and any other intellectual property whatsoever (including copyright), registered or unregistered, currently owned and in existence or to be developed in the future by the AFL and/or AFL NSW/ACT.
Junior	An adjective describing any competition grade up to and including under 18s.
League	An AFL NSW/ACT managed or affiliated League which operates or conducts a Competition within NSW and/or the ACT.
Match	A match in a Competition conducted by the League, and as appropriate and as applicable, includes practice matches.
MRO	Match Review Officer
MRP	Match Review Panel
NSW	The state of New South Wales.
Official	A person undertaking official duties for a Club, including a Club committee member, a ground manager, a timekeeper, an umpire escort, a Coach, an assistant coach, a team manager, a trainer, ERC, first aid person or QMP, a runner, a water carrier.
Official Team Sheet	The official printed listing of Players and Officials participating in a Match as lodged by each competing Club with the Ground Manager prior to the commencement of any Match in accordance with Rule 15.7.1 .
Parent	The parent or legal guardian of any Player under the age of 18 years.
Player Payment Rules	The player payment rules adopted by a League and approved by AFL NSW/ACT to regulate the level of payments and benefits to a Club's Players, as issued by the League from time to time.
Player Points System	The community club sustainability <i>Player Point's System Policy</i> approved by AFL NSW/ACT and implemented by a League with respect to a Competition or Competitions, as issued from time to time.
PlayHQ	The Competition Management Platform used by AFL NSW/ACT and Leagues to manage Player registration and competitions.
Policy Handbook	The <i>National Community Football Policy Handbook</i> .
QMP	Qualified Medical Professional as defined by Section 16.3 of the <i>Policy Handbook</i> .
Rules	These Rules.
RMC	The Rules Management Committee established in accordance with Rule 6.2.1
Senior	An adjective describing any Competition Grade over under 18s.
Source League	The League from which a Player or Club is transferring.
Student Permit	A permit in accordance with Rule 11.4.4 .
Supporter	A person who attends a Competition conducted and organised by AFL NSW/ACT or a League who is not a Player or Official, but who may include a Parent.
Team	A Club's team participating in a Competition conducted by the League.
Tribunal	A Tribunal constituted by a League under Rule 27 .

5.2 Interpretation

- (A) In the interpretation of the Rules, unless there is something in the subject or context inconsistent therewith:
- (i) words importing the singular will be deemed to include the plural and vice versa;
 - (ii) words importing persons will be deemed to include all bodies and associations, incorporated or unincorporated and vice versa;
 - (iii) headings are included for convenience only and will not affect the interpretation of the Rules;
 - (iv) “including” and similar words are not words of limitation;
 - (v) a reference to a “day” is a calendar day unless it is deemed otherwise for a particular Rule;
 - (vi) a reference to a “business day” means a day, other than a Saturday or Sunday, that is not a designated Public Holiday in the relevant location, and if not otherwise specified in the Rules, a business day ends at 5.00pm;
 - (vii) words, terms and phrases not otherwise defined in these Rules will be given their ordinary meaning; and
 - (viii) the Rules includes the Rules as amended, varied, supplemented or replaced from time to time and any Appendix, schedule, attachment, annexure or exhibit to the Rules or that document.

6 GOVERNING POLICY & COMPLIANCE

6.1 The Policy Handbook

- (A) The *National Community Football Policy Handbook* (“the *Policy Handbook*”) provides a national policy framework covering:
- (i) Eligibility & Registration;
 - (ii) Member Protection & Integrity;
 - (iii) Health & Safety;
 - (iv) Disciplinary.

(B) Unless varied in accordance with these Rules, the provisions of the *Policy Handbook* apply.

6.2 The Rules

6.2.1 Rules Management Committee

- (A) The AFL NSW/ACT Rules Management Committee (‘RMC’) is responsible for:
- (i) ensuring the Rules achieve the stated objectives;
 - (ii) overseeing the drafting of the generic Rules;
 - (iii) interpretation of any Rules in accordance with [Rule 6.2.2](#);
 - (iv) annual review and update of the generic Rules in accordance with [Rule 6.2.3](#);
 - (v) repeal of or amendment to any League variation under [Rule 6.2.4](#) where that variation is inconsistent with the objectives of the Rules;
 - (vi) amendment or repeal of a Rule in accordance with [Rule 6.2.5](#);
 - (vii) suspension of any Rule in accordance with [Rule 6.2.6](#);
 - (viii) review and determination of any matter that is referred to it in accordance with the Rules.
- (B) The RMC shall consist of at least three (3) of the following positions:

- (i) State Community Football Manager NSW/ACT;
 - (ii) Community Football Operations Manager NSW/ACT;
 - (iii) Community Football Regional Manager – ACT & Regional NSW;
 - (iv) Community Football Regional Manager – Greater Sydney;
 - (v) Community Football & Competition Manager (of any region);
 - (vi) Other Persons as determined by the State Community Football Manager.
- (C) Where the RMC is required to determine a matter in accordance with these Rules, no person may sit on the RMC for a matter where that person was involved in the decision under review.

6.2.2 Interpretation of Rules

- (A) A League or CMC may seek the advice of the RMC in relation to the interpretation or application of a particular Rule prior to making a determination of a matter.
- (B) Where there is a dispute with respect to the interpretation of the Rules, the opinion of the RMC will prevail and will be final unless:
- (i) otherwise specified in the Rules or *Policy Handbook*; or
 - (ii) subject to any right of appeal provided by law.
- (C) Any binding interpretation of the Rules made by the RMC will be circulated to all Leagues.

6.2.3 Generic Rules

- (A) The AFL NSW/ACT generic Rules will be published and distributed to Leagues prior to the commencement of each season and are to be used as the framework for establishing the Rules for the League.
- (B) A League may make variations to the generic Rules in accordance with Rule 6.2.4.

6.2.4 League Variations to the Rules

- (A) Variations to the generic Rules may be agreed by the League:
- (i) as may be necessary for the proper conduct and management of League and the regulation of its affairs; and
 - (ii) on the recommendation of the CMC in consultation with the Clubs; and
 - (iii) on the approval of AFL NSW/ACT.
- (B) Where a League variation made in accordance with Rule 6.2.4(A) differs from the AFL NSW/ACT generic Rule, the League variation will apply.
- (C) AFL NSW/ACT may determine and advise Leagues, at the time of distribution of the generic Rules, that select Rules must not be subject of any League variation.
- (D) Prior to commencement of any competition to which the Rules apply, or by other timeline specified by AFL NSW/ACT, a League must:
- (i) insert all agreed League variations into the Rules document and highlight these as variations in the manner specified by AFL NSW/ACT;
 - (ii) publish the complete varied Rules document on its website in a publicly accessible location; and
 - (iii) provide an electronic copy of its complete varied Rules document to AFL NSW/ACT.
- (E) If a League fails to meet the requirements of Rule 6.2.4(D):
- (i) the AFL NSW/ACT Generic Rules will apply until such time as the League complies; and
 - (ii) the RMC will determine the constraints of any Rules that require completion by a League for a competition to proceed.

- (F) If, following the commencement of any competition to which the Rules apply, a League determines that it is necessary to make a further variation to the Rules to ensure the fair and proper conduct of a competition, the League must first seek the approval of AFL NSW/ACT to do so.
- (G) AFL NSW/ACT, in its absolute discretion, may not approve a League variation where it is clearly inconsistent with the objectives of AFL national policy or these Rules.

6.2.5 AFL NSW/ACT Amendments

- (A) AFL NSW/ACT may, from time to time, amend or repeal any of the Rules as may be necessary for the proper conduct and management of AFL NSW/ACT and the regulation of its affairs and to notify all Leagues of any such amendment.
- (B) Where an amendment is made under Rule 6.2.5(A), all Leagues are required to update their respective Rules and republish these within seven (7) days together with notification of this to Clubs.

6.2.6 Suspension of Rules

- (A) AFL NSW/ACT, in its absolute discretion, may suspend any Rule from operation.
- (B) Any such suspension of a Rule shall be advised to Leagues and Clubs in writing and shall remain in force until AFL NSW/ACT determines otherwise.

6.3 Code of Conduct

6.3.1 Establishment of Code of Conduct

- (A) AFL NSW/ACT will establish, and amend from time to time as is necessary, a Code of Conduct in accordance with the objectives of Rule 6.3.3.
- (B) The Code of Conduct forms part of the AFL NSW/ACT Rules and is attached at Appendix One.
- (C) The provisions of Sections 9.1 and 9.2 of the *Policy Handbook* also apply.
- (D) The Code of Conduct may be supplemented by additional codes of behaviour or procedures as imposed by a League or Club, provided that they are not inconsistent with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

6.3.2 Application of Code of Conduct

- (A) The Code of Conduct applies to the conduct and behaviour of Clubs, Players, Club Officials, Supporters, League Officials and Umpires, and:
 - (i) applies to all forms of Australian Football under AFL NSW/ACT's jurisdiction;
 - (ii) continues to apply to a participant even after that participant's association, registration, employment or engagement has ended, if that participant breached this Code of Conduct while a current participant; and
 - (iii) does not limit or restrict the application of the AFL or AFL NSW/ACT Rules, the *Policy Handbook* or other National AFL policy.
- (B) The Code of Conduct does not govern Reportable Offences, the Order-Off Rule, or Citations and an individual must not be penalised under both the Reportable Offences provisions and the Code of Conduct.
- (C) Where an incident may constitute both a Reportable Offence or a breach of the Code of Conduct, the charge of a Reportable Offence will take precedence.

6.3.3 Objectives of Code of Conduct

- (A) The Code of Conduct aims to:
 - (i) promote and strengthen the reputation of Australian Football in NSW and the ACT by establishing a standard of performance, behaviour and professionalism for its participants and stakeholders; and

- (ii) ensure the safety and enjoyment of all participants and stakeholders and deter conduct that could impair confidence in the honest and professional conduct of Matches or in the integrity and good character of its participants.

6.3.4 Agreement to Code of Conduct

- (A) Clubs agree to comply with the Rules and Code of Conduct through affiliation.
- (B) Players agree to comply with the Code of Conduct through the online registration process in PlayHQ.
- (C) Coaches agree to comply with the Coaches Code of Conduct as part of the annual coaching accreditation and registration in CoachAFL.
- (D) Players, Officials, Coaches and Supporters, including Parents, are bound by the Rules and Code of Conduct irrespective of whether they have received or signed the Code of Conduct.
- (E) Any breach of the Code of Conduct by an individual or Club will be dealt with by the relevant Controlling Body as a breach of policy in accordance with [Rule 26](#).

6.3.5 Club Code of Conduct Responsibilities

- (A) Under the Code of Conduct, Clubs are responsible for the behaviour and conduct of its Players, Officials, Coaches and Supporters.
- (B) Clubs are required to ensure that all Club's Players, Officials, Coaches, administrators and Parents of Junior Players receive a copy of the Code of Conduct prior to the start of each season or at the time of registration.

6.4 Compliance

- (A) All Leagues, Clubs, Players and Officials agree to comply with the Rules as well as any other Laws, Regulations, Policies and Guidelines established by the AFL or AFL NSW/ACT, including:
 - (i) the National State & Community Football *Policy Handbook*;
 - (ii) the Laws of Australian Football;
 - (iii) the Australian Football Match Policy;
 - (iv) the Management of Sport-Related Concussion in Australian Football;
 - (v) the AFL National Female Community Football Guidelines;
 - (vi) the AFL Respect & Responsibility Policy;
 - (vii) the AFL Gender Diversity Policy Community Football;
 - (viii) the AFL Gender Diversity Policy Elite Football;
 - (ix) the Australian Football Anti-Doping Code;
 - (x) the AFL NSW/ACT Code of Conduct;
 - (xi) the AFL NSW/ACT Player Points System Policy;
 - (xii) the AFL NSW/ACT Club Participation Agreement;
 - (xiii) the AFL NSW/ACT Hearing Procedures.
- (B) Each League, Club, Player, Coach, Official and supporter acknowledges that in order to meet the stated objectives of the Rules, their terms must be strictly complied with and their spirit and intent honoured and AFL NSW/ACT has the right to invoke a disciplinary process to enforce and encourage such compliance.
- (C) AFL NSW/ACT may excuse:
 - (i) a League, Club, Player, Coach, Official or supporter from liability if that party ought reasonably and fairly be excused, wholly or partly, from that liability on such terms as AFL NSW/ACT thinks fit; and

- (ii) a Player, Coach or Official from liability in consideration of their co-operation and assistance in establishing a breach of the Rules by any League, Club, Player, Coach, Official or supporter.

6.5 Prohibited Conduct

- (A) A person, including a Club, Club Official, Player or club member, must adhere to a determination made by AFL NSW/ACT, the League, the RMC or the CMC, and not publicise in any form, including in media or social media, information that:
 - (i) ignores, is contrary to, or misconstrues the decision made;
 - (ii) is false or misleading in respect of the decision made; or
 - (iii) is unreasonable or excessive criticism of the decision made or of any person who made or communicated the decision.

6.6 Child Safe Standards

6.6.1 AFL Commitment

- (A) All Children and Young People, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from Child Abuse.
- (B) The AFL is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all Children and Young People.

6.6.2 Minimum Standards for Leagues & Clubs

- (A) All Leagues, Clubs and persons must comply with:
 - (i) applicable Child Protection Legislation;
 - (ii) Section 11 of the *Policy Handbook*;
 - (iii) any AFL NSW/ACT Child Safe policy, as introduced or amended from time to time, relating to the Child Safe Scheme and associated child safe standards.
- (B) All Leagues and Clubs are to:
 - (i) have zero tolerance for child abuse; and
 - (ii) provide an environment in which all children and young people feel safe, supported and respected.
- (C) All Coaches and Team Managers must obtain a Working With Children Check Clearance, even if they are exempt under the Rules of the Child Protection Legislation as not requiring a check by reason of them being a Parent or close relative of a Player in a Team in which the Player usually participates.
- (D) All Working With Children Check clearances must be valid and effective by 1 April each year.
- (E) Each Club must:
 - (i) maintain an up to date Working With Children Check Register; and
 - (ii) provide a copy of this to the League of AFL NSW/ACT within seven (7) calendar days following a request by the League or AFL NSW/ACT.

Guidance Note: A Club may download a template of the Working With Children Check Register from the Office of the Children's Guardian website [resources section](#).

- (F) Each Club and League must ensure its board (or committee) members are familiar with, and adhere to, the reporting procedures under Section 11.5 of the *Policy Handbook*.

(G) A Child Safe Commitment Statement must be incorporated into all League and Club websites by 1 April 2023.

Guidance Notes: To assist with meeting this requirement, AFL NSW/ACT will provide Leagues and Clubs with further information on the Child Safe Commitment Statement prior to 1 March 2023. Where a Club does not have a Website, the statement is to be placed on the Club's primary social media page (e.g. Facebook).

6.7 Public Health Compliance

(A) Whilst undertaking any community football related activity in NSW/ACT, all Leagues, Clubs, Players, Officials and supporters are required to adhere to all health and safety requirements established under:

- (i) The NSW Public Health Order;
- (ii) The ACT Public Health Directions;
- (iii) Any additional directives that AFL NSW/ACT mandates from time to time in accordance with Rule 6.7(B).

(B) To address any impact of a Public Health Order or Direction on its Competitions, AFL NSW/ACT may, as is required from time to time, issue directives to Clubs and Leagues that are necessary for the fair, proper and safe conduct of those Competitions.

(C) Any directives issued by AFL NSW/ACT in accordance with Rule 6.7(B) will be:

- (i) communicated to all Leagues as soon as implemented; and
- (ii) attached to these Rules as an Appendix; and

(D) All Clubs and Leagues are to comply with any directives issued under Rule 6.7(B).

6.8 Matters Not Provided For

(A) The RMC may regulate any matters not provided for in the Rules in its sole and absolute discretion.

Part B - STAKEHOLDERS

7 LEAGUES

7.1 League Governance Structure

(A) Each League in NSW and ACT will fall under one of the following governance structures:

- (i) AFL Managed League; or
- (ii) Affiliated League.

7.2 AFL Managed Leagues

(A) Under an AFL managed League model, AFL NSW/ACT assumes responsibility for all aspects of:

- (i) League Governance under an incorporated association;
- (ii) Financial management, including League management costs;
- (iii) Competition management including provision of necessary staff resources;
- (iv) Management of the disciplinary process.

7.3 Affiliated Leagues

7.3.1 Affiliation & Services Agreement

Each Affiliated League must have in place a current *Affiliation and Services Agreement* with AFL NSW/ACT.

7.3.2 Affiliation & Services Fee

Each League must pay an annual affiliation and / or service fee to AFL NSW/ACT as determined from time to time by AFL NSW/ACT in its absolute discretion.

7.3.3 Incorporation Requirement

Each Affiliated League must be incorporated pursuant to the relevant legislation in New South Wales or the Australian Capital Territory and lodge its current Constitution with the AFL NSW/ACT at all times.

7.3.4 Application of Rules

In the event of any inconsistency between the Constitution of an Affiliated League and the Constitution of AFL NSW/ACT or the Rules, then the Constitution of such League will be invalid to the extent of such inconsistency.

7.3.5 Refusal or Cancellation of Affiliation

Any League which fails to comply with the Rules, either in whole or part, may be refused application for affiliation or have its affiliation suspended or terminated by AFL NSW/ACT in its absolute discretion in accordance with the Affiliation Agreement.

7.3.6 League Contact Details

By 31 January each year, each Affiliated League must submit to AFL NSW/ACT a list of the names, addresses, telephone and email addresses of its Officials and a copy of the League Members register.

7.3.7 Club Contact Details

By 31 March each year, each Affiliated League must ensure that that each Club's contact details are updated on PlayHQ. This includes a list of the names, addresses and contact details of the Club's Office Bearers (including the President and Secretary).

7.4 League Insurance

- (A) A League affiliated to, or managed by, AFL NSW/ACT has insurance cover with Marsh under the AFL's National Risk Protection Programme.

Guidance Notes: Policy coverage details can be viewed at [Australian Football Community Clubs | National Risk Protection Program | Marsh](#). A League can download its Certificate of Currency via [Certificate of Currency | Marsh](#).

- (B) AFL NSW/ACT will determine insurance fees payable by an affiliated League under the National Risk Protection Programme, together with the terms of payment of this.

7.5 League Sponsorship / Marketing Agreements

The League will not enter into any contract, arrangement, agreement or understanding with any corporation/person for the supply, endorsement, approval or sponsorship of goods or services of the type provided by or associated with the operations of AFL NSW/ACT major sponsors or partners, unless otherwise approved by AFL NSW/ACT in writing.

Guidance Note: AFL NSW/ACT's major sponsors or partners provide, in part, the financial resources for AFL NSW/ACT to promote, develop and administer Australian Football in NSW and the ACT.

7.6 Establishment of a Competition Management Committee ('CMC')

- (A) The League shall establish a CMC to control the day-to-day management of the League's Competitions including the application and enforcement of the Rules.
- (B) A CMC shall consist of at least three (3) persons selected from the following positions:
- (i) League Chair/ President (if applicable);
 - (ii) State Community Football Manager (AFL NSW/ACT employee);
 - (iii) Community Football Operations Manager (AFL NSW/ACT employee);
 - (iv) Community Football Regional Manager (AFL NSW/ACT employee);
 - (v) Community Football & Competition Manager (AFL NSW/ACT employee);
 - (vi) Competition Coordinator (AFL NSW/ACT employee); or
 - (vii) Other persons as delegated by the League.
- (C) A CMC member must take appropriate steps to ensure they do not place themselves in a situation where there may be an actual or potential conflict of interests in the determination of a matter before the CMC.

Guidance Examples: A CMC member who is also member of a particular Club should recuse themselves from any determination of a matter by the CMC that is specific to that particular Club (e.g. a disciplinary matter). A CMC member who made, or was involved in, the original decision of a matter that is now under review by the CMC may participate in the CMC in so far as presentation of facts and rationale for the decision, but should not cast a vote in the CMC's determination of the matter.

7.7 Club Participation Agreements

- (A) In accordance with Club affiliation requirements under [Rule 8.1](#), each League must have an annually executed Club Participation Agreement with each of its Clubs, in the form prescribed by AFL NSW/ACT from time to time, in order for the Club to participate in a competition of that League.
- (B) Upon request by AFL NSW/ACT, a League must produce a copy of any or all Club Participation Agreements within seven (7) calendar days.

7.8 League Disbanding or Amalgamating

7.8.1 Notice of Intent to Disband or Amalgamate

Any League that is seeking to disband or amalgamate with another League, must provide notice of its intent to AFL NSW/ACT at the earliest possible time after establishing its intent.

7.8.2 Player and Club Transfer on League Disbanding

- (A) In the event of a League disbanding:
- (i) the Clubs affiliated with that League may be transferred to another League as determined by AFL NSW/ACT in its absolute discretion; and
 - (ii) Any Player of a Club affiliated with a disbanded League, who wishes to play for another Club, must request a Transfer in accordance with the Transfer Rules.

7.9 League Colours

- (A) A League may prescribe official colours to be used for the League's representative football Teams, stationery and marketing.
- (B) The official colours of the League are wattle, bottle green, and white.

7.10 League Awards

- (A) Each season the League will, in its absolute discretion, establish:
- (i) any awards to be awarded to Players, Officials, Clubs, Teams or other persons;
 - (ii) the criteria and benefits applicable to any awards;
 - (iii) the process for determining award nominees;
 - (iv) any event for presentation of awards.
- (B) Any Player who has been suspended for any offence in the home and away season will not be eligible to win a Best and Fairest award.
- (C) The League Awards are documented in the AFL North Coast Awards Policy.

8 CLUBS

8.1 Club Affiliation

8.1.1 Affiliation of a New Club

- (A) A new Club seeking to affiliate with a League and participate in the League's Competitions, must:
- (i) submit a new Club application for affiliation to the League in the form prescribed by the League; and
 - (ii) pay to the League any prescribed fee or bond in accordance with [Rule 8.1.3](#).
- (B) The League must:
- (i) determine the Club's affiliation application in accordance with [Rule 8.1.4](#); and
 - (ii) obtain the prior written approval of AFL NSW/ACT prior to affiliating any newly formed Club.
- (C) Where approval is given to affiliate a new Club, the Club must complete and sign a Club Participation Agreement prior to any of the Club's Teams participating in the League's Competitions.

8.1.2 Affiliation of an Existing Club

- (A) To participate in the League's Competitions, a Club must apply to affiliate with the League:

- (i) on an annual basis; and
- (ii) in the form and on such conditions as determined by the League and AFL NSW/ACT from time to time pursuant to a Club Participation Agreement; and
- (iii) pay to the League any prescribed fee or bond in accordance with Rule 8.1.3.

(B) The affiliation agreement is to be completed and returned to the League a minimum of three (3) weeks before the competition is due to commence, or any sooner date as specified by the League. Clubs failing to comply with this timeframe may be excluded from the competition by the League.

8.1.3 Affiliation Application Fee

- (A) The League will prescribe the amount of any affiliation application fee payable by a Club to affiliate with the League.
- (B) The League may determine that a bond is payable by a Club, in addition to or in lieu of a prescribed affiliation application fee, together with the terms of such bond.

8.1.4 Determination of Affiliation Application

- (A) The CMC is to determine a new or existing Club's application for affiliation and in doing so may:
 - (i) approve the application for affiliation;
 - (ii) approve the application for affiliation on terms and conditions as it reasonably requires;
 - (iii) approve the application for affiliation with a request for further or additional information, or amend or revise the application;
 - (iv) refuse to grant the application for affiliation; or
 - (v) defer same.
- (B) In determining whether to grant a Club's application for affiliation or in making any decision pursuant to Rule 8.1.4(A), the CMC shall take into account, as applicable:
 - (i) the Club's structure, governance and administration, including succession plans and long-term planning and development;
 - (ii) the promotion of AFL by the Club and its contribution to the ongoing development of Australian Football;
 - (iii) the financial health of the Club;
 - (iv) any outstanding debt to a League;
 - (v) the behavioural and conduct history of the Club, its Teams, Players, Officials, volunteers and Supporters, and the Club's relationships with other Clubs and the League;
 - (vi) any other matter that the CMC deems appropriate.

8.1.5 Termination of Affiliation Agreement

- (A) In signing a Club Participation Agreement, a Club acknowledges and agrees that this does not create a right or expectation of continued participation in any particular Competitions or any future Competition/s administered by AFL NSW/ACT.
- (B) In accordance with the Club Participation Agreement, the CMC of the League may, with prior approval from AFL NSW/ ACT, terminate the Club Participation Agreement at any time after each football season by giving three (3) month's written notice to the Club.
- (C) No reasons for termination of a Club Participation Agreement are required to be provided by the CMC.
- (D) Notwithstanding the above, the League may terminate the Club Participation Agreement with a Club immediately upon notice where:

- (i) the Club unreasonably fails to duly and promptly comply with its obligation in the Club Participation Agreement;
- (ii) the Club or any of its Officers, Players, Officials or volunteers does, or permits to be done, any act or thing which reflects unfavourably upon the reputation, standing or goodwill of the League or the game of Australian Football or engages in any unbecoming conduct or conduct which is prejudicial or likely to be prejudicial to the interests of the League, the AFL or the playing of Australian Football;
- (iii) any event occurs which in the opinion of the League or AFL NSW/ACT materially and prejudicially affects the financial position of the Club or the ability of the Club to duly and promptly observe and perform any of its obligations under the Club Participation Agreement;
- (iv) the League is of the opinion that the Club is otherwise unable to pay its debts as and when they fall due;
- (v) the League is of the opinion that the Club is unable to field any Teams in a Competition administered by AFL NSW/ACT;
- (vi) the Club threatens to or ceases to carry on all or part of its operations or disposes of the whole or any substantial part of its assets.

8.2 Club Incorporation & Governance

- (A) Each Club must be incorporated, either as an incorporated association or a company.
- (B) All Clubs are required to comply with all legal, statutory and other provisions and requirements governing their operations, including but not limited to:
 - (i) the NSW Associations Incorporation Act 2009 or ACT Associations Incorporation Act 1991, as applicable;
 - (ii) State and Federal child protection laws.
- (C) Whilst AFL NSW/ACT and the League will provide information, guidance and assistance to Clubs where it is able on issues affecting their governance and operations, the responsibility to ensure compliance with all legal, statutory and other provisions and requirements affecting their operations lies with each Club.
- (D) AFL NSW/ACT or the League may request that a Club provides documentation to demonstrate its compliance with governance requirements including financial solvency, the currency of its Constitution and the conduct of its Annual General Meeting.

8.3 Club Fees

8.3.1 Club Affiliation Fee

- (A) Clubs will be levied an annual affiliation fee, which will be used to offset the operational cost of the respective Competitions.
- (B) At least 28 days prior to the commencement of the season, the League will determine and notify the Clubs of:
 - (i) the rate of the affiliation fee; and
 - (ii) how the affiliation fee will be charged to Clubs and the timing of this.

8.3.2 Other Fees or Charges

The League may, in its absolute discretion, determine any additional fees or charges that are to be payable by Clubs to offset the operational costs of the Competition.

8.4 Club Finance

8.4.1 Club Budget

- (A) A Club is required to establish and maintain a Club budget for each financial year.

- (B) A Club shall provide the League with a Club budget for the season by 31 January each year or as otherwise designated by the League.

8.4.2 Financial Statements

- (A) A Club shall be required to furnish to the League by 31 January each year, or as otherwise designated by the League in the Club Participation Agreement, a copy of its Fair-Trading Return, or Financial Statement or Profit and Loss Statement for its operations for the previous season.
- (B) The League may, where it has concern at any time regarding a Club's solvency or financial administration, request that the Club provide Financial Statements within seven (7) days of the request by the League.

8.4.3 Outstanding Accounts

- (A) Except as provided for under Rule 8.4.3(B), a Club that is in arrears to the League for a period more than ninety (90) days from the date of the invoice, may, at the discretion of the League, be ineligible to receive any Competition points which may be accrued by its Teams and ineligible to play finals Matches, from that point in time until the overdue amount is paid.
- (B) Where extenuating circumstances exist, the League may in its discretion, place a Club on an agreed financial arrangement for the repayment of outstanding accounts.
- (C) Where a Club is operating under an agreed repayment arrangement:
- (i) the Club shall be considered financial with the League provided that it is up to date with all payments specified by the repayment arrangement and for the current year; and
 - (ii) if the club is not up to date with all payments specified by the repayment arrangement, the Club will be ineligible to receive any Competition points which may be accrued by its Teams and ineligible to play finals Matches, from the date the payment was due until the date the overdue amount is paid.

8.4.4 Dishonoured Payments

Any Club that pays an account to the League by an instrument which is not honoured by its bank or other institution upon presentation, shall be fined fifty (50) dollars on each occasion.

8.5 Club Insurance Requirements

8.5.1 Insurance Coverage

- (A) A Club affiliated to a League has insurance cover with Marsh under the AFL's National Risk Protection Programme.
- (B) Under the National Risk Protection Programme, all Players and Officials of a Club will have minimum cover for public and products liability, association liability (subject to the Club being an incorporated body), personal accident and non-Medicare medical.
- (C) A Club must be affiliated to a League in accordance with [Rule 8.1](#) to ensure insurance coverage under the National Risk Protection Programme.
- (D) A Player must be registered with the Club to ensure personal injury coverage under the National Risk Protection Programme.
- (E) A Club may elect higher levels of cover directly through Marsh.
- (F) A Club is required to register annually under the National Risk Protection Programme and obtain a Certificate of Currency.

Guidance Notes: Policy coverage details can be viewed at [Australian Football Community Clubs | National Risk Protection Program | Marsh](#). A Club can download its Certificate of Currency via [Certificate of Currency | Marsh](#).

8.5.2 Insurance Fees

- (A) Annual insurance fees for a Club under the National Risk Protection Programme will be determined by AFL NSW/ACT and will be notified to Leagues at least 28 days prior to the commencement of the season.
- (B) The League is to notify Clubs of insurance fee rates prior to the commencement of the Competition.
- (C) Unless otherwise determined by AFL NSW/ACT or the League, insurance fees are payable by the Club.

8.6 Club Name & Logo

- (A) A new Club must submit details of its proposed name, nickname and/or Club logo to the CMC for prior approval, with such approval to be determined at the absolute discretion of the CMC.
- (B) An existing Club must submit details of any proposed variation of its name, nickname or Club logo design to the CMC for approval before use, with such approval to be determined at the absolute discretion of the CMC.

8.7 Club Uniform

8.7.1 Club Uniform Obligations

- (A) A Club's playing uniform is fundamental to a Club's identity and consists of a jersey, playing shorts and socks.
- (B) Each Club must have a playing uniform approved by the League.
- (C) All Players participating in a Match must play in the Club's playing uniform as registered with and approved by the League.
- (D) A Club must have a sufficient number of:
 - (i) approved playing uniforms available for all players participating in a Competition Match; and
 - (ii) spare playing uniforms available in the event of damage to or blood on a player's uniform in the course of a Match.

8.7.2 Approved Club Uniform

- (A) A Club seeking to change any part of an existing approved uniform, or a new Club seeking approval for its uniform, is to lodge a *Club Uniform Design Approval Form* with the CMC and have this approved prior to any Player wearing the uniform in a Competition Match.
- (B) In reviewing any application made under Rule 8.7.2(A), the CMC will consider a range of factors, including:
 - (i) any possible clash of a proposed uniform with a competing Club;
 - (ii) the requirements of these Rules;
 - (iii) any other factors it considers relevant.
- (C) Following its review, the CMC may, in its absolute discretion:
 - (i) accept the proposed uniform design;
 - (ii) conditionally accept the proposed uniform design;
 - (iii) request changes be made to the proposed uniform design with resubmission of the application;
 - (iv) reject the proposed uniform design.

Guidance Note: *An example of conditional acceptance is where a particular design is relevant to a themed round and therefore is to be worn only in that themed round.*

- (D) A Club may have more than one approved uniform.
- (E) Where a Club has more than one approved uniform, all players in a Team must wear the same approved uniform in a Match.

8.7.3 Approved Suppliers

- (A) The suppliers listed in Table 2 are licensed and authorised as the only suppliers in NSW and ACT to use the AFL logo.

Table 2 – AFL NSW/ACT Approved Apparel Suppliers

Supplier Companies	
Aceit Sport	JS Sports (Belgravia)
ISC Teamwear	S-Trend Sportswear

Guidance Note: Any NSW or ACT Club uniform or Club merchandise that incorporates the AFL logo (e.g. AFL NSW/ACT logo, or a League logo), can only be purchased from one of the suppliers listed in Table 2.

8.7.4 Logos on Playing Uniforms & Club Merchandise

Guidance Note: The Rules relating to the placement and approval of logos on playing uniforms seek to balance the importance of maintaining the integrity of a Club's identity against the need to visually recognize those who contribute valuably to a Club.

- (A) In assessing a Club application under [Rule 8.7.2](#), the CMC will have regard for the nature, content and placement of any logos on a uniform and will not approve the following:
- (i) tobacco or vaping company logos, images or text;
 - (ii) explicit, discriminatory, obscene or offensive logos, images or text;
 - (iii) alcohol or gambling logos, images or text on Junior Player uniforms;
 - (iv) any logo, image or text that promotes illegal activity or that the CMC considers may bring the game into disrepute.

Guidance Note: Reference to alcohol in this Rule, as it applies to Junior Player uniforms, is aimed at alcohol manufacturers and images of alcohol. It is not intended to bar sponsorship arrangements with local pubs or clubs, however imaging used in such a sponsorship arrangement must still meet the requirements of this Rule.

- (B) There are no limitations on the number, size or placement of logos on any Club merchandise that is not part of a playing uniform, however Clubs are to ensure that the type of logos on any Club merchandise does not contravene the items referred to in 8.7.4(A)(i) to (iv).

8.7.5 Legal Approval for Artwork, Logos & Images

- (A) Prior to submitting any application under [Rule 8.7.2](#), a Club must ensure that it has legal approval for the use of any artwork, logo or other image that it intends to include as part of the uniform.

8.7.6 Jersey Design

- (A) Jersey design must comply with Table 3.

Table 3 – Jersey Design

Component	Requirement
Style	AFL style jerseys (as worn at elite level of male and female football). Jerseys must have either no sleeves or full-length sleeves. Tee-shirt style sleeves are not permitted in Competition Matches.
Numbers	Each jersey must have a number on the back and the number must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A whole number between one (1) and ninety-nine (99) inclusive.• Between 20cm and 28cm in height.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In plain font and in a colour that contrasts with the primary jersey colours. • Recognisable from one hundred (100) metres and unobscured by a logo or artwork of any kind. 	
Logos	Right Breast (AFL Logo)	Every Jersey must have the AFL NSW/ACT logo on the right breast. The logo must not exceed 8cm x 8cm in size. No other logo is permitted on the right breast.
	Left Breast (Club / Sponsor Logos)	A jersey may have a club logo and/or one sponsor logo on the left breast. A club logo must not exceed 8cm height and 8cm width. A sponsor logo must not exceed 8cm height and 15cm width. If a jersey has both a club logo and a sponsor logo on the left breast, the combination of both must not exceed 15cm in width.
	Front Neck-vee (apparel supplier logo)	An approved AFL NSW/ACT supplier may place its logo on the front of the jersey just below the neck-vee. The size of the logo will be specified in the supplier Agreement.
	Front of Jersey	A sponsor logo on any other part of the front of a jersey is generally not permitted. The CMC may, in its absolute discretion, consider an application for a logo to be placed on the front of a jersey in some circumstances.
	Back of Jersey	A jersey may have up to two logos on the back. If only one logo, this may be placed above or below the number. If two logos, one must be placed above the number and one below the number. A logo above the number must be centred and not exceed 8cm height and 25cm width. A logo below the number must be centred and not exceed 15cm height and 30cm width.

8.7.7 Shorts Design

(A) Shorts design must comply with Table 4.

Table 4 – Shorts Design

Component	Requirement	
Style	AFL style shorts (as worn at elite level of male and female football).	
Club Name	Either Side	Shorts may have the Club name or nickname placed down one or both side of the shorts. This must not exceed 6cm width.
Logos	Left Front Thigh	Shorts must have the AFL NSW/ACT logo on the left thigh. This logo must not exceed 6cm height and 7cm width Shorts may also have the Club logo on the left thigh. This logo must not exceed 6cm height and 7cm width and is to be placed above the AFL NSW/ACT logo Shorts may also have the Supplier logo on the left thigh. This logo is not to exceed the size specified in the supplier agreement and is to be placed below the AFL NSW/ACT logo.

	Right Front Thigh	Shorts may have up to two sponsor / Club logos placed on the right thigh. The combined size of the two logos must not exceed 6cm height and 11cm width.
	Back of Shorts	Shorts may have up to two logos on the back, one on the bottom of each leg. Each logo must not exceed 6cm height and 7cm width.

8.7.8 Socks Design

- (A) Socks must be AFL style socks (as worn at elite level of male and female football).

Guidance Note: Shorter style AFL socks, as worn at the elite level, are permitted providing there is a reasonable component (10cm or more) of the sock visible above the ankles (not just ankle sports socks), and they must be consistent with the club uniform & colours as worn by all players.

8.8 Club Contact Details

- (A) By 31 March each year, Clubs must ensure that Club details are updated in PlayHQ including a list of the names, addresses and contact details of the officers (including the President and Secretary).

8.9 Attendance at League Meetings

- (A) The League will determine a schedule of meetings for Clubs to attend that enable the business of the League to be properly conducted.
- (B) The League is to provide sufficient notice to each Club of any meeting arranged in accordance with this Rule and each Club is entitled to have one Club Delegate present at any such meeting.
- (C) Each Club is to make proper effort to ensure that a Club Delegate is in attendance at a League meeting.
- (D) Any Club Delegate attending a meeting under this Rule must have the authority to represent the Club's position on a matter including, where applicable, the right to vote on a motion on the Club's behalf.
- (E) In addition to a Club Delegate, the League will determine the number of any additional Club persons entitled to attend a League meeting in a non-Delegate capacity.

8.10 Club Integrity Officer

- (A) Each Club must appoint a Club Integrity Officer who is responsible for ensuring compliance by the Club, its Players and Officials with the Rules, Policies and Guidelines referred to in [Rule 6](#).
- (B) The Club Integrity Officer:
- (i) may be an existing Club committee member;
 - (ii) will act as the primary point of contact for all Club related integrity and compliance matters.
- (C) If a Club does not appoint a Club Integrity Officer, the Club President will be deemed to have assumed this role.

8.11 Club Alcohol Compliance

- (A) Subject to these Rules, alcohol is permitted to be sold at a League venue by the Host Club where the Host Club:
- (i) has a current liquor licence for the venue issued by the relevant authority; and
 - (ii) has consent, if required, of the local council or landowner.
- (B) Alcohol is not permitted to be brought into any League venue and it is the responsibility of each Club to take reasonable measures to ensure that its members and Supporters abide by this Rule.

- (C) Should a Host Club find that alcohol has been brought to the venue it must report the matter to the League and advise an Official of the offending member's or Supporter's Club, who in turn shall take the necessary action.
- (D) Alcohol is not permitted to be taken onto the field of play at any time during the course of a Match, including during quarter breaks and the Host Club is responsible for enforcement of this.
- (E) Alcohol is not to be consumed by a Club Official either before or whilst they are fulfilling an official Match day role (e.g. timekeeping, Ground Manager, Umpire escort, Umpire etc.).
- (F) In accordance with the Australian Football Match Policy, alcohol is prohibited during Under Age Competitions. Where both Senior Competitions and Under Age Competitions are played on the same day at the same venue, League Policy will apply.
 - (i) AFL North Coast Policy is to prohibit the sale of alcohol until the conclusion of the last Under Age match to be played on any given match day.
- (G) Alcohol is only to be consumed in areas specifically provided for in the Host Club's liquor licence which areas must be clearly marked.
- (H) Should a Club fail to act with a requirement under this Rule, or the Club members or Supporters fail to adhere to an Official's request, the Club, together with any identify members or supporters will be deemed to be in breach of the Code of Conduct.

8.12 Club Transferring

8.12.1 Club Preliminary Request to Transfer

- (A) A Club seeking to transfer to or from a League that is not affiliated with AFL NSW/ACT must first refer the matter to AFL NSW/ACT.
- (B) A Club, from a League affiliated with AFL NSW/ACT, seeking to transfer to another League affiliated with AFL NSW/ACT, must, prior to formally applying to transfer:
 - (i) seek and receive written 'in principle' agreement from the Destination League that it may apply to transfer to that League;

Guidance Note: *This is not approval to join that League, but rather just approval to proceed with an application to transfer to that League.*

- (ii) determine from the Destination League any Competition minimum standards that apply to Clubs in that League as per [Rule 12.1](#), as well as any additional criteria that must be met by the Club;
 - (iii) co-operate with the Destination League in the provision of any information the League requests that will assist with its decision under Rule 8.12.1(B)(i);
 - (iv) ensure that it has followed and met any requirement under the Club's Constitution to provide voting rights to its members in respect of the Club's decision to apply to transfer; and
 - (v) ensure that it has no debt owing to the Source League.
- (C) Where a Destination League declines to provide 'in-principle agreement' as per Rule 8.12.1(B), the Club may refer the matter to AFL NSW/ACT for its consideration.
- (D) Where a Club has satisfied the provisions of Rule 8.12.1(B), it may then proceed to lodge an application to transfer in accordance with Rule 8.12.3.

8.12.2 League Request for Club to Transfer

- (A) A League seeking to invite a Club(s) to join it from any other League must notify, at least fourteen (14) days prior to the invitation to the Club(s):
 - (i) the Secretary of the Source League of such Club(s); and

(ii) AFL NSW/ACT.

(B) A Club(s) that accepts a League's invitation to transfer must:

- (i) ensure that it has followed and met any requirement under the Club's Constitution to provide voting rights to its members in respect of the Club's decision to apply to transfer;
- (ii) ensure that it has no debt owing to the Source League; and
- (iii) subject to satisfying Rules 8.12.2(B)(i) and (ii), lodge an application to transfer in accordance with Rule 8.12.3.

8.12.3 Club Application to Transfer

(A) Where 'in-principle' agreement has been granted to a Club by a Destination League under Rule 8.12.1(B)(i), or an invitation accepted by a Club under Rule 8.12.2, the Club must then submit, at the same time:

- (i) an *Application by Club to Transfer Leagues* form to both the Source League and the Destination League; and
- (ii) a copy of the application to transfer to AFL NSW/ACT.

(B) An application made under Rule 8.12.3(A) must be submitted to the required parties by no later than:

- (i) 30 November of the year immediately preceding the season for which the transfer, if approved, would take effect; or
- (ii) such other time as agreed by both the Source League and Destination League.

(C) The Destination League may, at its discretion, impose a fee payable by the Club on application, which shall be refunded in full if the application is not successful.

(D) The Destination League may, at its discretion, impose a bond payable by the Club as a condition of a successful application and that bond will not be refundable if there is any contravention by the Club of the agreed terms and conditions of approval during the first three (3) seasons of participation in the Destination League.

8.12.4 Determination of Application to Transfer

(A) Where it is established that the Club has a debt owing to the Source League, an application to transfer must not be determined until such time as that debt has been paid.

(B) The Source League is required to respond to the Club's application to transfer within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the application and in doing so must advise the Club in writing, with a copy to the Destination League & AFL NSW/ACT:

- (i) if it has no objection to the application; or
- (ii) if it objects to the application together with the reasons for that.

(C) The Destination League is required to respond to the Club's application to transfer within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the application and in doing so must advise the Club in writing, with a copy to Source League & AFL NSW/ACT:

- (i) if it approves the application unconditionally;
- (ii) if it approves the application conditionally, together with the details of the conditions to be imposed; or
- (iii) if it requires additional information from the Club to determine the application, together with the details of the information sought; or
- (iv) if it declines the application together with the reasons for that.

(D) Should either the Source League or Destination League fail to respond to the application within fourteen (14) calendar days of lodgement, the Club may refer the matter to AFL NSW/ACT for its consideration.

- (E) If approval to transfer is granted by both the Source League and Destination League, the transfer will proceed on the agreed terms, and:
- (i) All registered Players of that Club shall be transferred with the Club to the Destination League;
 - (ii) The Secretary or authorised person of the Source League shall supply a certified list of all registered Players of the Club to the Destination League.
- (F) Where an application is not approved by the Source League or Destination League, the Club may refer the matter to AFL NSW/ACT for its consideration.
- (G) In assessing any referral made by a Club under Rule 8.12.1(C), 8.12.3(E) or Rule 8.12.3(G), AFL NSW/ACT may request the Club provide any relevant information that will assist with consideration of the matter and the Club is required to co-operate with any such request

8.13 Club Amalgamating

- (A) Any Club seeking to amalgamate with another Club in the same League, must apply to the League for approval to do so.
- (B) The League may prescribe the amalgamation application requirements.
- (C) The League will determine any application by a Club to amalgamate, and may:
- (i) approve the amalgamation;
 - (ii) approve the amalgamation subject to any conditions it considers necessary;
 - (iii) request additional information prior to determining the application;
 - (iv) decline the amalgamation.

8.14 Club Disbanding

Any Club seeking to disband must notify the League of its intention to do so at the earliest possible time.

8.15 Proof of Communication

Wherever the Rules provide for a time limit for a communication, including lodgement of any document, the onus of proof of such communication or lodgement is on the initiating Club.

8.16 Disputes Within a Club

- (A) Subject to 8.16(D), any dispute arising within a Club is to be resolved in accordance with the provisions of the Club Constitution and to the reasonable satisfaction of the members of that Club.

Guidance Note: *Examples of common disputes arising within a Club may be (but are not limited to):*

- *Termination or non-appointment of a coach, committee member or staff person*
- *Denial or termination of a club membership*
- *Misuse of club money, theft or damage to club property by a person*
- *Bullying or harassment of, or abusive behaviour toward, a Club member by another Club member of the same club (including via social media)*

- (B) All Clubs and their members have a responsibility to participate in the Club's dispute resolution processes subject to the Club's Constitution and all persons involved in a dispute must act in a genuine attempt to resolve the dispute.
- (C) If a dispute is unable to be resolved in accordance with the Club Constitution, the Club may raise the matter with the Controlling Body for further advice on dispute resolution options.
- (D) Where a dispute involves a potential breach of Section 11 of the Policy Handbook (Safeguarding Children and Young People) or the Australian Football Anti-Doping Code the matter must be immediately reported to AFL NSW/ACT, and the Club is to co-operate with the provision of all information relevant to the dispute.

9 OFFICIALS

9.1 Conduct of Officials

- (A) Whilst in attendance at a community football event, irrespective of whether they are acting in an official capacity at that event or not, all Club Officials are:
- (i) required to adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times; and
 - (ii) responsible for ensuring the adherence of its Club's Players and Supporters to the Code of Conduct and should seek to immediately address any identified behaviour that may be considered a breach of this.

9.2 Disqualification – Persons Not to Act

Any person who has been refused a Transfer or Permit to play or has been suspended or deregistered shall not hold any on field position with any League or Club until the Transfer or Permit is granted, or the period of suspension or de-registration has expired or is removed by the Controlling Body imposing the suspension or de-registration.

9.3 Coaches

9.3.1 Coach Eligibility

- (A) To Coach in a Competition Match, a Coach must be registered and accredited in accordance with Section 5 of the *Policy Handbook*.
- (B) Any Coach not accredited or not registered, or registered based upon incorrect information, is ineligible to coach a Club's team in a Competition Match.
- (C) Any Club who engages or permits an ineligible Coach to officiate during a Competition Match may be subject to disciplinary sanctions including the loss of Competition Match points and / or a fine determined by the relevant Controlling Body in its absolute discretion.
- (D) An ineligible Coach may also be liable to disciplinary sanctions including a fine, suspension, deregistration or ban on registration as determined by the relevant Controlling Body in its absolute discretion.
- (E) When an allegation has been made against any Club for engaging an ineligible Coach the Club is responsible for the appearance of the Coach at any investigation or hearing conducted by the relevant Controlling Body.
- (F) Each Club is to ensure that a person who is ineligible to Coach as a result of a disciplinary sanction or deregistration, must not:
- (i) display signs of Coaching, which includes communicating before or during the game to any Player, any Assistant Coach, or any Team officials including the Team manager, runners, water carriers and/ or trainers;
 - (ii) enter the playing arena at any stage during the Match; or
 - (iii) be within twenty-five (25) metres of the Team's interchange bench during a Competition Match.

9.3.2 Coach Code of Conduct

- (A) Section 9.3 of the *Policy Handbook* applies.
- (B) A Coach may be subject of citation, suspension or deregistration in accordance with Section 5.4, and Sections 7.2 to 7.7 of the *Policy Handbook*

9.3.3 Coach Identifiable

- (A) A Coach of a Junior Team must be attired in accordance with [Rule 9.5.2](#) or as required by the League
- (B) Any Coach of a Junior Team who fails to comply with this requirement may be referred to the CMC who may impose any relevant sanctions at its absolute discretion.

9.3.4 No Dual Team Official Role

- (A) Any person designated on the Team Sheet as the Coach or Assistant Coach for a Match must not undertake any other Team Official roles including those of Club Umpire, runner, water carrier, first aid or trainer.

Guidance Note: The purpose of this Rule is to prevent a Coach or Assistant Coach assuming another team official role to enter the field of play during a match and potentially coach players from on field.

9.3.5 Coaching in an Under 10 Match

- (A) A Coach of an Under 10 Team is permitted to be on the Ground during a Match.
- (B) A Coach must wear a Coach's Bib and enclosed footwear. If the Coach does not meet the required dress standards, the Umpire will not start the Match until they do.
- (C) While on the Ground, a Coach is allowed to have brief interactions with Players to provide praise, teaching and feedback when warranted or errors occur.
- (D) A Coach must remain a reasonable distance from play at all times. An Umpire will award a free kick to the opposition Team where the Umpire considers that a Coach is encroaching on or interfering with play, regardless of whether that is accidental or not.
- (E) A Coach is allowed to run their interchange bench from the field during play but cannot move Players between on field Zones other than as provided for in [Rule 12.4.6](#).
- (F) The Coach must not pressure, instruct or make comment to any member of the opposition team.
- (G) The Coach must not pressure, instruct or make comment to or about officiating Umpires or decisions that they make.
- (H) A breach of Rule 9.3.5(F) and/or Rule 9.3.5(G) will be an automatic yellow card offence for the Coach. A subsequent breach will be a red card offence.
- (i) The Coach can be replaced on field whilst serving the sanction imposed under the yellow or red card, however the Coach may only be replaced by an individual holding the appropriate level of Coach accreditation.
- (I) Where a Player has been issued a yellow or red card, the Coach must leave the Ground with the Player to provide immediate feedback.
- (J) While the Coach is off the Ground speaking with a Player who has been issued a Yellow or Red Card, the Coach cannot be replaced on the field.
- (K) Once the feedback has been given to the Player, the Coach can return to the field irrespective of any remaining time the Player has to stay off the field per the provisions of [Rule 24.1.1](#) and [24.1.2](#).

Guidance note: Interactions with Players on matters such as skill correction, positional play and game sense should be kept brief, generally no longer than 10 seconds at a time. Keeping interactions brief allows Players to return to play as soon as possible. If there is a need for a longer interaction, both the Player and Coach should leave the Ground and have the discussion at the Team's interchange area.

9.4 Ground Officials

9.4.1 Ground Manager

- (A) The Host Club must provide a Ground Manager for each Match to undertake the responsibilities detailed in this Rule.
- (B) A Ground Manager must be readily identifiable by the wearing of a yellow bib that has the words "Ground Manager" clearly visible.
- (C) The Ground Manager's Matchday responsibilities are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5 – Ground Manager Responsibilities

Category	Specific Responsibilities
Risk Management Compliance	<p>Check the playing field and general conditions and complete the Marsh Match Day Checklist</p> <p>Guidance Note: <i>The Ground Manager is responsible for regular checks of the playing field on matchday to ensure it remains safe and suitable to play on, and the checklist is to be redone anytime the Ground Manager considers there to be a change to the playing field that may impact the safety of Players and Officials (e.g. if raining heavily and the field becomes boggy throughout the day as more matches are played).</i></p>
Equipment & Ground Setup	<p>Ensure all equipment necessary for conducting a Match is available before the Match.</p> <p>For Junior Competitions on reduced field sizes, ensure the ground is set-up properly for each Match including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusting the field size (e.g. with cones) to the specified size for the age group (see Rule 16.5.2); • The movement and placement of goal posts and padding (where applicable); and • Marking the interchange area (e.g. with cones). <p>Ensure that both Teams are aware where the interchange area is.</p>
Rules & Laws	<p>Ensure the following are readily available (online or hardcopy) for all Matches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Rules; • the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i>; • the <i>Policy Handbook</i>; and • the <i>Management of Sport-Related Concussion in Australian Football</i>.
Timekeeping	<p>Ensure the availability of a competent timekeeper for each Match.</p> <p>Ensure timekeeping equipment and a back-up timer are available.</p>
Umpires	<p>Check the availability of field, goal and boundary Umpires.</p> <p>Provide Goal Umpires with flags and score cards.</p> <p>Ensure an Umpire Escort is available to conduct duties as detailed in Rule 9.4.3.</p> <p>Ensure water is provided for the field Umpires at each break.</p> <p>Ensure the field Umpire reviews both Team Sheets for inclusion of all jumper numbers and then sign the sheets plus the score cards.</p> <p>Ensure a spare set of Yellow and Red cards is available.</p>
Officials Identification	<p>Ensure Team Officials are properly attired and identifiable as per Rule 9.5.2 and Table 8.</p>
Injury Management	<p>Ensure injury management officials are present for each Match in accordance with Rule 21.2 and Section 16.2 of the <i>Policy Handbook</i>.</p> <p>Ensure a stretcher and a first aid kit are readily accessible at all times.</p> <p>Provide assistance to injury management officials as needed with contacting an ambulance and safe access for an ambulance to the venue and playing field.</p> <p>In any case where a stretcher or ambulance is required, ensure a Match does not resume until the injured person has been safely removed from the field.</p> <p>Determine whether any delay to a Match caused by an injury, requires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alteration to the duration of any quarter to ensure the Match is still able to be completed within the specified time as per Rule 15.8.5; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Match to be abandoned in which case the result of the Match is to be determined in accordance with Rule 16.6.
Matchday Paperwork	Ensure adherence to Matchday paperwork requirements in accordance with Rule 15.7 .
Scoring	<p>Check the accuracy of the scoreboard with goal Umpires at the end of each quarter and instruct the scoreboard attendant to correct any inaccuracy in the score displayed.</p> <p>For Under Age Competitions ensure the Mercy Rule, where applicable, is applied in accordance with Rule 15.2.8.</p>
Complaints & Attendee Conduct	<p>Receive any formally submitted complaint from a Club Official or other person. Determine if a complaint is practicably able to be resolved at the time. Where a complaint cannot be resolved, ensure the complaint, together with any additional information collected, is forward to the League within 24 hours.</p> <p>Manage, in consultation with other available Club Officials, any attendee behaviour that is contrary to the Code of Conduct (not including on-field reportable offences) and make a record of this.</p> <p>In the event of a complaint of or observation of serious misconduct of an attendee, obtain as much immediate information as possible of the situation including the names and contact details of any witnesses. Forward all information in relation to the serious misconduct to the League within 24 hours.</p> <p>Determine any circumstance where Police need to be called.</p>
Dangerous Weather or Conditions	Identify any conditions (e.g. extreme weather) that may place attendees at significant risk and determine if a Match in progress is to be suspended or abandoned.
Abandoned Match	<p>For any Match that has been abandoned prior to or after commencing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the reasons for the Match being abandoned ; and Within 24 hours, inform the League of the details of the abandoned Match including the reasons for the abandonment so the result of the Match can be determined by the CMC.

9.4.2 Timekeepers

- (A) The Host Club must provide a Timekeeper for each Match to undertake the responsibilities detailed in this Rule.
- (B) The away Club is entitled to also appoint or supply a Timekeeper for each Match and where it does so, that Timekeeper must sit in the same proximity as the Host Club Timekeeper.
- (C) Where practicable, the Timekeeper should be positioned in an equally accessible location for both Teams.
- (D) A Timekeeper is to perform the duties as set out in the *Laws of Australian Football* and in Table 6.

Table 6 – Timekeeper Responsibilities

Category	Specific Responsibilities
Quarter Duration	<p>Keep the time for each quarter in accordance with the quarter duration specified in Rule 15.8.2 for the relevant Grade and sound the siren at the conclusion of the quarter.</p> <p>Where time-on is applicable to a Match, record on a timecard or timesheet the time taken to play each quarter</p>
Break Duration	Keep the time for each break between quarters in accordance with the break duration specified in Rule 15.8.2 for the relevant Grade and sound the siren in accordance with the “Sirens” section in this Table.

Record Keeping	Ensure that a copy of all timekeeping records are retained by the Club for the duration of the current Season and are provided to the League within three (3) business days upon request.
Scoring	Record the scores of each Match in which they officiate.
Sirens	<p>Sound the siren as follows:</p> <p>Once - As Umpires enter the playing field prior to the start of a Match and after half-time.</p> <p>Once - Five (5) minutes prior to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the scheduled starting time of the Match; and ▪ the start of the third quarter (unless the prescribed break duration for the Grade is 5 minutes or less) <p>Twice - Two (2) minutes prior to scheduled starting time of each quarter.</p> <p>Once - One (1) minute prior to scheduled starting time of each quarter</p> <p>Once - Scheduled starting time of each quarter (as the umpire holds the ball in the air)</p> <p>*Once - At the end of each quarter</p> <p>*Keep siren on until satisfied the Field Umpire has heard the siren by raising both arms in the air and blowing the whistle.</p>
Red or Yellow Cards	<p>Acknowledge the Umpire's decision to send off a Player by showing the appropriate red or yellow card to the controlling Umpire</p> <p>Record the time that Players who are ordered off leave the field and be the sole arbiter on when a Player may return to the field in accordance with Rules 24.1.1 or 24.1.2.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the offending Player's Club to obtain the all-clear from the timekeeper for a Player to resume playing.</p>
Timekeeping Disputes	<p>In the event of a dispute or disagreement between the two timekeepers, such dispute shall be reported to the field Umpire, at half time if the dispute occurs during the first half or at the conclusion of the Match if it occurs during the second half.</p> <p>The field Umpire shall report the matter to the CMC for attention.</p>
Dismissal of a Timekeeper	The field Umpire shall have the power to dispense with the services of either or both timekeepers during a Match, and in such instance may request the Host Club provide an alternative Official to fulfil the required duties.

9.4.3 Umpire Escort

- (A) For each Match, the Host Club must appoint a suitable person to act as an escort for the Umpires (ideally the Ground Manager).
- (B) The Umpire Escort is to escort the Umpires:
- (i) From their change-rooms to the centre of the field prior to the commencement of a Match.
 - (ii) From their assembly point on the field to their change room at half time.
 - (iii) From their change room to the centre of the field after the half time break.
 - (iv) From their assembly point on the field to the change room at the conclusion of the Match.
- (C) An Umpire exclusion zone should be implemented at quarter and three-quarter time encompassing the centre square.

- (D) The Umpire Escort is to stand with the Umpires during the quarter and three-quarter time intervals and arrange for water to be provided to the Umpires, if required.
- (E) The Umpire Escort is expected to be identifiable as required by the League.
- (F) Any Umpire Escort provided is expected to assist in providing and/or obtaining details of any alleged breach of the Code of Conduct immediately after completing their duties in liaison with/at the request of the Umpire or Ground Manager.

9.5 Team Officials / Staff

9.5.1 Number Allowed on Bench

- (A) A Team competing in a Match is allowed the number of Club Officials on the bench inside the ground during the Match as prescribed in Table 7:

Table 7 – Number of Team Officials on Bench

Official	Number Allowed	Specific Requirements
Head Coach	1	See Rule 9.3
Assistant Coach	1	See Rule 9.3
Team Manager	1	See Rule 9.5.3
Trainers / First Aid / QMP	2	See Rule 9.5.4
Runners	2	See Rule 9.5.5
Water Carrier	4	See Rule 9.5.6

9.5.2 Team Officials Attire

- (A) Team Officials are to be attired as follows:
 - (i) Must wear an identification bib or shirt as detailed in Table 8;
 - (ii) Must wear enclosed footwear and in the case of Runners and Water Carriers, must wear runners or football boots.
 - (iii) Must not wear singlets or a team jersey (unless a playing Coach) or other football jersey.

Table 8 – Team Officials Identification Requirements

Official	Applies to (Junior / Senior)	Colour of Bib / Shirt	Wording on Bib / Shirt
Coach	Junior	Blue	COACH
Assistant Coach	Junior	Blue	COACH
Team Manager	Junior	Maroon	TEAM MANAGER or MANAGER
Trainer	Both	White	TRAINER
QMP / First Aid	Both	Red	FIRST AID
Runner	Both	Pink	RUNNER
Water Carrier	Both	Light Blue	WATER or WATER CARRIER

- (B) The field umpire will ask any Team Official on the field without the correct attire to leave the field and not return until they are correctly attired.

9.5.3 Team Manager

- (A) A Club is to appoint a Team Manager for each Team it fields in the Competition.
- (B) The Team Manager is responsible for:

- (i) ensuring their Team's Players, Officials and supporters comply with the requirements of the Rules and with any request reasonably made by the Umpire officiating in a Competition Match in which their Team is participating;
- (ii) the management and alteration of Team Sheets and PlayHQ records as detailed in [Rule 15.7.1](#);
- (iii) ensuring that, at the conclusion of the Match, the match scores, goal kickers and best Players for their Team are recorded on the Official Team Sheet, which is held by the Ground Manager;
- (iv) obtaining the "all clear" from the timekeeper in relation to the expiry of any time penalty imposed on a Player under a yellow or red card;
- (v) ensuring that a representative of the Club waits on the Umpires at the conclusion of each Match to ascertain whether or not any reports of Players or Officials have arisen from the Match or to receive the "all clear".

9.5.4 Trainers / First Aid / QMP

(A) A Trainer, QMP or First Aider:

- (i) is only permitted onto the field during play to attend to an injured Player, Official or Umpire;
- (ii) must not be used to deliver messages to a Player;
- (iii) may enter the field at any stage during play where it is evident that a Player, Official or Umpire is injured;
- (iv) may speak to an Umpire to assist the Umpire determine whether a Match should be halted whilst the injured Player or Official is being attended to, or for the purpose of treating the Umpire where the Umpire is the injured person.

9.5.5 Runners

- (A) Each Team is permitted to use a maximum of two (2) runners.
- (B) Except during quarter breaks, only one (1) runner per team shall be allowed on the field of play at any one time whilst a match is in progress.
- (C) The sole duty of the runner is to deliver messages to their Club's Players and then leave the field immediately having done so.
- (D) The Umpire shall ask a runner to leave the field if the runner remains on the playing surface for an unnecessary period of time as determined by the Umpire.
- (E) A runner is not required to enter the field via the interchange area and is permitted to enter the field at any stage throughout the match.
- (F) For any Match played on a full field, and other than where attending to an injured Player, a runner must not be within the fifty (50) metre arc when a Player is preparing to bring or bringing the football back into play after a behind is scored, and an umpire may award a free kick to the opposition Team where this occurs.
- (G) A runner must remain a reasonable distance from play at all times and an Umpire may award a free kick to the opposition Team where the Umpire considers that a runner is encroaching on or interfering with play, regardless of whether that is accidental or not.
- (H) Suspended or deregistered Players or Officials are not permitted to act as the runner.
- (I) The runners' names must appear on the Team Sheet.
- (J) A runner must be at least fourteen (14) years of age.
- (K) There are no runners in an Under 10 Match.

9.5.6 Water Carriers

- (A) The sole duty of the water carrier is to deliver water to their Club's Players and then leave the field immediately having done so.
- (B) A water carrier must not be used to deliver messages to Players.
- (C) The Umpire will ask water carriers to leave the field if they are delivering messages to Players and is to include details of this in the Umpire Match Report.
- (D) A water carrier may enter the field at any stage during play.
- (E) For any Match played on a full field, a water carrier must not be within the fifty (50) metre arc when a Player is preparing to bring or bringing the football back into play after a behind is scored, and an umpire may award a free kick to the opposition Team where this occurs
- (F) A water carrier must remain a reasonable distance from play at all times and an Umpire may award a free kick to the opposition Team where the Umpire considers that a water carrier is encroaching on or interfering with play, regardless of whether that is accidental or not.
- (G) Water carriers shall not be younger than an age approved by the relevant Controlling Body.
 - (i) AFL North Coast Senior Competition: fourteen (14) years of age.
 - (ii) Under 14 and Under 16 age groups: thirteen (13) years of age.
 - (iii) Under 12, Youth Girls 14, and Youth Girls 17 age groups: twelve (12) years of age.
- (H) There are no water carriers in an Under 10 Match

10 UMPIRES

10.1 Umpire Accreditation

- (A) Section 6 of the *Policy Handbook* applies to the accreditation of an Umpire.
- (B) Each League must ensure that all field Umpires appointed by the League are from a panel of Umpires that are approved by AFL NSW/ACT through the national Umpire registration process.

10.2 Minimum Age

- (A) Subject to Rule 10.2(B), the minimum age of field and boundary and goal Umpires (both League and Club appointed Umpires) for all Senior and Junior Competitions is as per Table 9.

Table 9 – Minimum Age of Umpires

Umpire Role	Minimum Age – Senior Competitions	Minimum Age – Junior Competitions
Field Umpire	Sixteen (16)	Fourteen (14) (subject to Rule 10.2(C))
Boundary Umpire	Fourteen (14)	Fourteen (14)
Goal Umpire	Sixteen (16)	Fourteen (14)

- (B) Any requests for League or Club appointed Umpires below the minimum age to officiate a Competition Match are to be made to the CMC, and the CMC will seek the feedback of Umpire Coaches and the AFL NSW/ACT Umpiring Department before approving such requests.
- (C) The age of a League or Club appointed field Umpire of a Junior Match must be at least two (2) years older than the Age Group being officiated unless otherwise approved by AFL NSW/ACT Umpiring Department.

Guidance Note: As an example of the Umpire age rule, an Umpire should be a minimum of fifteen (15) years of age to officiate in an Under 13 Match.

10.3 Appointment of Umpires

- (A) The League or League's delegate will appoint official Umpires to all competitive Matches as available and the names of the appointed Umpires will be issued to participating Clubs at least one (1) calendar day prior to the first Match of each round.
- (i) in the event the League is unable to appoint sufficient Umpires to all Matches, affected Clubs will be notified by 12.00pm on the Thursday prior to the Match and will be responsible for providing a Club Umpire.
 - (ii) where a Club is unable to provide an Umpire, the Club will be required to show cause to the League as to why that match result should not be declared a forfeit by the team.

Guidance Note: Where all Matches are unable to be filled with league appointed umpires, the League should endeavour to provide the Clubs with as much notice of this as possible so Clubs can make arrangements for Club umpires to officiate.

- (B) Any senior field, senior boundary or senior goal Umpire coach:
- (i) shall be eligible to be appointed to any practice match or home and away Match as required;
 - (ii) shall not be eligible to be appointed to a senior representative fixture Match;
 - (iii) shall be eligible to be appointed to any final or grand final, with the exception of a senior (first grade or equivalent) final or grand final unless prior written approval has been granted by the State Umpiring Lead or an independent selection panel is in place.
- (C) For the avoidance of doubt, any other field, boundary or goal Umpire coach that formally holds a coaching position with AFL NSW/ACT (for example, but not limited to a state League umpires' Coach or assistant Coach) are not eligible to be appointed to Senior (first grade or equivalent) representative fixture matches or senior (first grade or equivalent) finals and grand finals, subject to 10.3(B).

10.4 Number of Field Umpires for a Match

- (A) A minimum of two (2) field Umpires are required in order for a Match to commence unless determined otherwise by the League and these must be registered League appointed Umpires or Club appointed Umpires (or a combination of both).
- (i) Matches in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition are permitted to be officiated by one League appointed field Umpire.
 - (ii) Matches in the Under 14, Under 16, and Youth Girls 17 age groups must be officiated by at least one (1) adult field Umpire. Experienced junior Umpires are able to officiate these age groups in conjunction with an adult, but not without an adult in the capacity of field Umpire.
- (B) Except where determined otherwise by the League in accordance with 10.4(A), where two (2) Umpires are not available, the Match will not proceed and the matter referred to the CMC for determination.
- (C) Where two (2) field Umpires commence a Match and for any reason one (1) of the field Umpires is unable to complete the Match, the remaining field Umpire may continue to control the Match as a single Umpire in the event that there is not a suitable replacement Umpire.
- (D) If for any reason, none of the field Umpires who commenced the Match are able to complete the Match and there is no other accredited Umpire available:
- (i) the competition Match will be stopped and the result determined in accordance with Rule 16.6;
 - (ii) the League is to be notified of this via the Umpire Match Report;
 - (iii) Teams may proceed with a scratch match for the remaining duration of time that was allocated to the competition Match, with the provision by one or both Teams of a person to umpire that scratch match.

10.5 Number of Goal Umpires for a Match

- (A) As a minimum, two (2) goal Umpires are required prior to a Match commencing.
- (B) Goal Umpires can be League appointed or Club appointed umpires or a combination of both.
- (C) Should two (2) goal Umpires not be available, the Match must not commence and the matter is to be referred to the CMC for determination.

10.6 Club Umpires

10.6.1 Club Field Umpires

- (A) From time to time each Club may be required to provide suitable persons to umpire Matches from the League Club Umpire program or register, and prior to the season, the League will advise Clubs of the expected Club Umpire commitment for the season.
 - (i) Clubs will be responsible for providing Field Umpires for all matches in non-competitive age groups. These Umpires are not required to be accredited, however it is strongly recommended that they do obtain accreditation during the season.
- (B) Club field Umpires, where appointed, shall be required to complete the minimum level accreditation and must register as a Club Umpire in OfficialsHQ prior to umpiring their first match of a season.
- (C) Where the League has not appointed official field Umpires or accredited Club Umpires, it shall be each Club's responsibility to arrange for a suitable person or persons to umpire the Match.
- (D) Club field Umpires, where appointed for a Match, are to be attired as approved by the League.
- (E) Club field Umpires are required to complete and submit, in the manner prescribed by the League, all the necessary Match Paperwork, including the Umpires Match Report and Best & Fairest votes.
 - (i) Umpires of Matches in non-competitive age groups are not required to complete paperwork for submission to the League.

Guidance Note: Where a Club Umpire is appointed to a Match and is not registered in OfficialsHQ, it is strongly recommended that the Club registers a 'Club profile' in OfficialsHQ which will provide the link to the relevant matchday paperwork for completion by the Club Umpire.

- (F) Each competing Club is responsible for the payment of their own Club field Umpires, or in the case of one Club providing both Club field Umpires, the payment is to be shared equally between the competing Clubs.
- (G) Club field Umpires are not permitted to umpire more than two (2) Competition Matches on the same day.

10.6.2 Club Goal and Boundary Umpires

- (A) Where Official goal and boundary Umpires have not been appointed by the League, each competing Club must be prepared to provide a suitable goal and boundary Umpire to officiate.
- (B) Each Club is to ensure the competency of any person who accepts appointment as a goal or boundary Umpire.
- (C) Club goal Umpires must be equipped with two white flags, a scorecard and pen, and attired in a uniform as approved by the League.
- (D) Club boundary Umpires must be attired as approved by the League and equipped with a suitable whistle.
- (E) Official field Umpires shall have the power to:
 - (i) overrule decisions by Club goal and/or boundary Umpires; and
 - (ii) remove them should they consider that such Club Umpires are not competent to carry out the required duties.

- (F) Payment of Club goal and boundary Umpires (if any) shall be the responsibility of the respective Clubs or as determined by the CMC.

10.7 Umpire Match Report

- (A) At the conclusion of each competitive Match, the field Umpire must, via OfficialsHQ:
- (i) complete and provide an Umpire Match report to the League; and
 - (ii) for home and away season Matches, complete the Best and Fairest Player voting.
- (B) If it is not practicable for an Umpire to complete the requirements of Rule 10.7(A) immediately following the Match, the requirements must be met by no later than 7.00pm (10.00pm for night game) on the day of the Match.
- (C) If the requirements of Rule 10.7(A), or Rule 10.7(B) where applicable, are not met:
- (i) payment of the field Umpires for a Match may be withheld until such time as the relevant information is submitted; and
 - (ii) the League may also choose not to allocate one (1) or more future Matches to the responsible Umpire.

10.8 Umpire Responsibilities

- (A) In addition to any other requirements under the Rules:
- (i) all members of the Umpires' panel must make themselves available to the League for appointment as a field, boundary or goal Umpire as required;
 - (ii) any Umpire who is unavailable for appointment on a particular day is to provide seven (7) calendar days' notice of this to the League in the manner prescribed by the League, or in the case of illness, at the earliest practicable time to the League;
 - (iii) all Umpires must conform to the Rules and arrangements of the League and shall appear when called upon by the CMC and/or Tribunal;
 - (iv) all appointed Umpires must, at least ten (10) minutes before the scheduled Match start time, be correctly attired and ready to go on the field.

10.9 Umpire Fees & Payment

- (A) The Umpires' fees for each season will be determined by the CMC and communicated to all Clubs no later than February in the year of the season in which they are applicable.
- (B) The process for payment of the Umpires will be determined by the League.
- (C) In the event of a Match being cancelled, other than because of forfeit as provided for in [Rule 16.5.7](#), no payment shall be due to the Umpires appointed to the Match.

10.10 Umpire Uniform Branding

- (A) Subject to this Rule, a League:
- (i) has the right to display partner or sponsor branding on Umpire uniforms;
 - (ii) may have a formal written agreement with an Umpires' Association which grants rights to that Umpiring Association to brand parts of the Umpiring uniform.
- (B) Each League must provide AFL NSW/ACT with an agreed area on the umpiring uniform shirt for the purpose of promotion of an AFL NSW/ACT community umpiring partner.
- (C) Each League must submit all Umpire uniform designs to AFL NSW/ACT for approval which will not be unreasonably withheld.
- (D) Each League must ensure that on-field umpiring uniforms comply with the following design requirements:

- (i) all umpiring uniform shirts and shorts must display the AFL NSW/ACT logo in accordance with Table 10;
- (ii) only a supplier approved by the AFL may reproduce the Umpire AFL logo;
- (iii) on-field umpiring shirts and shorts may have sponsor logos in compliance with Table 10;
- (iv) on-field umpiring shorts may have the apparel supplier logo in compliance with Table 10.

Guidance Notes: AFL NSW/ACT approved apparel suppliers are licensed and authorized as the only suppliers to use the AFL NSW/ACT logo. A current list of AFL NSW/ACT approved apparel suppliers can be found on the AFL NSW/ACT website.

Table 10 – Umpire Uniform Logo Requirements

Uniform Location	What Logo is Allowed	Size (must not exceed)
Shirt right breast	AFL NSW/ACT logo	8cm width and 8cm height
Shirt left breast	Sponsor logo	8cm width and 8cm height
Shirt front mid-region	Sponsor logo	28.5cm width and 8.5cm height
Shirt rear	Sponsor logo	30cm width and 13cm height
Shirt front neck-vee	Apparel supplier logo	7cm in width and 3cm height
Shirt sleeve (either or both)	Sponsor logo	12cm width and 8cm height
Shorts left thigh	AFL NSW/ACT logo	8cm width and 8cm height
Shorts right thigh	Sponsor logo	8cm width and 8cm height

- (E) The same principles detailed in Rule 8.7.4(B) apply to the nature and content of a logo on an Umpiring uniform.

10.11 Powers & Duties of Umpires

- (A) The field Umpire has the power to order replacements for any boundary or goal Umpire.
- (B) The field Umpire has the power to consult with, and if necessary, overrule a goal or boundary Umpire where, in the field Umpire’s opinion, an obvious error has occurred, and no third party is permitted to be involved in any such consultation (notwithstanding the *Laws of Australian Football*).
- (C) All goal and boundary Umpires should introduce themselves to the field Umpire prior to the commencement of the Match and restrict all communications with the field Umpires to matters arising directly from Umpire duties.
- (D) Any person officiating in a Match as a field, goal or boundary Umpire, is to:
 - (i) act in a professional manner;
 - (ii) adhere to the *Code of Conduct* as it applies to an Official;
 - (iii) refrain from barracking for or giving support to a Team;
 - (iv) refrain from making comments to Officials or Supporters other than for the purposes of fulfilling responsibilities as an Umpire;
 - (v) refrain from engaging in any form of coaching of, or instruction or advice to Players other than for the purpose of fulfilling responsibilities as an Umpire.

Guidance Notes: This provision relates to Competition Matches. A field umpire may provide some degree of helpful instruction to Players in a non-competition (development) Age Group, particularly to clarify the rules of the game where Players are still learning how to play.

10.12 Emergency Umpires

- (A) Emergency umpires, when appointed to a Match by the League, shall have the power to order Players, Coaches and Officials from the field as well as the ability to report Players, Coaches and Officials.

10.13 Approaching Umpires

- (A) No person, except as listed in Rule 10.13(B) or 10.13(C), shall approach or talk to an Umpire (field, boundary or goal) prior to, during or after the conclusion of a Match, or leaving the playing arena.
- (B) The following excepted persons referred to in Rule 10.13(A) may approach an umpire during a quarter time break, or following the conclusion of the match:
- (i) a full-time AFL NSW/ACT staff member, who is not otherwise participating in the Match as a Player, Coach or Team Official;
 - (ii) the Ground Manager, including any designated assistant;
 - (iii) the Umpire escort;
 - (iv) the Umpire Manager or Umpire Coach;
 - (v) the Team Manager of a Junior Team, but only for the purpose of confirming the score of a Match where the Mercy Rule under [Rule 15.2.8](#) may apply and only during a quarter break;
 - (vi) the Team captain, vice-captain or Team runner, but only for the purposes of requesting a headcount in accordance with the *Laws of Australian Football*.
- (C) In the AFL North Coast Junior Competition, if the Coaches of both Teams agree that the Umpires' consistent interpretation of the rules is creating concerns for Player safety, they may approach the Ground Manager with these concerns. Following such an approach the Ground Manager is to discuss the matter with the Umpires at the next break between quarters.

10.14 Abuse of Umpires

10.14.1 Umpire Welfare & Safety

- (A) The Controlling Body may, at any time, implement any reasonable measures or Rules aimed at:
- (i) reducing the occurrence of Umpire abuse in community football;
 - (ii) protecting the safety and welfare of Umpires; and
 - (iii) providing an inclusive environment for Umpires.
- (B) All Clubs are to commit to the safety and welfare of Umpires and are to co-operate with the Controlling Body in implementing and adhering to any measures established under Rule 10.14.1(A).

10.14.2 Definition of Abuse

For the purpose of Rule 10.14, *abuse* includes any language, terminology or behaviour intended to insult, offend, intimidate, threaten or harm an Umpire.

10.14.3 Action Against a Person for Umpire Abuse

- (A) Subject to Rule 10.14.2(B), any person identified as having abused an Umpire will be subject of the *reportable offence* process under [Rule 25](#), the *policy breach* process under [Rule 26](#), or the *Prohibited Conduct* process under Section 10 of the Policy Handbook, as is applicable to the circumstance.
- (B) Any adult identified as having abused an Umpire under the age of 18 years will be referred to AFL Integrity for investigation into potential breach of the *Safeguarding Children and Young People* policy under section 11 of the Policy Handbook and/or the *Member Protection* policy under section 9 of the Policy Handbook.
- (C) In addition to any sanction available under Rule 25 or Rule 30, a Controlling Body or Tribunal may impose a requirement on any person who pleads or is found guilty of umpire abuse to attend one or more Umpire training sessions.

10.14.4 Action Against a Club for Umpire Abuse

Guidance Notes: In accordance with Rule 6.3.5 a Club is responsible for the behaviour and conduct of its players, officials, coaches and spectators.

- (A) A Club will be subject of the following automatic sanctions, payable to the Controlling Body, in respect of any person associated with the Club who pleads or is found guilty of umpire abuse:
- (i) a fine of two hundred and fifty (250) dollars for a first offence in the current season;
 - (ii) a fine of five hundred (500) dollars for a second offence in the current season, regardless of whether the offence was committed by the same or different person to the person who committed the first offence; and
 - (iii) a fine of one thousand (1,000) for a third or subsequent offence in the current season, regardless of whether the offence was committed by the same or different person to the person who committed any earlier offence under this Rule.
- (B) Any Club that has been subject of three or more instances of sanction under Rule 10.14.4(A) in one season, will be issued with a *Notice of Breach* under [Rule 26.5.1](#) and referred directly to the Tribunal for a Tribunal Hearing under [Rule 27](#).
- (C) Any fine payable under Rule 10.14.4(A) is to be used by the Controlling Body to fund:
- (i) Umpire training and education;
 - (ii) Umpire recruitment and/or retention strategies;
 - (iii) Umpire welfare and safety strategies which may also include Club education.

10.15 Club Feedback Report on Umpiring

- (A) A Club Coach, Club Official or Player is not to approach any Umpire during or immediately following a Match to voice any concerns or other feedback regarding the umpiring.
- (B) Clubs may provide a feedback report to the League on the Umpires' performance in a Match which will be used by the League and AFL NSW/ACT in its assessment of Umpire performance including areas for potential focus.
- (C) A feedback report made by the Club in accordance with this Rule must be provided via the online form as prescribed by AFL NSW/ACT.
- (D) Each League is to ensure the feedback report is readily accessible on its Website.

Guidance Notes: The relevant Umpire feedback form can be found on the League website under the heading "Umpiring" and "Club Review on Umpires". Feedback should be specific and objective to enable it to be used for focused training and improved umpiring standards.

11 PLAYERS

11.1 Player Registration

11.1.1 Registration Requirements

- (A) Subject to any variation in these Rules, a Player seeking to play Australian football and/or participate in a Competition must be registered in accordance with Section 3.1 and 3.2 of the *Policy Handbook*.
- (B) The League agrees to apply and enforce the uniform system of registration of Players as set out in the *Policy Handbook* and the Rules.
- (C) Registration is for the period of one season only, and a Player must re-register each season.

- (D) A Club must not register a Player without the Player's consent, or in the case of a Player under the age of 18 years, without consent of the Player's parent or guardian.
- (E) A Player must not be registered or re-registered under an assumed name unless such assumed name and the reason for its necessary use is notified to and accepted by the League and the person's legal name and current address are submitted to the League at the time of registration.
- (F) Upon a person's registration application being approved, the person shall be deemed a Player of that Club until such time as the person has either been granted a transfer to play with another Club or a period of twenty-four (24) calendar months has elapsed since the person last played competition football for the Club with which he or she was last registered.

11.1.2 Junior Player Registration with a Senior Club

- (A) Subject to meeting the eligibility and permit requirements in the Rules and the *Policy Handbook*, a Junior Player may play in a Senior Grade competition on an available permit.
- (B) A Junior Player may only register with a Senior Club where;
 - (i) there is no Junior Grade available to the Player at a Junior Club that is within reasonable proximity to the Player; and
 - (ii) where the Player is age eligible to play a senior Grade in accordance with [Rule 11.2.1\(C\)](#).
- (C) If a Junior Player wishes to register with a Senior Club where there is an eligible Junior grade competition available for the Player to participate in, the Player may only register with the Senior Club where:
 - (i) a written application has been made to the CMC by the Senior Club detailing any exceptional circumstances that apply to the Player;
 - (ii) the Player's Junior Club has provided written endorsement of the registration with the Senior Club; and
 - (iii) the application has been approved by the CMC.

Guidance Notes: *Where a Club is both a Junior and Senior Club, the intent of this Rule still operates, i.e. the expectation is that the Player still plays in an available Junior Competition and if the Player is seeking to play only in a Senior Competition, the Player must still apply to the CMC in accordance with Rule 11.1.2(C) and establish exceptional circumstances.*

11.1.3 Registration Period

- (A) The registration period in respect of each season commences on 1 November immediately preceding the season.
- (B) Subject to any Transfer Rules, new Player registrations will be accepted until the end of the home and away series in the season in which the Player intends to play.

11.1.4 Matchday Registration

- (A) As per [Rule 11.1.1](#), a Player must be registered with the Club prior to being eligible to play in a Match.

11.1.5 Proof of Player Identity

- (A) The relevant Controlling Body or CMC may, at any time, request in writing that a Player, or the Player's Club, provide proof of a Player's identity and/or date of birth by way of production of one or more of the following documents:
 - (i) Birth certificate;
 - (ii) Drivers licence (with photo);
 - (iii) Passport;
 - (iv) Student identification;

- (v) Statutory declaration;
 - (vi) Any other document that provides legal proof of identity and/or age.
- (B) Where a request is made in accordance with Rule 11.1.5(A), the Player or the Player’s Club must produce the requested documentation by no later than 5.00pm on the third (3rd) business day following the request.
- (C) Failure to provide documentation as requested under this Rule, or where documentation does not satisfy proof of identity or date of birth, the relevant Controlling Body may:
- (i) revoke or suspend a Player’s registration;
 - (ii) revoke any dispensations previously granted to the Player;
 - (iii) initiate a Policy breach process in accordance with Rule 26.

11.1.6 Multiple Registrations or Profiles

- (A) A Player must not be registered with more than one Club at the same time except as provided for under Part B of the *Policy Handbook*, or otherwise in exceptional circumstances as determined by the League with which the Player is registered and approved by AFL NSW/ACT.
- (B) Where a Player is identified as having more than one Player profile in PlayHQ, the details of the Player’s profiles are to be provided to the League who will initiate steps to merge the profiles.

11.2 Player Eligibility

11.2.1 Junior Player Age Eligibility

- (A) A Junior Player must be a minimum of seven (7) years of age by 31 July in the year of the relevant season to be eligible to be registered.

Guidance Notes: A Player younger than this requirement may still register and participate in Auskick.

- (B) Subject to these Rules, a Player may only play in a Junior Competition age group if they are eligible to do so based on the age criteria specified in Table 11.
- (C) Subject to Rule 11.2.1(E), a Junior Player may only play in a Senior Grade Competition where the Player is a minimum of 16 years of age as at 31 December of the year immediately prior to the Competition year.
- (D) Subject to Rule 11.2.1(A), the Player’s minimum age to participate in a Junior Competition age group is to be taken as at 31 December of the year immediately prior to the Competition year.

Table 11 – Age Eligibility for Junior Age Groups & Senior Grades

Age Group	Minimum Age to Participate in Age Group (age as at 31 December of the year prior to the Competition Year)	Age Turning in the Competition Year
Under 9	See Rule 11.2.1	Subject to Rule 11.2.1(A), 7, 8 or 9
Under 10	7	8, 9 or 10
Under 11	8	9, 10 or 11
Under 12	9	10, 11 or 12
Under 13	10	11, 12 or 13
Under 14	11	12, 13 or 14
Under 15	12	13, 14 or 15
Under 16	13	14, 15 or 16
Under 17	14	15, 16 or 17
Under 18	15	16, 17 or 18
Senior Grade	16	17 or older

- (E) A Junior Player may play up a Junior age group, or in a Senior Grade, subject to the following:
- (i) the Player must meet the ‘minimum age to participate in an age group’ as specified in Table 11, or have been granted dispensation in accordance with Rule 11.2.2;
 - (ii) the Player should always first commit to playing in the eligible age Junior group most closely aligned to their age; and
 - (iii) the Player must not displace another Junior Player to whom that higher Junior age group applies and who otherwise would be available to play.

Guidance Note: *if a competition has two-year age group intervals, e.g. under 11s, under 13s, under 15s etc, a Player turning 13 in the Competition year who wishes to play in an under 15 competition, must not take the place of an available under 15s Player who is turning 14 or 15 in that competition year. This would not apply to a 7-year-old playing in under 9s if there was no lower age group in the Competition.*

11.2.2 Dispensation to Play Up

- (A) For any Player who is younger than the ‘minimum age to participate in an age group’ as specified in [Table 11](#), and who wishes to participate in a higher age group or a Senior Grade, the Player’s Club must;
- (i) complete and lodge an *Age Dispensation Application Form* with the CMC together with any evidence to support the application; and
 - (ii) obtain approval from the CMC prior to the Player playing in a higher Competition age group, otherwise the Player will be deemed to be an ineligible Player in accordance with [Rule 11.6](#).

Guidance Notes: *A Player younger than the minimum age specified in Rule 11.2.1(A), is not eligible to register as a Junior Player and is therefore not eligible to seek dispensation under this provision.*

- (iii) The CMC will consider applications for exemption to the minimum age identified in Table 11 for players that are within one (1) year of the minimum age.
- (B) In assessing an application made under Rule 11.2.2(A), the CMC will give consideration to the actual age differential between the Player and the age group or Senior Grade they seek to play in, together with any evidence submitted with the application that demonstrates:
- (i) any exceptional circumstances for the Player playing at a higher level;
 - (ii) it is clearly in the football development interests of the Player to play at a higher level;
 - (iii) the Player’s ability to compete safely and adequately at the higher age level, including evidence of their physical capacity, experience, skill level and social sense;
 - (iv) the Player is not displacing an age eligible Player, as detailed in Rule 11.2.1(E);
 - (v) in the case of a Junior Player seeking to play in a Senior Grade, any plan the Club has to ensure the safe integration of the Junior Player into a Senior Club environment, taking into account the *Safeguarding Children and Young People* provisions of Section 11 of the *Policy Handbook*;
 - (vi) it does not jeopardise the viability of the Player’s current age eligible team being able to continue to participate in the Competition.

Guidance Notes: *Where assessing a Player under the “football development interests” Rule, a CMC could consider, for example, where the Player is part of a talent pathway program (e.g. Academy) and where a coach in that program has provided a written confirmation to the League that it is in the Player’s development interests to be allowed to play in the higher Grade and any conditions around that (e.g. limited number of games or game time).*

- (C) In making a determination of an application made under Rule 11.2.2(A), the CMC may, in its absolute discretion:
- (i) grant dispensation unconditionally for the duration of the season;
 - (ii) grant dispensation subject to specific conditions;
 - (iii) request additional information prior to granting or declining an application;
 - (iv) decline an application.

Guidance Notes: An example of a specific condition of approval could be to limit the number of games a Player is initially approved for (e.g. three games), with review at the end of those games to ensure that any continued approval meets the objectives of this Policy.

- (D) Rule 12.2(D) applies to an appeal of a determination of the CMC made under Rule 11.2.2.

11.2.3 Dispensation to Play Down

Guidance Note: A Player may apply for dispensation to play in a Competition age group below their applicable age group on the basis of a 'disability' or for 'physical size considerations'.
'Physical size considerations' is measured on a Player's body mass index ('BMI') being below the 5th percentile for the Player's age group.

- (A) Subject to any variation specified in these Rules, Section 4 of the *Policy Handbook* applies.
- (B) To make an application under Section 4.1 of the *Policy Handbook*, a Player's Club must:
- (i) complete and lodge an *Age Dispensation Application Form* with the CMC together with the required evidence to support the application; and
 - (ii) obtain approval from the CMC prior to the Player playing in a lower Competition age group, otherwise the Player will be deemed to be an ineligible Player in accordance with [Rule 11.6](#).
- (C) In addition to the relevant factors listed in Section 4.2 of the *Policy Handbook*, the CMC will also have regard to evidence demonstrating that the participation of the Player in a lower age group does not adversely impact the safety of other Players in that age group.
- (D) In addition to the determination options provided for under Section 4.1(C) of the *Policy Handbook*, the CMC may also determine to approve an application subject to specific conditions.
- (E) If a Player's dispensation application to play down is declined by a CMC in accordance with Part B Section 4.1(C) of the *Policy Handbook*, the Player may seek to appeal the decision in accordance with [Rule 28.2](#).

11.2.4 Gender Eligibility & Diversity

- (A) Age eligible female and male Players are entitled to play in a Junior mixed grade Competition up to and including under 14's.
- (B) Where the CMC has determined, in accordance with [Rule 12.5](#), that a junior age group is classified as a boys only age group or a girls only age group, the following applies:
- (i) no male Player is eligible to play in a girls only age group; and
 - (ii) no female Player is eligible to play in a boys only age group.
- (C) Where a Player identifies as transgender or non-binary, the *AFL Gender Diversity Policy – Community Football* applies.

11.2.5 Player Eligibility to Move Between Senior Grades

- (A) The League may determine any criteria or restrictions on Player movement between Senior Grades in a Competition.

- (B) If, in a particular Round, a Team is scheduled for a bye, or has its fixture cancelled or postponed for any reason, no Player who was in that Team in the previous Round is eligible to play in a lower Grade.

Example: In Round 7 a Women's Division One team is scheduled to have a bye, so no Player who played in in the Women's Division One team in Round 6 may play in Women's Division Two in Round 7.

Example: Where a competition has Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3 Grades, once a Player has played five Division 1 matches, the player is ineligible to play in Division 3 for the remainder of the home and away season.

- (C) During the home and away Rounds, a Senior Player is ineligible to drop back more than one Grade once that Player has played five (5) or more highest available Grade matches in the Competition in that season.
- (D) A Club may apply to the CMC in writing for an exemption from Rule 11.2.5(B) or Rule 11.2.5(C):
- (i) where there are exceptional circumstances as to why the Player should be allowed to play down in a lower Grade; and
 - (ii) where any such application is made no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the Match in which permission is sought for the Player to play.
- (E) The CMC, may, in its absolute discretion, determine to accept or decline an application under 11.2.5(C).

11.2.6 Club Request for Proof of Player Eligibility

- (A) If a Club considers it has reasonable grounds to question an opposing Player's eligibility to participate in a Match, the Team Managers of both Teams are to meet and endeavour to resolve the matter at the time by production and review of any Player identification record and/or review of relevant PlayHQ records.
- (B) Where a matter is unable to be resolved in accordance with Rule 11.2.6(A), the following is to apply:
- (i) the Player in question shall sign the reverse side of the Official Team Sheet;
 - (ii) the signed Team Sheet is to be photographed by the Ground Manager, with the photograph to be sent to the League;
 - (iii) the Club requesting proof shall apply in writing to the League;
 - (iv) The Player's Club must produce satisfactory evidence within three (3) working days of receiving an official request from the League, otherwise all Match wins gained by that Team in which the Player took part shall be forfeited to the opposing Team.
- (C) Should any Club, Official or Player fail to comply with a request pursuant to Rule 11.2.6(B) or fail to assist in the provision of identification of the Player, the Club, Official or Player may be subject to the Policy breach process as per Rule 26.
- (D) If the League considers that a Club's request for proof of Player eligibility was made without reasonable grounds, or was frivolous, the League may request a further explanation from the Club making the request and may, in its absolute discretion, impose a penalty on that Club in the form of a fine not exceeding one hundred (100) dollars.

11.3 Transfers

- (A) Subject to any variation specified in these Rules, Section 3 of the *Policy Handbook* applies.
- (B) Where a Transfer Request is to be determined by a League in accordance with Section 3.2(b) of the *Policy Handbook*, the League is required to determine whether to approve or decline the Transfer Request within six (6) calendar days of notification of the Transfer Request.

Guidance Note: All Transfer requests will be processed via PlayHQ. Where a League has the 'auto' approval setting switched on in PlayHQ, the Transfer will be approved immediately at that level. Where the approval setting is set to "manual", the six (6) day time limit will apply.

- (C) If a League declines a Transfer Request, the League must, within three business (3) days of a request by a Source Club or Destination Club, provide reasons for the decision.
- (D) A Player and/or the Destination Club may, in accordance with Section 3.5 of the *Policy Handbook*, appeal a decision of a League to decline a Transfer Request.

11.4 Permits

11.4.1 Local Interchange Agreements

- (A) Two or more Leagues may enter into Local Interchange Agreement that allows for conditional Player movement during a season between Clubs that are in different Leagues without a Player having to fully transfer from one Club to another.
- (B) Any Local Interchange Agreements between Leagues must:
 - (i) be in place and current in order for a Season Permit or Student Permit to be used;
 - (ii) be in a form approved by AFL NSW/ACT;
 - (iii) be in place by 30 June of the year of the current Season;
 - (iv) established only between Leagues where it is mutually beneficial to each League;
 - (v) establish the conditions under which Player movement can occur.

11.4.2 Season Permit (formerly Local Interchange Permit)

- (A) A Season Permit allows a Player, who is registered with one Club, to play one or more home and away Matches with another Club in a different Competition without having to register with the Destination Club.
- (B) A Season Permit must:
 - (i) be lodged by the Destination Club via PlayHQ;
 - (ii) specify duration of the Permit;
 - (iii) be approved by the Source and Destination Clubs and the Source and Destination Leagues involved before the Player can play in a Match for the Destination Club.
- (C) Where there is a dispute between two Clubs or two Leagues regarding the approval of a Season Permit, the dispute may be referred to the following for determination:
 - (i) where the dispute is between two Clubs or two Leagues that are both in NSW and/or ACT, refer to the RMC; or
 - (ii) where the dispute is between a Club or a League in NSW or ACT, and a Club or a League in another State or Territory, refer to the Permit Committee in accordance with Section 3.11 of the *Policy Handbook*.
- (D) Any determination made by the RMC in accordance with Rule 11.4.2(C)(i) will be considered final and binding and not subject to any right of appeal under these Rules or the *Policy Handbook*.

11.4.3 Game Permit (formerly Match Day Permit)

- (A) A Game Permit allows a Player, who is registered with one Club, to play a Match with another Club in the same League without having to register with the Destination Club.
- (B) This type of Permit:
 - (i) must be lodged by the Destination Club via PlayHQ;
 - (ii) is limited to a single home and away season Match only;
 - (iii) cannot be used by a Player on a day or weekend when that Player's usual team has a bye or is otherwise not playing except in the case of a Junior Player from an Aligned Junior Club who is eligible to play in a Senior Grade in accordance with [Rule 11.2.1](#) or [Rule 11.2.2](#).

- (C) Where there is a dispute between two Clubs regarding the approval of a Game Day Permit, the dispute may be referred to the CMC for determination, subject to the following:
- (i) the Club lodging the dispute must do so no later than three (3) business days prior to the Match for which the permit is being requested; and
 - (ii) the determination of the CMC will be considered final and binding and not subject to any right of appeal under these Rules or the *Policy Handbook*.

11.4.4 Student Permit

Guidance Note: A Student Permit allows a Player, who has moved away from home to attend an educational institution on a full-time basis in a different region, and who has had to Transfer Clubs to play football in the new region, to return home during holiday periods to play for their former Club.

- (A) A Student Permit may only be approved where an Interchange Agreement is in place between Leagues and allows for this type of Permit.
- (B) A Student Permit:
- (i) requires proof that the Player is a current full-time student at an educational institution;
 - (ii) requires proof of the relevant holiday periods of that educational institution;
 - (iii) only applies to Matches during those holiday periods;
 - (iv) subject to Rules 11.4.4(D) and 11.4.4(E), only allows the Player to play for the Club they last transferred from;
 - (v) must be made on the Student Permit Form;
 - (vi) must be completed and approved prior to 1 July of each season;
 - (vii) requires approval by the Source and Destination Clubs and the Source and Destination Leagues involved.
- (C) Where a Player has not previously been registered with any Club, the Player may request a Student Permit to play at the Club closest to their usual home address in the region they are returning to during the holiday period.
- (D) Where a Player's former Club is a Junior Club, and the Player is no longer eligible to play Junior football, the Player may request a Student Permit to play for a Senior Club to which that former Junior Club is aligned.
- (E) Where there is a dispute between two Clubs or two Leagues regarding the approval of a Student Permit, the dispute may be referred to the RMC for determination, subject to the following:
- (i) the Club lodging the dispute must do so no later than three (3) business days prior to the first Match for which the permit is being requested; and
 - (ii) the determination of the RMC will be considered final and binding and not subject to any right of appeal under these Rule or the *Policy Handbook*.

11.5 False or Misleading Information

- (A) Subject to any variation specified in these Rules, Section 3.2(c) of the *Policy Handbook* applies to the provision of false or misleading information in relation to Player registration, transfers or permits.
- (B) In addition to the sanctions referenced in Section 3.2(c) of the *Policy Handbook*, the CMC may, in its absolute discretion, also determine to:
- (i) suspend a Player from participation in one or more Matches;
 - (ii) impose a sanction on any Club Official found to be involved in the provision of false or misleading information.

11.6 Ineligible Players

- (A) An ineligible Player includes a Player who:
- (i) is not properly registered in accordance with the Rules or the *Policy Handbook*;
 - (ii) has registered or transferred on the basis of false or misleading information;
 - (iii) does not meet the minimum age requirements under the Rules or the *Policy Handbook*, unless given exemption upon application to the CMC;
 - (iv) exceeds the age limit for any Junior Grade, unless given dispensation under Rule 11.2.3;
 - (v) has failed to provide proof of identity or age in accordance with the Rules;
 - (vi) plays in a higher or lower Grade contrary to the Rules or any determination of a CMC;
 - (vii) plays in a Finals Match without having met finals eligibility criteria or without receiving an exemption to play;
 - (viii) does not have an approved Permit or Transfer to play with another Club in accordance with these Rules or the *Policy Handbook*;
 - (ix) is suspended from playing by way of a sanction invoked under these Rules or the *Policy Handbook*;
 - (x) is a deregistered Player or Official;
 - (xi) has not satisfied the minimum age requirements of a particular age group or grade and has not been granted an age exemption;
 - (xii) has exceeded the maximum age of a particular age group and has not been granted an age dispensation;
 - (xiii) has played up an age group without satisfying the requirements of [Rule 11.2.1\(E\)](#).
- (B) Any Club that fields an ineligible Player in a Match (including in a finals Match) may be subject to disciplinary sanctions to be imposed by the CMC including but not limited to:
- (i) the loss of the Competition Match and associated Competition Match points;
 - (ii) a fine of up to one thousand (1,000) dollars for each Competition Match in which such Player has played: and
 - (iii) any additional conditions as reasonably determined by the CMC.
- (C) Only under exceptional circumstances will the sanction under 11.6(B) not include the loss of the relevant Match or Matches.
- (D) Any Player, Official or Club, who the CMC determines in its absolute discretion, was knowingly involved with allowing an ineligible Player to compete in a Competition Match may, in addition to any sanction applied under Rule 11.6(B):
- (i) in the case of a Player or Official, be liable for suspension or deregistration; or
 - (ii) in the case of a Club, suspension or termination of the Club Participation Agreement.
- (E) If a complaint has been made against a Club with respect to fielding an ineligible Player, the Club must ensure that its Players and Officials attend and cooperate with any relevant investigation conducted by the CMC.

Part C – COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

12 COMPETITIONS

12.1 Minimum Standards

- (A) Clubs must comply with the minimum standards applicable to a Competition or Competitions as prescribed by the League from time to time.
- (B) The League will determine which Competitions operate under minimum standards.
- (C) If a Club fails to meet the relevant minimum standards of a Competition or Competitions, the CMC may impose disciplinary sanctions, including but not limited to expulsion or relegation from the relevant Competition.

12.2 Competition Management Committee (CMC) Decisions

- (A) The League's CMC is established in accordance with [Rule 7.6](#).
- (B) A Club or person seeking a determination of the CMC in accordance with these Rules, must make any such request in writing.
- (C) A CMC may request that a Club or person provide further information to assist its review and determination of a matter, and that Club or person must co-operate with any such request.
- (D) The CMC is to make decisions in an efficient and transparent manner, and where practicable, will provide the applicant Club or person with its decision in writing.
- (E) The decision of a CMC will be final and binding unless:
 - (i) otherwise specified in a particular Rule or the *Policy Handbook*; or
 - (ii) subject to any right of appeal provided by law.

12.3 Competition Equalisation

12.3.1 Player Points / Player Payments System

- (A) Prior to the League introducing, utilising, or implementing, a Player Points System or Player Payment Rules, the Player Points System or Player Payment Rules must be in a form approved in writing by AFL NSW/ACT.
- (B) In addition to the obligations of a League under Rule 12.3.1(A), no League may introduce, utilise or implement any Rule or other binding provision or direction that relates to or impacts on the registration or transfer of Players, competitive balance or equalisation mechanisms in respect of the League's Competitions or the number of teams Clubs may enter or field in the League's Competitions, without the prior written approval of AFL NSW/ACT.
- (C) The competitions listed in Table 12 are presently governed by an approved Player Points System Policy.

Table 12 – AFL NSW/ACT Competitions with an approved PPS Policy

League	Competition / Grade
AFL Canberra	First Grade Men's
	First Grade Women's
AFL Hunter Central Coast	Black Diamond Cup
AFL Sapphire Coast	Men's Division One
AFL South Coast	Men's Premier Division
AFL Sydney	Men's Premier Division
	Women's Premier Division

Farrer Football & Netball League	Men's Seniors
Hume Football & Netball League	Men's Seniors
Riverina Football & Netball League	Men's Seniors

- (D) Any alleged breach of a Player Points System Policy will be considered to be a breach of policy under the Rules.
- (E) Appeal rights and procedure in relation to decisions made under the Player Points System Policy are provided for within that Policy rather than under the Rules.

12.3.2 Restricted Player List – Reserve Grade

(A) AFL North Coast is committed to allowing clubs to enter teams at the appropriate level to their ability, but also needs to preserve the integrity and competitive balance of Reserve Grade. The Restricted Player List will aim to achieve this outcome by providing a limit to the number of Senior (First) Grade standard Players that can compete for a club in any given Reserve Grade match.

(B) Senior (First) Grade standard Players will be identified as Players under the age of forty (40) years in that season (i.e. will not turn at least (40) years of age in the season in question) on the following basis:

- (i) Players that were named in the AFL North Coast Team of the Decade (2010 to 2019).
- (ii) Players that have appeared in an Australian community football League Senior (First) Grade Grand Final in any one (1) of the three (3) preceding seasons.
- (iii) all Players that have participated in the NAB League and/or AFL National Championships at Under 16, Under 17, Under 18, or Under 19 age groups in the immediate past three (3) years. Inclusion on this list does not preclude these Players from participating in their true age group.
- (iv) all Players that have played Senior representative football for their League in the past five (5) years.
- (v) all Players that have played in the AFL, a Tier 1 State League, or the highest grade in a Premium Competition League in the preceding three (3) seasons where a premier was declared (classification of Tier 1 State League and Premium Competition League as included in the AFL NSW/ACT Player Points System Policy).
- (vi) all Players that have played more Matches in the highest grade than they have in any lower grade in any one (1) of the three (3) preceding seasons where a premier was declared in a community football League in Australia where the club the Player played for fielded teams in more than one (1) grade.
- (vii) any Player who was a member of the Northern Heat squad in any one (1) of the three (3) programs immediately preceding the current season.
- (viii) any Player who in the most recent season where the AFL North Coast Reserve Grade Best & Fairest has been awarded who has finished in the top-10 (including ties) in the voting.
- (ix) any Player who in the most recent season where the AFL North Coast Reserve Grade leading goalkicker has been awarded who has finished in the top-3 (including ties) of the goalkicking tally.

(C) Each Club that fields a Team in the Reserve Grade Competition will be required to provide the League with a comprehensive list of Players that meet at least one (1) of the criteria in (B)(i) to (ix) which shall be the Club's Restricted Player List. This list is to be updated by the Club and re-submitted to the League throughout the season upon accepting the registration of further Player(s) that meet at least one (1) of the criteria in (B)(i) to (ix).

(D) Other Clubs within the competition can make an application to have a Player added to the Restricted Player List on the basis that the Player meets at least one (1) of the criteria in (B) (i) to (ix) (or comparable).

(E) The CMC can provide an exemption to excuse an individual Player from being named on the Restricted Player List upon application from the club.

- (F) Any Club shall not include any more than four (4) Players from the Restricted Player List in the Reserve Grade team on any given match day. This includes matches in the Finals Series.
- (G) The CMC retains the right to review a team's status in the Reserve Grade competition. Where a Reserve Grade team of a Club with no Senior (First) Grade team is significantly outperforming all other teams in that grade, the CMC may re-grade that team to the Senior (First) Grade.

12.3.3 Intra-League Player Recruitment

- (A) In any given season, a Club (Destination Club) can recruit a maximum of three (3) Players from any other Club (Source Club) in the League in which they compete.
- (B) The exception to 12.3.3(A) is where the Source Club is prepared to release more than three (3) Players to the Destination Club.
- (C) This Rule applies to Players that were registered with a Club inside the period of the existing twenty-four (24) month Rule that relates to the transfer of Players.
- (D) Disputes in relation to the application or interpretation of this Rule are to be submitted to the CMC in writing for determination. The decision of the CMC is final and binding on the applicable Clubs (Source and Destination).

12.4 Conduct of Junior Competitions

- (A) All Junior Competitions will be conducted according to the principles outlined in the *Australian Football Match Policy* unless otherwise approved by AFL NSW/ACT or as detailed in the Rules.

12.4.2 Bouncing the Ball

- (A) There is no limit upon the number of times a Player can bounce the ball in any age group in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition except;
 - (i) In an Under 10 match a Player can only bounce the ball once and only inside their nominated playing zone.

12.4.3 Kicking off the Ground

- (A) Kicking off the ground in the Under 10, Under 12, and Youth Girls 14 age groups is not permitted.

12.4.4 Marking

- (A) A mark will be awarded in the Under 10 age group where the ball has been kicked any distance provided the Player shows control of the ball.
- (B) A mark will be awarded in the Under 12 age group for a direct catch where the ball has been kicked a minimum distance of ten (10) metres.

12.4.5 Modified Tackle

- (A) In an Under 10 or Under 12 match opponents are to perform a modified tackle. This applies as follows:
 - (i) Under 10 applies to all Players at all times;
 - (ii) Under 12 applies only where a female Player is wearing a coloured sleeve that is different to the primary colours of the team jumper.
- (B) A Player in possession of the ball may be tackled by an opponent wrapping both arms around the area below the top of the shoulders and on/above the knees. The tackle may be from either side or from behind providing the tackle from behind does not thrust forward the Player with the ball (i.e. push the Player in the back).
 - (i) if the Player in possession of the ball is taken to the ground in the act of tackling, they will receive a free kick unless their momentum makes such an action unavoidable. If the Umpire feels the Player drops to the ground deliberately in order to receive a free kick, they will be penalised for holding the ball.

- (ii) a Player in possession of the ball, when held by an opponent applying the modified tackle, should be given a reasonable chance to dispose of the ball by kick or by handball, or by attempting to kick or handball, otherwise a free kick shall be awarded to the tackler for holding the ball.
- (iii) the field Umpire shall conduct a ball-up when the Player with the ball has the ball held to the body by an opponent, unless the Player has had a reasonable time to dispose of the ball before being tackled, in which case a free kick shall be awarded to the tackler for holding the ball.
- (iv) the field Umpire shall allow play to continue if the ball is knocked accidentally out of a Player's hands by an opponent.
- (v) there is strictly no bumping, slinging or deliberately bringing an opposition Player in possession of the ball to the ground if that opposition Player is wearing a coloured sleeve.

(C) Players cannot;

- (i) push the Player in the side;
- (ii) smother an opponent's kick;
- (iii) shepherd a Player, other than where the shepherd is performed with outstretched arms only and no bump is initiated by the Player performing the shepherd.

(D) Where a Player who wears a coloured sleeve engages in full contact, the Umpire will advise the Coach to instruct the Player to remove the sleeve for the remainder of the match. Circumstances where a Player engages in full contact include:

- (i) tackling an opponent and choosing to take them to ground;
- (ii) being a second or subsequent Player to join a tackle, and/or;
- (iii) attempting to fend away an opponent as a means of avoiding a tackle.

12.4.6 Minimum Game Time

(A) In every Under 10 Match, all Players that are present are to be on the Ground for a minimum of fifty (50) percent of the Match.

12.4.6 Under 10 Zones

(A) The playing field is to be divided into three (3) zones of equal distance along the length of the ground. These zones are to be marked across the width of the ground using cones.

(B) Players are to be divided as equally as possible into backs, midfielders and forwards. Based on a Team's on-field playing numbers, the number of Players in each zone on the ground will be as follows:

- (i) nine (9) Players – three (3) backs, three (3) midfielders, three (3) forwards
- (ii) ten (10) Players – three (3) backs, four (4) midfielders, three (3) forwards
- (iii) eleven (11) Players – four (4) backs, three (3) midfielders, four (4) forwards
- (iv) twelve (12) Players – four (4) backs, four (4) midfielders, four (4) forwards

(C) Players must rotate through each zone during the course of a Match so that they spend a minimum of one quarter in each zone or in the rotation for that zone.

(D) To comply with this Rule, a Player can be in the rotation for any given zone for a maximum of two quarters.

(E) In the case of an on-field injury that requires a Player to leave the field, that Player is to be replaced in their nominated zone by a Player on the interchange if one or more is available.

- (i) If there is not a Player on the interchange bench, an on-field Player may be swapped to another zone during a quarter.

(F) Only forwards will be able to score. Players in the forward zone are to be identified by wearing a bib/armband that is a different colour to their Team uniform and that of their opponents.

- (i) should a midfield zone Player kick a score, no score shall be acknowledged, and a free kick is to be paid to the opposing Team to be taken from adjacent to a behind post.

(G) A Player is to remain inside their zone at all times except:

- (i) where a Player receives the ball within five (5) steps of the edge of the zone, the Player is permitted to enter the adjacent zone to allow the time needed to effect a proper disposal at the earliest opportunity.
- (ii) where a ball is within five (5) steps of a zone, and the out of zone Player is the closest member of the team to the ball, the out of zone Player is allowed to cross into the adjacent zone to attempt to gain possession of the ball and effect a disposal at the earliest opportunity.
- (iii) where an opponent has possession within five (5) steps of the edge of the zone and is static, and the out of zone Player is the closest member of the team to the opponent, the out of zone Player is permitted to enter the adjacent zone to apply a modified tackle or pressure.

(H) In all instances where a Player leaves their zone in accordance with Rule 12.4.6(G), they are then to return immediately to their zone.

(I) A Player is not permitted to make a second effort that is beyond the immediate vicinity of the initial contest when out of zone.

(J) When a Player is an out of zone Player in the forward zone, they are not allowed to score. The Player must attempt to pass to a teammate who is a designated forward.

12.4.7 Ball Ups

(A) When a Field Umpire in an Under 10 Match decides a Ball Up is required as per the Laws of Australian Football, the Umpire is to nominate two opposing Players from the Zone the ball is in who are of a similar height to contest the ruck.

(B) During a Ball Up in an Under 10 Match, a Player must knock the ball to a teammate and may not play the ball again until it has either hit the ground or another Player has taken possession.

- (i) If a Player takes full possession from the Ball Up or plays at the ball again before it has hit the ground or another Player has taken possession, the Player will be penalised with a free kick being paid to the nearest opposition Player.

12.4.8 Rushing a Behind

(A) If a Player in an Under 10 match deliberately rushes a behind for the opposition team, the Player will not have a free kick paid against them.

12.5 Competition Grades

(A) Subject to these Rules, the CMC will determine, in accordance with any relevant AFL Policy, the Competition Grades for the season including;

- (i) any Junior Age Groups available and, subject to Rule 12.5(D), whether each Age Group is boys only, girls only or mixed gender Age Groups;
- (ii) which, if any, Junior Age Groups are development age groups;
- (iii) any Senior Grades available; and
- (iv) which Teams are eligible to participate in each of those Grades.

Guidance Note: A development age group is one where matches are not played for points and is designed to assist junior Players learn the game in a non-competition, modified rules environment.

- (B) Where Player numbers do not permit a Junior Competition to be conducted in single year age intervals the CMC may determine that the competition is to be conducted in two year age intervals.
- (C) Where a CMC seeks to have a Junior Competition that has an age interval exceeding two years, the CMC must obtain the prior approval of AFL NSW/ACT as per the *Australian Football Match Policy*.
- (D) In accordance with the *Policy Handbook* and the *Australian Football Match Policy*, mixed grade competitions are only allowed up to and including Under 14s.
- (E) Table 13 details the Competition Grades that have been determined by the CMC for the current season.

Table 13 – Current Season Competition Grades

League	Competition	Age Group / Grade (include whether mixed, female only, male only)
AFL North Coast	Junior	Under 10 (mixed, development)
AFL North Coast	Junior	Under 12 (mixed)
AFL North Coast	Junior	Under 14 (mixed)
AFL North Coast	Junior	Youth Girls 14 (female only)
AFL North Coast	Junior	Under 16 (male only)
AFL North Coast	Junior	Youth Girls 17 (female only)
AFL North Coast	Senior	Under 18 (male only)
AFL North Coast	Senior	Women’s (female only)
AFL North Coast	Senior	Reserve Grade (male only)
AFL North Coast	Senior	Seniors (male only)

12.6 Regrading of Teams

- (A) As part of a Competition structure, a League may establish a system for the regrading of Teams at a particular interval during the home and away season.
- (B) A League must, at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the commencement of a Competition, advise all participating Clubs of any regrading system established in accordance with Rule 12.6(A)
- (C) Where the League regrades a Team in accordance with Rule 12.6(A), the Team’s Match Ratio (wins and losses) are included in the regraded Competition the Team is aligned to.

13 FIXTURE

13.1 Preparation of Fixture

- (A) The League will determine dates, locations and times of all Competition Matches in its ultimate discretion.
- (B) The League will prepare the Season Fixture for each Grade of Competition for distribution to Clubs prior to the start of the season.
- (C) Other than in exceptional circumstances as determined by the League, the Season Fixture will not be varied once the season has commenced.
- (D) Where a Season Fixture is prepared for a divisional structure, any byes, where possible, should be in the lower division.
- (E) Each Competition Season Fixture will consist of a series of home and away Matches followed by a finals series of Matches.

13.2 Club Requests for Fixture Changes

- (A) Not applicable.
- (B) All Clubs may only seek to change the time and/or venue of a fixtured Match where:

- (i) it has been agreed to by both competing Clubs; and
 - (ii) where it has been agreed to by the Umpire Co-ordinator; and
 - (iii) where notice of the requested change has been lodged by the competing Clubs with the CMC no later than seven (7) days prior to the scheduled Match.
- (C) The League may prescribe that a *Fixture Change Request* form is to be completed by a Club seeking to change a fixture in accordance with Rules 13.2(A) or 13.2(B).

14 TEAMS

14.1 Team Nominations

- (A) The nomination process for a Club to enter a Team in a Competition will be determined by the CMC in its absolute discretion.
- (i) in the AFL North Coast Senior Competition, the affiliation deposit is set at \$1,000 per Team, which is payable by 31 January each year for the subsequent season, or at any later date as specified by the League.
 - (a) This deposit will be reduced from the overall affiliation fee where the Team takes part in the Competition.
 - (b) In instances where a nominated Team fails to participate in the Competition, the deposit will not be reduced from the overall affiliation fee and will not be refunded.
 - (ii) in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition, the affiliation deposit is set at \$100 per Team which is payable by 1 March each year for the subsequent season, or at any later date as specified by the League.
 - (a) This deposit will be reduced from the overall affiliation fee where the Team takes part in the Competition.
 - (b) In instances where a nominated Team fails to participate in the Competition, the deposit will not be reduced from the overall affiliation fee and will not be refunded.
 - (c) Clubs are required to provide the details of one (1) Umpire per Team nominated for the nomination to be accepted by the League. Where a club nominates a Team in the Under 14, Under 16 and/or Youth Girls age groups, at least one (1) nominated Umpire must be an adult, i.e. eighteen (18) years of age or older by the start of the season. Each nominated Umpire must be prepared to undertake the accreditation process, be available to officiate all Matches that Team(s) plays at home throughout the season, and be centrally appointed to match day duties by the League.
 - (d) Where a host Club fails to provide an adult Umpire for a Match in the Under 14, Under 16 and/or Youth Girls age groups that Club will have to show cause to the League as to why that Match result should not be declared a forfeit by the host Team.
 - (e) Where a Club is unable to nominate sufficient Umpires for the number of Teams nominated, that Club will have to show cause to the League as to why the Teams without Umpires should be permitted to accrue Competition points.
- (B) The CMC may impose sanctions on Clubs for late submissions of a Team nomination or withdrawal of a Team nomination past a predetermined date.

14.2 Joint Venture Teams

- (A) The CMC may allow the formation of a joint venture Team between Clubs to maximise the participation opportunity for Players to play in a Competition.
- (B) The formation of a joint venture Team will only be allowed to proceed where it is in the best interests of the Competition.

- (C) Clubs proposing a joint venture Team must make a written application to the CMC, setting out the background to the proposed joint venture, the reasoning and justification for same, and must include a completed Joint Venture Agreement template as approved from time to time by the CMC.
- (D) The CMC may reject, approve, or approve on terms and conditions, the proposed joint venture Team and Joint Venture Agreement.
- (E) A joint venture Team will not be able to be participate in any Competition until such time as the Joint Venture Agreement for that Team is approved by the CMC.
- (F) The terms of a Joint Venture Agreement will be for one (1) season only, at which time the Joint Venture Agreement will expire or be deemed to expire.

14.3 Club Entering Multiple Teams in a Junior Competition

- (A) Where a Club enters more than one (1) Team in a Junior or Youth Grade in the same Competition, the Club:
 - (i) has three (3) rounds to finalise its Player allocation to those Teams; and
 - (ii) must ensure that the allocation of Players to those Teams results in Teams that are evenly matched.
- (B) During the first three (3) rounds a Player may play for any of the Club's Teams in that Grade but cannot play for more than one (1) of those Teams in a round.

Guidance Note: *The purpose of this Rule is to allow Clubs to move Players from one Team to another during these rounds to try to achieve evenly matched Teams. Allowing a Player to play in more than one Team in a Round would not serve this purpose*

- (C) After round three (3) a Player must remain in the same Team for the duration of the season including finals.
- (D) If, after five (5) Rounds, it is evident to the CMC that there is significant disparity in the evenness of the Teams from a Club, the CMC may:
 - (i) direct the Club to make changes to the Teams; and
 - (ii) determine that the Teams will not accrue any Competition points until such time as the Club demonstrates to the satisfaction of the CMC that they are taking reasonable steps to even up the Teams.
- (E) During the course of the Season, a Club may make application to the CMC to move a Player to another Team in that Grade, where the Club can demonstrate that moving that Player will help bring balance to the Club's Teams in that Grade.
- (F) The approval of an application under Rule 14.3(E) is at the absolute discretion of the CMC, and:
 - (i) if the application is approved, the Player must then remain in that Team for the duration of the Season, including any Finals; and
 - (ii) Matches played by that Player in the other Team will be counted for finals eligibility.
- (G) Younger Players that play up an age group may play for multiple Teams in the older age group until such time as they have played three (3) matches for one (1) of those Teams. From this point, the Player may only play for the Team with which they have participated on three (3) occasions.

14.4 Number of Players in a Team - Senior Competitions

- (A) The CMC will determine the minimum and maximum number of Players allowed per Team for Senior Competitions and detail this in Table 14.

Table 14 – Number of Players Allowed in a Team - Senior Competitions

Competition	Grade	Minimum Number of Players for a Match	Maximum Number of Players	
			On a Team Sheet	On Field
North Coast Senior	Senior (First)	14	22	18
North Coast Senior	Reserve	12	20	16
North Coast Senior	Women	12	22	16

- (B) Where both competing Teams in a Match have the maximum number of Players allowed on a Team Sheet as per Table 14, the number of Players per Team on field at the start of a Match shall be the “Max Number of Players On-Field” as per Table 14.
- (C) Where one or both competing Teams have less than the maximum number of Players allowed on a Team Sheet as per Rule 14.4(A), the number of Players per Team on field at the start of a Match shall be as per Table 15.

Table 15 – On-Field Number Where Less than Maximum Team Sheet Number - Senior Competitions

Competition	Grade	Where One or Both Teams has only...	On-field Number of Players is...
North Coast Senior	Senior (First)	18	16
North Coast Senior	Reserve	16	14
North Coast Senior	Women	16	14

- (i) Matches are to be played between two (2) Teams of even numbers, with the exceptions being where a Player receives a yellow card and there is no other Player on the bench to provide a replacement, and when a Player receives a red card and cannot be replaced.
 - (ii) where one Team has more Players than the other, the Team with the greater numbers can run an extended bench up to the maximum number permitted on the Team Sheet. Alternatively, Players can be loaned to the Team with fewer Players. Players that are loaned to the opposition must stay with the opposing Team for a minimum of one quarter and can be swapped at a break between quarters.
- (D) The Coaches of both Teams may agree, in consultation with the Umpire, to start with a different on-field number of Players to that stated in Rule 14.4(C) provided that:
- (i) Both teams have the same on-field number of Players; and
 - (ii) The agreed on-field number of Players does not exceed the Maximum Number of Players on-field for that Grade as specified in Table 14 and is not less than the Minimum Number of Players for Match for that Grade as specified in Table 14.
- (E) In Finals Matches:
- (i) Rules 14.4(C) and 14.4(D) do not apply; and
 - (ii) either team may field up to the maximum number of on-field Players specified in Table 14.
- (F) At the commencement of a Match, both Teams must have available the “Minimum Number of Players for a Match” as detailed in Table 14 in order for it to constitute an official Competition Match and where a Team has less than the minimum number of Players required, that Team will be deemed to have forfeited the Match.
- (i) where the loaning of Players outlined in 14.4(C)(ii) ensures that both Teams achieve the minimum number of on-field Players for a match to commence, the match is played for Competition points.
 - (ii) in this instance, the Team that is able to establish the minimum number prior to the loaning of Players shall receive two (2) competition points, with the outcome of the Match to determine the destination of the remaining two (2) points, i.e. two (2) points to the winning Team, one (1) point to each Team for a draw, and zero (0) points to the losing Team.

- (G) If for any reason during the course of a Match a Team has less than the “Minimum Number of Players for a Match” as per Table 14:
- (i) the Team has fifteen (15) minutes to ensure the minimum number of Players is reinstated; and
 - (ii) the Team is unable to comply with this requirement, it will be deemed to have forfeited the Match.

14.5 Number of Players in a Team - Junior Competitions

- (A) The CMC will determine the minimum and maximum number of Players allowed per Team for Junior Competitions and detail this in Table 16.

Table 16 – Number of Players Allowed in a Team - Junior Competitions

Competition	Grade	Minimum Number of Players for a Match	Maximum Number of Players	
			On a Team Sheet	On Field
North Coast Junior	Under 10	9	15	12
North Coast Junior	Under 12	10	22	15
North Coast Junior	Under 14	12	22	18
North Coast Junior	Under 16	12	22	18
North Coast Junior	Youth Girls 14	9	22	15
North Coast Junior	Youth Girls 17	10	22	16
North Coast Senior	Under 18	12	N/A	16

- (i) the maximum number of Players that are able to be registered to a Team is as follows:
 - (a) Under 10, Under 12, Youth Girls 14, and Youth Girls 17 is equal to the maximum number of Players permitted on a team sheet;
 - (b) Under 14 and Under 16 is equal to the maximum number of Players permitted on a team sheet plus two (2);
 - (c) Under 18 has no maximum number.
- (B) Teams must have the “Minimum Number of Players for a Match”, as per Table 16, available at the scheduled commencement of a Competition Match to constitute an official Match, and subject to Rule 14.5(C), where a Team has less than the minimum number of Players:
- (i) that Team will be deemed to have forfeited the Match;
 - (a) where one Team has more Players than the other, the Team with the greater numbers must loan Players to the Team with fewer Players, and is able to retain a maximum of two (2) additional Players who are to comprise a bench. Players that are loaned to the opposition must stay with the opposing Team for a minimum of one quarter and can be swapped at a break between quarters.
 - (b) where the loaning of Players ensures that both Teams achieve the minimum number of on-field Players for a match to commence, the match is played for competition points.
 - (c) in this instance, the Team that is able to establish the minimum number prior to the loaning of Players shall receive two (2) competition points, with the outcome of the match to determine the destination of the remaining two (2) points, i.e. two (2) points to the winning Team, one (1) point to each Team for a draw, and zero (0) points to the losing Team.
 - (ii) a scratch match may still proceed to allow Player participation, with the Coaches encouraged to even-up the skill levels of the Teams.
- (C) If the “Minimum Number of Players for a Match” as per Table 16 are not available at the scheduled commencement of Junior Competition Match, but Players sufficient for minimum numbers are expected to arrive before the end of the first quarter, the following is to apply:

- (i) a scratch Match will be commence to be played with reduced Player numbers on each Team;
- (ii) Teams must still have equal numbers on the field;
- (iii) scores will be recorded by the goal Umpires;
- (iv) if minimum numbers become available at any time prior to the end of the first quarter, then they may take the field after a goal is scored, the Teams are to be adjusted accordingly and the scratch Match then becomes an official Match;
- (v) the scores at the time when the Match becomes an official Match will stand;
- (vi) if minimum numbers are not available by the end of the first quarter, the Match remains a scratch Match and the Team with less than the minimum number of Players forfeits the Match.

(D) During school holidays the “Minimum Number of Players for a Match” as per Table 16 are to be reduced by two (2) Players where this is necessary to ensure a Match can be played, unless the League advises otherwise.

14.6 Even On-field Numbers – Junior Competitions

- (A) On-field Player numbers must be equal at all times other than:
- (i) in the case of a send-off where the Rules disallow a replacement for a period of time; or
 - (ii) where a Coach declines to accept Players as per the requirements of Table 17.
 - (iii) Where team numbers are adjusted in accordance with the mercy rule under [Rule 15.2.8](#).
- (B) If during the Match, an injured Player has to leave the ground but there are no replacements in that Team, the following applies:
- (i) the field Umpire, the Opposition Coach and the Ground Manager must be advised accordingly;
 - (ii) the other Club’s Team is to remove a Player to keep the numbers on the ground even; and
 - (iii) if the injured then Player returns to the field, the same process applies in reverse.

14.7 Even Up Rule – Junior Competitions

- (A) To encourage maximum participation where the two Teams do not have the same number of available Players, the rules in Table 17 apply.
- (i) where the loaning of Players outlined in Table 17 ensures that both Teams achieve the minimum number of on-field Players for a match to commence, the match is played for competition points.
 - (ii) in this instance, the Team that is able to establish the minimum number prior to the loaning of Players shall receive two (2) competition points, with the outcome of the match to determine the destination of the remaining two (2) points, i.e. two (2) points to the winning Team, one (1) point to each Team for a draw, and zero (0) points to the losing Team.

Table 17 – Even Up Rules - Junior Competitions

Grades	Requirements
Under 10, Under 12, Under 14, Under 16, Youth Girls 14, Youth Girls 17, Under 18.	<p>Clubs must borrow or loan available Players up to the maximum on-field number for that Grade as specified in Table 16.</p> <p>Players must be rotated so that no single Player plays more than one (1) quarter per match for the opposition team.</p> <p>The team that is loaning Players is able to retain a maximum of two (2) additional Players who are to comprise a bench.</p> <p>If the Coach does not accept the Players offered, the Team offering the additional Players will be able to play with such additional Players up to the maximum on-field number as specified in Table 16.</p>

(B) The Rules specified in Table 17 do not apply in finals series matches.

15 MATCHES

15.1 Laws of Australian Football

Except where otherwise provided for in the Rules, Competition Matches shall be played under the *Laws of Australian Football* as prescribed by the AFL from time to time.

15.2 AFL NSW/ACT Match Laws

15.2.1 Kick-in Rule

- (A) Subject to Rule 15.2.1(B), the same football used to score the behind must be utilised for the resultant kick-in, unless otherwise instructed by the field Umpire.
- (B) Senior Competitions may have an additional football of appropriate quality behind each set of goals and a Player is permitted to use this ball in the event the ball from in play is not easily accessible (e.g. no longer in the venue).

15.2.2 50 Metre Penalties

- (A) Players may not play on during the advancement of any 50 metre Penalty and must wait until the field Umpire signals time back on (variation from the Laws of the Game).
- (B) Where a 50-metre penalty is not applicable in the Age Group rules, the penalty metres applicable for that Age Group shall be applied.
- (i) distance penalties awarded in Under 10 and all age groups in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition shall be twenty-five (25) metres.
- (C) In addition to any Report that may be made, a free kick or a fifty (50) metre penalty may be awarded against a Team if a Player, Official or clearly identifiable Supporter of a Team:
- (i) uses abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards an Umpire;
 - (ii) behaves in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards an Umpire;
 - (iii) intentionally, recklessly or negligently engages in conduct which affects, interferes with or prevents an Umpire from performing their duties.

15.2.3 Starting Positions at Centre Bounces

Guidance Note: Refer to Law 13.1 and Diagram 2 in the *Laws of Australian Football*. This applies to Senior Competition Grades only.

- (A) The Law in the *Laws of Australian Football* relating to “Centre Bounces – Starting Positions” does not apply to Junior Competition Grades.
- (i) As the Under 18 age group is staged as part of the North Coast Senior Competition, the law relating to “Centre Bounces – Starting Positions” will apply.
- (B) Based on a Team’s on-field playing numbers, the number of Players in each area of the field will be as per Table 18.

Table 18 – Player Number Starting Positions

Per Team	Forwards	Centres	Backs
18	6	6 – Maximum 4 in square	6
17	6	5 – Maximum 4 in square	6
16	5	6 – Maximum 4 in square	5
15	5	5 – Maximum 4 in square	5

14	5	4 – Maximum 4 in square	5
13	5	3 – Maximum 3 in square	5
12	4	4 – Maximum 4 in square	4

15.2.4 Location of Mark at Kick In

The Law in the *Laws of Australian Football* relating to “Location of The Mark at Kick Ins” does not apply to a Junior Competition Grade where a reduced size field is used.

15.2.5 Player Standing the Mark

The Law in the *Laws of Australian Football* relating to “Player Standing the Mark” does not apply to Junior Competition Grades.

(A) As the Under 18 age group is staged as part of the North Coast Senior Competition, the law relating to “Player Standing the Mark” will apply.

15.2.6 Out of Bounds

(A) Where Boundary umpires have not been designated to a Match, and when the ball goes out of bounds, the field Umpire will bring the ball back in 5m from the boundary line and a ball-up will apply.

(B) In the Senior Grade, the Laws of the Game will apply with regard to the ball out of play.

(C) In Under 10 and all age groups in the Junior Competition, Under 18, Women’s Grade, and Reserve Grade, the “Last Disposal” rule operates as outlined below:

- (i) a free kick is paid to the opposing Team when the Team in possession of the ball kicks or handballs the ball out of play without it being touched by an opposition Player.
- (ii) the Player taking a free kick under the “Last Disposal” Rule may not resume play by taking a shot for goal. Where a free kick to resume play goes through the posts without being touched by any other Player, no score is recorded and play resumes with a free kick next to the closest behind post.
- (iii) where the ball goes out of play as a result of a spoil, smother, contested play, or it is unclear to the Umpire which team was responsible for the last disposal, the Umpire shall call a ball-up ten (10) metres to fifteen (15) metres in from the boundary line following the ball being out of play.
- (iv) the “Last Disposal” rule will not apply where a Player prevents the ball from being touched by an opposition Player via shepherd where it could otherwise have been touched. Where there is doubt, Umpires shall call a ball-up ten (10) metres to fifteen (15) metres in from the boundary line following the ball being out of play.

15.2.7 Removing a Team from the Field of Play

(A) No person, including any Coach or Club Official, may remove, or cause to be removed, a Team from the field of play before the official completion of the Match.

(B) Breach of this Rule is, for an Official, a reportable offence, to be dealt with by the Tribunal pursuant to the Rules as an act of Misconduct under Law 22.2.2(cc).

(C) Breach of this Rule by a person other than an Official, is a breach of the Code of Conduct, to be dealt with by the prescribed disciplinary process.

15.2.8 Mercy Rule - Junior Competitions

Guidance Note: This Rule is established in accordance with the Mercy Rule principles of the Australian Football Match Policy. The purpose of the Rule is to instil in Coaches and Players of Junior Teams that it serves no beneficial purpose to inflict massive losses on an opposition Team. The Rule provides a mechanism to limit the final winning margin of any Junior Match, and where that capped margin is reached during a Match, requires the Coaches to implement strategies to equalise the competitive balance of the Teams for the benefit of all participants.

- (A) The provisions of this Mercy Rule apply to all Junior Competition home and away Matches, but do not apply to finals Matches.
- (B) Regardless of the actual Match score, the official final winning margin between Teams in a Junior Competition Match cannot exceed:
- (i) sixty (60) points for all Grades up to and including Under 16 and Youth Girls 17;
 - (ii) the Mercy Rule will not apply to the Under 18 age group;
 - (iii) the Mercy Rule will not apply to the Under 10 age group as scores are not recorded. However the principle of evening up the skill levels of Players should be applied where it is apparent that one team is significantly stronger than the other.
- (C) Where the score differential between Teams at the end of the first (1st), second (2nd) or third (3rd) quarter equals or exceeds the points margin specified in Rule 15.2.8(B) for the relevant Grade, the requirements of Table 19 apply.

Table 19 – Mercy Rule Requirements

Component	Requirements
Score Check	The Umpires and Team Managers are to check the scores with the Goal Umpires at the end of the quarter to confirm that the maximum margin has been achieved.
Scoreboard	Scoring on the scoreboard is to cease at the end of the quarter that the margin is achieved, and the score on the scoreboard is to be adjusted as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the trailing team’s score is to be retained; and ▪ the leading team’s score is to be calculated and recorded by adding the maximum margin specified in Rule 15.2.8(B) to the trailing team’s score. <p><i>[Example: if at the end of the third quarter, the score of an Under 15s boys match is 125 to 32, the trailing Team’s score is to be recorded on the scoreboard as 32 and the leading Team’s score is to be recorded as 92 (i.e. 32 + 60).]</i></p>
Goal Umpire Scoring	The goal umpires are to continue to score the Match as usual and submit score cards to the Ground Manager at the end of the Match. <p><i>[Guidance Note: The purpose of this is to assist the League determine whether the on-field equalisation requirements of the Mercy Rule have been applied.]</i></p>
Entry of Scores in PlayHQ	Each Team’s total score is to be recorded in PlayHQ by the home Club as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for the losing Team – that Team’s actual score at the end of the quarter that the margin was achieved; and ▪ for the winning Team – by adding the maximum margin specified in Rule 15.2.8(B) to the losing Team’s score. <p><i>[Example: if the score at the end of the 2nd quarter of an Under 13s mixed match is 83 to 12, the losing Team’s score is to be entered as 12 and the winning Team’s score is to be entered as 72 (i.e. 12 + 60).]</i></p>

Umpire Match Report	The field Umpire is to note in the Umpire Match Report that the Mercy Rule was invoked and end of the quarter that it was invoked at. A copy of the goal umpire scorecards is to be submitted with the Umpire Match Report.
On-field Equalisation Requirements	It is incumbent on the Coaches of both Teams to implement measures to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ equalize the on field competitive balance of the Match; and ▪ allow for improved participation in the Match for the Players of the losing team. The League may prescribe particular requirements in relation to the on-field equalisation measures to be taken. Coaches are required to even-up the skill levels and number of Players for both teams. Any equalisation measure should look to maximise the number of Players on the field, but no more than the maximum number of Players on field allowed for under Table 16 . Where an equalisation measure results in an uneven number of Players in each Team on the field, the Umpires must be notified of this so that the headcount Rule is not unnecessarily invoked.
Coach Responsibilities	Clubs and Coaches may be required by the CMC to explain any circumstance in which there is evident failure to take equalisation measures or achieve a competitive balance between the Teams.
Non-Compliance	Non-compliance with this Mercy Rule will be dealt with by the CMC as a potential breach of policy by the Club and any Officials involved.

- (D) Where the maximum margin specified in Rule 15.2.8(B) is not attained until the fourth (4th) quarter, the same principles and method as detailed in the “Entry of Scores in PlayHQ” in Table 19 apply.

15.2.9 Supporter Distance from Boundary & Goals

- (A) Where a playing field has no fence, supporters are to remain a minimum distance of:
- (i) three (3) metres from the boundary line;
 - (ii) five (5) metres from the behind and goal posts.
- (B) The field Umpire may require Supporters to provide more space beyond the boundary or goals and may refrain from recommencing the Match until the request is complied with.

15.2.10 Persons Allowed on Field of Play

- (A) Only Players, Umpires, medical staff (trainers, QMP’s or first aiders), runners and water carriers are permitted on the field during the course of play, including any period of delay in play caused by an injury to a Player and their presence on the field must be in accordance with the provisions of these Rules.
- (B) A Coach of a junior grade team is permitted to be on the field of play in a grade that is deemed to be a development grade.

Guidance Note: *Development age groups are non-competition ages groups like under 9’s where no there is no formal scoring, result or ladder maintained.*

- (C) During an unscheduled delay caused by an injury to a Player, the Ground Manager may enter the field to determine from medical staff the Player’s condition, whether an ambulance is to attend and the likely duration of such delay.
- (D) Where a Player is injured and it has been determined by medical staff that the Player is not to be moved pending the arrival of an ambulance, the parents or guardians of an injured junior Player, or the spouse or partner of an injured senior Player, are allowed to enter the field of play to provide support to that Player.

15.3 Player Match Attire & Protective Equipment

15.3.1 Match Uniform

- (A) A Player is required to wear an approved Club uniform in any Match as prescribed by [Rule 8.7](#).
- (B) Where a Player is not attired for a Match in an approved Club uniform:
- (i) the field umpire, at their discretion, may request the Player leave the field of play until such time as the Player is correctly attired;
 - (ii) the field umpire is to include details of the incorrectly attired Player in the Umpire Match Report; and
 - (iii) the CMC may, in its absolute discretion, deal with the matter as a potential breach of policy under these Rules.
- (C) Each Player must wear a number on the back of their jersey that corresponds to the number listed on the Club's Team Sheet and no Players from the same Team are permitted to wear the same number at any time during a Match.
- (D) If a Player is required to change a jersey during a match (e.g. due to damage to, or blood on, a jersey), the following is to apply if the replacement jersey has a different number on it:
- (i) the Team Manager is to notify Ground Manager immediately;
 - (ii) the Ground Manager is to note the change of the Player's number on the official team sheet and the time of the game this occurred;

Guidance Note: *The Player's original number must still remain visible on the team sheet.*

- (iii) The Team Manager is to notify the opposition team immediately following notification to the Ground Manager;
- (iv) At the next quarter time interval in the match, the Ground Manager is to notify the field umpire of the change to a Player's jersey.

15.3.2 Uniform Clashes

- (A) Not applicable.
- (B) The CMC may, in consultation with the Clubs involved, determine any other measure necessary to avoid a clash of uniform between Teams in a Match.
- (C) The sole arbiter on uniform design clashes shall be the CMC.

15.3.3 Undergarments & Other Items

- (A) Table 20 prescribes what undergarments and other items are permitted, or not permitted, to be worn in a Match.

Table 20 – Undergarments & Other Items in Matches

Item	Permitted or Not
Undergarments	Undergarments, such as lycra shorts or compression garments, are permitted to be worn under shorts and jerseys as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Undergarments worn under shorts must be skin tone, black or the same colour as Club shorts and must not be longer than the top of the knee.2) Undergarments worn under jersey must be sleeveless unless the jumper being worn is long sleeve or the undergarment is the same colour as the jersey.

	<p>Exemptions to the length of undergarments worn may be sought from the CMC for medical, religious or other reasons.</p> <p>Written approval from the CMC is required for any exemption prior to the undergarment garment being worn.</p> <p>The field Umpire, at their discretion, may request evidence of an exemption to be provided prior to a Player, who is wearing long length undergarments, being allowed on the field of play.</p>
Tee Shirts	Not permitted unless worn under a long sleeve jersey.
Football Boots	Football boots must be worn. Metal stops are not permitted.
Runners	Not permitted
Hats, Caps, Beanies	Not permitted
Gloves	Not permitted, unless medically prescribed to protect an injury and approved by the CMC.
Arm Bands	Black tape arm bands are permitted where worn to commemorate a deceased person. Other colour tape arm bands may only be worn with the permission of the CMC.
Wrist Bands	Not permitted, other than medical tape for an injury.
Hair Bands	Permitted as long as thin, unobtrusive and in black or club colour.
Bobby Pins	Not permitted
Jewellery	<p>Not permitted and must be removed, unless it is fixed permanently.</p> <p>The Club of a Player with permanently fixed jewellery must apply to the CMC for approval for the Player to wear the jewellery, and must detail what measures are proposed to be taken to ensure the jewellery does not lead to increased risk of injury to the Player, or other Players.</p>
Spectacles	Refer to Section 17.6 of the <i>Policy Handbook</i> . The Club of any Player wearing spectacles in a Match is to advise the CMC of this and provide evidence to show that the spectacles meet relevant safety requirements.

15.3.4 Protective Equipment

- (A) Sections 17.1 to 17.5 of the *Policy Handbook* applies.
- (B) For the purposes of Rule 15.3.4(A), the Controlling Body as referred to in the *Policy Handbook* will be AFL NSW/ACT.

15.4 Host Club Match Day Responsibilities

- (A) A Host Club's matchday responsibilities are established throughout the Rules.
- (B) Table 21 provides a snapshot of key Host Club matchday requirements.

Table 21 – Host Club Key Match Day Responsibilities

Item	Requirements
Ground Setup & Equipment	Ensure that each ground for a Match is set up in accordance with the Rules and that all relevant equipment is provided.
Risk Management Checklist	Complete a risk management assessment of the venue in accordance with Rule 20 .

Ground Manager	Appoint a Ground Manager for all Matches to carry out responsibilities detailed in Rule 9.4.1 and Table 5 .
Timekeeper	Appoint a Timekeeper for all Matches to carry out the responsibilities detailed in Rule 9.4.2 and Table 6 .
Umpire Escort	Appoint an Umpire Escort for all Matches to carry out the responsibilities detailed in Rule 9.4.3 .
Injury Treatment Resources	<p>Ensure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the presence of injury management officials in accordance with Rule 21.2. ▪ that a properly stocked first aid kit is readily available; ▪ that ice packs are available; ▪ that a stretcher is readily available; ▪ that the telephone numbers and addresses of the nearest medical services including ambulance and hospitals are available; ▪ that the <i>Management of Sport Related Concussion in Australian Football</i> document is readily available. <p><i>For matches played at a neutral venue (e.g. C.ex Coffs International Stadium or Junior Competition Gala Day rounds) both teams are required to provide at least one person with the minimum competencies. Failure to do so shall not be sufficient grounds to have a match result overturned but may see a penalty applied.</i></p>
Match Day Paperwork Records	Collect, submit and retain matchday records in accordance with Rule 15.7 .

15.5 Ground Preparation & Setup

15.5.1 Ground Marking

- (A) For any Grade where a Match is played on a full-size field, the ground is to be clearly marked with lines in white or other easily discernible colour as detailed in Table 22.

Table 22 – Ground Marking Requirements

Part of Ground	Line Marking Requirement
Boundary Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As per Law 3.2(b) of the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i>. ▪ The line must be at least three (3) metres in from any fence
Goal Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As per Law 3.4 of the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i>. ▪ It is also recommended that a short line be marked fifteen (15) metres out from the “kick-off line” (end of the goal square) to assist Players and Umpires with the Location of the Mark at Kick-in Law.
Centre Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As per Law 3.5(a) of the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i>.
Centre Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As per Law 3.5(b) of the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i>. ▪ Law 3.6 of the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i> provides for the League to allow relocation of the centre circle if it the centre location is in unsuitable condition.
Goal Line & Behind Lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Goal Line – a straight line to be marked between the goal posts ▪ Behind Lines – a straight line to be marked between each behind and goal post
50m Arc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As illustrated in Diagram 1 of the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i>. ▪ The fifty (50) metre arc is not to intersect with the centre square. If a ground is less than one hundred and fifty (150) metres in length:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the arc to be reduced by 5m intervals (e.g 45m or 40m) until it no longer intersects with the centre square; and ○ the Club is to clearly mark, at both ends of the arc, the actual number of metres the arc is from the goals (e.g. 45).
Interchange Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unless otherwise specified by a League, one interchange area fifteen (15) metres wide.
Coach Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Coach's line should be marked comprising five (5) metres in length and one (1) metre in from the fence / fence line or if no fence line, two (2) metres out from the boundary. ▪ It should be marked in front of the Coach's box / area. ▪ No Official or bench Player is allowed to stand in front of this line during play
Spectator Exclusion Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where a playing field has no fence around it, it is recommended that the Club also mark lines to denote spectator exclusion areas as per Rule 15.2.9.

Guidance Note: Where chemicals (e.g. weed killer) are used with or without paint to curb grass growth on a playing field, the Club is to ensure that it is not creating a trip hazard for participants due to any resultant significant surface variation.

15.5.2 Ground Size

- (A) The playing surface dimensions for Senior Grade Matches are to be in accordance with Law 3.2(a) of the *Laws of Australian Football*.
- (B) The field sizes to be used in Junior Competition Matches are to be in accordance with Table 23.

Table 23 – Junior Competition Field Dimensions

Grade		Length (Metres)	Width (Metres)
Mixed	Under 8	80	60
	Under 9 - 10	100	80
	Under 11	120	90
	Under 12 - 14	Full size up to a max of 150	Full size up to a max of 130
Girls Only	Under 8 - 10	80	60
	Under 11 - 12	100	80
	Under 13 - 14	120	90
	Under 15 - 18	Full size up to a max of 150	Full size up to a max of 130
Boys Only	Under 15 - 18	Full length (135 to 185)	Full width (110 to 155)

- (i) Under 12 and Youth Girls 14 matches are to be played concurrently, using two temporary grounds marked across the oval.
- (C) For Matches played on a field of smaller dimensions as specified in Table 23, boundaries are to be marked with cones placed no more than five (5) metres apart
- (D) Where an exceptional circumstance results in an available ground being smaller than the field size for one or more Grades as specified in Table 23:
- (i) for age groups of under 13 or below, the field size is to be as close to the specified size as the ground space allows, but no smaller than 75% of the ground size specified in Table 23; or

- (ii) in all other circumstances, an alternative venue with the correct ground size is to be sought.

Guidance Note: Clubs are to make all reasonable efforts to play matches on the correct size field. This Rule is only intended to be used where a field becomes unavailable due to damage or wet weather closure or other exceptional situation. It is not to be used where it is simply convenient to a Club to play on a smaller field.

- (E) Where both teams have less than the maximum number of Players, the Coaches of the two teams, in consultation with the Ground Manager and Umpire, may agree to reducing the field size from that specified in Table 23.

15.5.3 Goal / Behind Posts

- (A) Table 24 establishes key requirements for the setup of goal and behind posts for a Match.

Table 24 – Goal and Behind Post Requirements

Post Attribute	Requirement
Post Height	Where goal and behind posts are fixed, the minimum and maximum heights are to be in accordance with Law 3.3.1 of the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i> . Guidance Note: The recommended height for posts for venues that host local and regional level competitions are 10m for goal posts and 6.6m for behind posts. For State level facilities, the recommended heights are 12m for goal posts and 8m for behind posts.
Post Placement	All goal and behind posts are to be placed in a straight line with a distance of six point four (6.4) metres between each post.
Post Padding	All fixed goal and behind posts are to be padded in accordance with Law 3.3.2 of the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i> .

15.5.4 Scoreboard

- (A) A suitable scoreboard with numbers and Team names clearly visible to Players, Umpires and Supporters must be in operation for all Matches.
- (B) As a minimum standard, the scoreboard should identify teams as “Home” and “Away”.
- (C) The correct score should be confirmed with the Ground Manager at the end of each quarter and updated accordingly.

15.5.5 Timekeeping Facilities / Equipment

- (A) Where a Timekeeping box is not available at a venue, a table and seating with an unobstructed view of the playing area must be provided for Club timekeepers, and where practicable, should be positioned in an equally accessible location for both Teams.
- (B) The following must also be provided:
 - (i) a suitable time clock or timing device;
 - (ii) a siren in working condition that can be clearly heard at any location on the playing surface; and
 - (iii) a backup sounding device readily available in the event of the failure of the siren.

15.5.6 Change Rooms

- (A) Separate and adequate changing facilities and showers must be provided for each Club and the Umpires.
- (B) These rooms must be presented in a clean and tidy condition at the commencement of each Match.
- (C) For Senior Grade Matches, the Host Club is to make the change rooms available to both teams as follows:
 - (i) for the first Match of the day, or where there is no match immediately prior, at least one (1) hour prior to scheduled commencement time of the Match;

- (ii) for all other Matches, by no later than the commencement of the third quarter of the Match immediately prior.

(D) Where a venue does not have change rooms available, the Host Club is to notify any attending Club and Umpires of this at least two calendar (2) days before any scheduled Match at the venue.

15.6 Match Footballs

(A) Unless otherwise agreed by AFL NSW/ACT in writing, the size, type and brand of footballs to be used in Competition Matches is specified in Table 25.

Table 25 – Match Football Size & Type

Grade		Size	Type	Brand
Mixed	Under 8 - 10	2	Leather or synthetic	Sherrin Match or Sherrin synthetic
	Under 11 - 12	3	Leather or synthetic	Sherrin Match or Sherrin synthetic
	Under 13 - 14	4	Leather	Sherrin Match
Girls Only	Under 10 - 11	2	Leather or synthetic	Sherrin Match or Sherrin synthetic
	Under 12 - 13	3	Leather or synthetic	Sherrin Match or Sherrin synthetic
	Under 14 - 18	4	Leather	Sherrin Match
Boys Only	Under 15 - 18	5	Leather	Sherrin Match
Men	All Senior Grades	5	Leather	Sherrin Match or Kangaroo Brand
Women	All Senior Grades	4	Leather	Sherrin Match

- (i) Matches played in the Youth Girls 14 age group will be played with Size 3 footballs.

(B) The colour of the football to be used in a Match is:

- (i) red, for any Match played in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition, unless the match time is amended such that any part of the match is played under lights, in which case a yellow football is to be used;
- (ii) yellow, for all Matches played in the AFL North Coast Senior Competition.

(C) The Home Club must make available at least two footballs of a *suitable standard* and correct size for each Competition Match.

(D) For the purposes of Rule 15.6(C), a football of *suitable standard* is a new ball, where that is mandated by the League under Rule 15.6(D) for a particular Grade, or otherwise it is a used ball where that ball:

- (i) has only had limited use, is clean and has no discernible scratches or damage to its surface;
- (ii) has retained its proper shape and colour;
- (iii) has all branding and writing on the ball clearly visible and legible; and
- (iv) can be inflated to the correct limit.

(E) Subject to Rule 15.6(A), additional standards and requirements relating to footballs for all Competitions may be determined by the League.

(F) AFL NSW/ACT approved suppliers, as published on the AFL NSW/ACT website, are the only companies authorised to use the AFL logo on footballs for NSW and ACT competition Matches.

(G) In the AFL North Coast Junior Competition, synthetic balls may be used in adverse weather conditions where the competing Clubs are in agreeance.

- (i) any such decision can be made at the start of the Match, or at any of the breaks between quarters.
- (ii) in the event that the Team Managers are unable to reach agreement, the final decision shall be made by the field Umpires.

15.7 Match Day Paperwork / Records

15.7.1 Team Sheets

- (A) The Club of a Team that is competing in a Match is required to complete a Team Sheet in accordance with the requirements detailed in Table 26.
- (B) Each Club is ultimately responsible for the accuracy of its own Club’s Team Sheets.
- (C) Any Club that provides a late, incorrect or incomplete Team Sheet, including the PlayHQ Team Sheet records, may be subject to disciplinary sanctions including a determination that the Club’s Team be recorded as losing the Match with scores determined under [Rule 16.4](#).

Table 26 – Team Sheet Requirements

Match Stage	Requirements
Pre-Match	<p>Preparation of Team Sheet</p> <p>A Team Sheet is required to be prepared by each Club prior to every Match via PlayHQ. This requirement does not apply to Matches in non-competitive age groups.</p> <p>A Team Sheet must accurately reflect the list of all Players and Officials participating for the Club’s Team in a Match and must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The name of each Player participating (in alphabetical order by surname); ii. The jersey number of each Player participating; iii. The name of all Team Officials participating, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coach b. Assistant Coach (if applicable) c. Team Manager d. Runner(s) e. Trainers / QMPs / First Aid Officials f. Water Carriers <p>Any person not listed on the Team Sheet must not participate in the Match as a Player or Official.</p>
	<p>Distribution of Team Sheet</p> <p>Four (4) copies of each Team’s Team Sheet are to be printed and distributed prior to the Match by the Team Manager as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. one (1) provided to the Ground Manager (“Official Team Sheet”); ii. one (1) provided to the Timekeeper; iii. one (1) provided to the opposition Club’s Team Manager; iv. one (1) to be retained by the Club Team Manager. <p>Once the Official Team Sheet has been provided to the Ground Manager, it must not be taken back by the Club for any purpose including amendment. Any alterations to it in accordance with this Rule must be made in the presence of the Ground Manager.</p> <p>Guidance Note: where it is known that a Match is being officially filmed with commentary, an additional copy of each Team’s Team Sheet is to be provided to the commentator.</p>
During Match	<p>Alteration of Team Sheet</p> <p>Team Officials must make a proper effort to ensure the accuracy of a Team Sheet prior to the commencement of a Match and make immediate amendments to it where it is known at the time that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. a person listed on the Team Sheet will not be participating in the Match; or ii. a person not listed on the Team Sheet will be participating in the Match.

	<p>A Team Sheet may only be amended during a Match to add or delete Players or Officials in accordance with the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. any such amendment must be made as soon as the Team Manager becomes aware a person will or won't be participating in a Match, but by no later than the siren to commence the third quarter; ii. all copies of the Team Sheet must be amended, with priority given to amendment of the Official Team Sheet first which must be done in the presence of the Ground Manager; and iii. any amendment is to be handwritten in pen. <p>No alterations or additions may be made to a Team Sheet after the siren to commence the third quarter has sounded, other than for the purposes of recording scores and best Players post-Match in accordance with this Rule.</p> <p>Where the Player Points System Policy applies to a Match, it is the responsibility of the Team Manager to ensure that any amendment to the list of Players on the Team Sheet takes into account the requirements of that Policy and the cap that applies to the Team.</p> <p>Players Arriving Late</p> <p>No Player, who arrives after the siren to commence the third quarter has sounded, may take the field.</p> <p>Players arriving late, but prior to the siren to commence the third quarter, may take the field providing their name and jersey number have been added to all copies of the Team Sheet in accordance with this Rule.</p> <p>Recording of Match Scores on the Team Sheet</p> <p>Each Club's Team Manager, or a person nominated by the Team Manager, is to keep a record of the quarter-by-quarter scores, and goal kickers, on the Team copy of the Team Sheet (which will be transposed to the Official Team Sheet at conclusion of the Match).</p>
<p>Post Match</p>	<p>Adding Scores & Best Players to Official Team Sheet</p> <p>At the conclusion of the Match, the Team Managers from each Team are to record the following on the Official Team Sheet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. quarter by quarter scores; ii. the Team's goal scorers; and iii. the Team's best Players, and; iv. yellow and red cards issued. <p>Goals not listed on the Official Team Sheet at the time it is received by the League shall not be credited to a Player's tally.</p> <p>Umpire Verification of Official Team Sheet</p> <p>The field Umpires are to sign each Official Team Sheet after completing end of Match duties.</p> <p>Updating of PlayHQ Team Sheet</p> <p>Where an Official Team Sheet is altered in accordance with these Rules, the PlayHQ team sheet records are to be updated by the Club by 7.00pm (or 10.00pm for night Matches) after completion of the Match to ensure that the altered Official Team Sheet and PlayHQ records properly reconcile.</p>

15.7.2 Recording of Match Results

- (A) Except where Rule 15.7.2(B) applies, the designated Host Club must enter the following in PlayHQ by no later than 7:00pm (or 10:00pm for night games) on the day of the Match:

- (i) quarter by quarter scores and final Match results; and
- (ii) unless otherwise specified by the League, goal kickers and best Players for both teams.
 - (a) Individual goal scorers are not required to be recorded in PlayHQ for matches played in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition.
- (iii) yellow and red cards issued.
- (iv) This requirement does not apply to Matches in non-competitive age groups.

Guidance Note: the entry of goal kickers and best Players for Junior Matches may be prescribed by the League as optional.

- (B) A League may mandate the requirement for a Host Club to record live or progressive scoring, in PlayHQ, of a Match in a particular Grade.
- (C) A Host Club will incur a one hundred (100) dollar fine for failure to comply with this Rule 15.7.2.

15.7.3 Umpire Matchday Records

- (A) Table 27 establishes the matchday record requirements of the Umpires.

Table 27 – Umpire Matchday Record Requirements

Record	Requirements
Goal Umpire Score Cards	<p>Score cards are required to be completed by both goal Umpires for every Competition Match.</p> <p>The League may prescribe the form of the score card to be used.</p> <p>At each quarter interval during a Match and following completion of the Match, the goal Umpires are to meet on the ground to compare and reconcile their score cards.</p> <p>If there is any difference in the two score cards, the goal Umpires are to consult with the Team Managers from both Clubs and the Timekeeper to determine and agree on the correct score.</p> <p>Once the score cards are reconciled at the conclusion of the Match, scorecards are to be signed by both goal Umpires and then immediately provided to the Ground Manager.</p>
Send Off Form / Timekeepers Card	These are to be provided to the Ground Manager at the conclusion of the Match.
Umpire Match Report	Immediately following completion of the Match, the field Umpire (regardless of whether a League appointed Umpire or a Club Umpire) is to complete an Umpire Match Report in accordance with Rule 10.7 .
Umpire Notice of Report	<p>If an Umpire has reported a Player or Official, the Umpire is to undertake the following at the earliest practicable time following the Match:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. verbally notify the League Umpire Coach / Coordinator of the Report; ii. verbally notify the Ground Manager that a Notice of Report will be lodged; iii. if not already done during the Match or in the quarter breaks, verbally notify an Official of the reported person’s Team that a Notice of Report will be lodged; iv. complete the online Notice of Report form via OfficialsHQ.
Forfeit During Match	Where a forfeit of a Match occurs after the Match has commenced, an Umpire Match Report should be completed detailing any reasons provided for the forfeit.

No score cards or best and fairest votes are required to be submitted.
--

15.7.4 Club Retention of Match Day Paperwork

- (A) Clubs must retain all Official Team Sheets, score cards, send off forms and Timekeeper records for a period of at least four (4) weeks after the Season (including Finals) concludes and be able to produce these, if required, to the League within three (3) days or other timeframe as determined by the League.

15.8 Match Times & Duration

15.8.1 Match Start Times

- (A) Matches must start and finish on time.
- (B) The starting time of a Match;
- (i) is as outlined in the Season Fixture;
 - (ii) may be varied by the CMC, in its absolute discretion, by notice to the Clubs involved.
 - (iii) Matches in the AFL North Coast Senior Competition are to be played on a Saturday unless varied under 15.8.1(C):
 - (a) Under 18 matches shall commence at 10:00am, concluding at or before 11:40am.
 - (b) Women's matches shall commence at 11:50am, concluding at or before 1:10pm.
 - (c) Reserve Grade matches shall commence at 1:20pm, concluding at or before 2:40pm.
 - (d) Senior Grade matches shall commence at 2:50pm.
 - (iv) Matches played in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition are to be played on a Sunday unless varied under 15.8.1 (C):
 - (a) Under 10 matches shall commence at 9:30am, concluding at or before 10:36am.
 - (b) Under 12 matches shall commence at 10:45am, concluding at or before 12:03pm.
 - (c) Youth Girls 14 matches shall commence at 10:45am, concluding at or before 12:03pm.
 - (d) Under 14 matches shall commence at 12:10pm, concluding at or before 1:28pm.
 - (e) Youth Girls 17 matches shall commence at 1:35pm, concluding at or before 2:53pm.
 - (f) Under 16 matches shall commence at 3:00pm if they are preceded by a Youth Girls match, or at 1:35pm if they are not.
 - (g) Under 12 and Youth Girls 14 matches are to be played concurrently, using two temporary grounds marked across the oval.
 - (h) Matches played in a gala day format where Teams play multiple matches on the same day shall have varying commencement times and will be advised when the fixture is released.
- (C) For both Senior and Junior Matches the competing Clubs may vary the times by mutual agreement subject to the CMC receiving notification:
- (i) at least seven (7) days before the initial scheduled starting time; or
 - (ii) a shorter time period if determined by the League, but a fee, as determined by the League, may be payable by the Club requesting any such change.
- (D) Where a Team fails to enter the playing field after receiving a second warning from the Umpire, the Umpire is to:
- (i) include this in the Umpire Match Report (and the Club of the Team may be issued with a fine at the absolute discretion of the CMC); and

- (ii) determine, at their discretion, whether the match is to proceed taking into account the forfeit provisions detailed in [Rule 16.5.2](#).

15.8.2 Match & Quarter Duration

- (A) The duration of quarters and breaks for all home and away Matches will be determined by the League and prescribed in Table 28.

Table 28 – Duration of Quarters & Breaks for All Grades

Grade	Duration (Minutes)					
	Quarter Length	¼ Break	½ Break	¾ Break	Time On (Y/N)	Match Total
Under 10	12	3	10	5	N/A	66
Under 12	15	3	10	5	N/A	78
Under 14	15	3	10	5	N/A	78
Under 16	20	3	10	5	N/A	98
Youth Girls 14	15	3	10	5	N/A	78
Youth Girls 17	15	3	10	5	N/A	78
Under 18	20	5	10	5	N/A	100
Women	15	5	10	5	N/A	80
Reserve	15	5	10	5	N/A	80
Senior (First)	25	5	10	5	N/A	120

- (i) Matches played in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition in a gala day format where Teams play multiple matches on the same day shall be played over four (4) quarters of ten (10) minutes.
- (B) If a Match commences after its scheduled start time or there is a lengthy delay during the Match, [Rule 15.8.5](#) applies.

15.8.3 Time On

- (A) Where time on is played in a Competition Match, Law 10.6 of the *Laws of Australian Football* applies.
- (i) time on is not played in any age group or grade within AFL North Coast.
- (B) Where the field Umpire fails to signal the completion of the time added period, or the timekeepers fail to hear their whistle or see their signal, the timekeepers must restart the clock when the ball is clearly back in play.
- (C) In the event of a Player being replaced under the blood rule or where a stretcher is required, timekeepers are to stop the clock from the time that the blood rule or stretcher signal is given by the field Umpire until the field Umpire signals time back on or the ball is clearly in play.

Guidance Note: This rule applies to all Matches, including those where no time-on is played. Where a stretcher is required, the Umpire and Ground Manager may need to have consideration to Rule 15.8.5 if the requirement for a stretcher results in a significant delay to the Match.

- (D) Where time on is not played in a Competition Match, the following will apply:
- (i) the clock is only to be stopped for the blood rule or when a Player is replaced using a stretcher.

15.8.4 Match Unable to Commence

- (A) Subject to [Rule 16.5.2](#), where a Match is unable to commence for reasons beyond the control of either Team:
- (i) the field Umpire is to notify the League, including any reasons for which the Match was unable to commence; and

- (ii) the CMC will determine whether the Match is to be rescheduled, or the result of the Match.

15.8.5 Significant Delay in a Match

- (A) Where, for any reason, a Match is subject of a significant delay in starting, or during a Match, the field Umpire in consultation with the Ground Manager will determine whether, following resolution of the delay, the Match can proceed within the remaining time scheduled for the Match.

Guidance Note: The term “significant delay” is not formally defined in these Rules. It is intended to refer to a delay arising from something uncommon that impacts the ability of the competing teams to complete a full quarter or more of the Match. It will usually arise where an injury results in the need for an ambulance to be called, or where extreme and dangerous weather such as lightning or hail occurs. It is not intended to cover minor delays due to the like of players being escorted off the field due to blood or other common injury.

- (B) In making a determination under this Rule, the field Umpire and Ground Manager will have regard for:
 - (i) the length, or expected length, of the delay;
 - (ii) the health and safety of Players;
 - (iii) what adjustments to the Match can fairly and practicably be made;
 - (iv) the provisions of Table 29.

Table 29 – Determining if Match is to Recommence

Circumstance	Requirements
Delay in Starting or During the First Half	<p>In order to proceed with the Match, the field Umpire and Ground Manager are to be satisfied that the equivalent of one half of the Match, including any time already played, is able to be completed within the remaining time scheduled for the Match.</p> <p>To enable completion of the equivalent of one half of the Match within the remaining time scheduled for a Match, the field Umpire and Ground Manager may make an adjustment to the length of quarter breaks or to the length of a quarter providing that the length of a quarter is no less than five (5) minutes.</p> <p>If it is determined by the field Umpire and Ground Manager that the equivalent of one half of the Match is unable to be completed, the Match is not to recommence and the result of the Match is to be determined in accordance with Table 31.</p>
Delay at or After Half Time	<p>In order to recommence a Match, the field Umpire and Ground Manager are to be satisfied that the equivalent of at least half of one quarter can be completed within the remaining time scheduled for the Match.</p> <p>If it is determined by the field Umpire and Ground Manager that at least half of one quarter is unable to be completed, the Match is not to recommence and the result of the Match is to be determined in accordance with Table 31.</p> <p>Guidance Note: It is important to provide a prescriptive measure so that teams cannot dispute whether a match should resume or not depending on whether they are winning or losing. If a quarter is usually 20 minutes duration, half of one quarter will be 10 minutes.</p>
Last Match of the Day	<p>Where the delayed Match is the last scheduled Match of the day, and where the lighting conditions would allow for the continuation of that Match beyond its schedule finish time, the field Umpire and Ground Manager may determine that additional time, not exceeding 20 minutes, is to be added where that additional time allows for the equivalent of one half of the Match, including time already played, to be completed.</p>
Finals Match	<p>Where the delayed Match is a Finals Match, the Ground Manager may, after consultation with the League, alter the start and finish times of Matches in order to complete a Match provided there are no significant impacts on the remaining matchday fixture.</p>

Junior Competition Match	Where it has been determined in accordance with this Rule that a Competition Match involving Junior Teams is unable to recommence, the Teams may, by agreement between Coaches, play out any remaining scheduled time as a scratch Match for the benefit of participation of the Players. This is only to occur where it is deemed safe for Players to return to the field. No further scoring, however, is to be recorded.
---------------------------------	---

- (C) Where a Team is directed to recommence play by a field Umpire and the Team fails, refuses or neglects to recommence play:
- (i) [Rule 16.5.2](#) shall apply; and
 - (ii) the field Umpire is to report the matter to the League for investigation.
- (D) Where a Match is unable to recommence, the result of the Match is to be determined in accordance with [Table 31](#).

15.9 Ground Closures

- (A) Where a ground at which a Match is scheduled becomes unavailable due to adverse weather conditions or other reason, the home Club is to advise the League and any opposing Club as early as it becomes aware of the likelihood of the ground closure to enable alternative arrangements for the playing of scheduled Matches to be considered.
- (B) Where a ground has been closed by the local Council, no Competition Match is to be played on that ground unless the home Club:
- (i) has a written agreement with the local Council that allows it to override the ground closure; and
 - (ii) in making its decision on the use of the ground, has followed any risk assessment process expected as part of that agreement with the local Council.
- (C) Where a venue at which a Match has been scheduled is unfit for play or has been closed, the League will, in consultation with the Clubs concerned and Umpires, provisionally reschedule the Match to be played on the away Club's ground if available.
- (i) the deadline for a host Club to advise of a ground closure for a Match to be moved to the away Club's venue is:
 - (a) 4.00pm on the Friday prior to the Match for all AFL North Coast Senior Matches.
 - (b) 12.00pm on the Saturday prior to the Match for all AFL North Coast Junior Matches.
- (D) Where a Match is transferred to the opposing Club's venue:
- (i) that Club will assume the Host Club responsibilities; and
 - (ii) where practicable, the venue of the next Match between the two Clubs concerned will be reversed to compensate for the loss of the home ground privilege.
 - (iii) the deadline for an opposing Club to advise of a ground closure for a Match to be moved to an alternative available venue is the same as Rule 15.9 (C)(i).
- (E) Where neither the Host Club nor opposing Club's venue is available:
- (i) the League will make every effort to reschedule the Match to an alternative available venue that is most convenient to the Host Club;
 - (ii) other Clubs whose venues are vacant and playable will be expected to co-operate with the League by making their venue available to minimise the likelihood of cancellations;
 - (iii) the Host Team responsibilities will be assumed by the Host Team as nominated in the fixture.
- (F) Where a change of venue of a Match is required:
- (i) the League is to provide as much notice of this as possible to the participating Clubs and Umpires;

- (ii) the competing clubs are expected to comply with this;
 - (iii) failure to comply with this by a Club will be deemed as a forfeit; and
 - (iv) should both Clubs fail to comply, both Clubs will be deemed to have forfeited the match.
- (G) If a Match is unable to be played because no venue is available, the CMC will decide whether or not the Match is to be rescheduled to another date, as per Rule 15.10, or cancelled.
- (H) Each Club is required to have procedures in place which enable them to contact their Players and Officials at short notice regarding any changes to scheduled Matches.

15.10 Postponed Matches

- (A) Where it has been agreed by the League or the CMC that a Match is to be postponed for any reason, the competing Clubs have two (2) weeks from the date of postponement to reach agreement, and notify the League, on the rescheduling of the Match, including:
- (i) the date and time the Match is to be played;
 - (ii) the venue at which the Match is to be played;
 - (iii) providing the League with a minimum of three (3) business days' notice of the agreed re-scheduled date, time, and venue.

Guidance Note: Both Clubs are to co-operate with each other and with the League to agree on an available date and venue for the Match to be rescheduled, including options such as playing midweek or playing on a date set aside as a wet weather round.

- (B) Rule 15.10(A) does not apply where the date of the postponed Match is less than two (2) weeks prior to the commencement of the Finals fixture.
- (C) Where Clubs are unable to reach agreement in accordance with Rule 15.10(A), the Clubs are to advise the League of this, together with any reasons either Club has in relation to the matter, and the CMC will then determine whether the Match is deemed to be:
- (i) a cancelled Match, in which case, Rule 15.11 will apply; or
 - (ii) a forfeit in accordance with Rule 16.5.3 where it is considered by the CMC that a Club has not made reasonable endeavours to reschedule the Match, or does not have reasonable grounds to decline playing the Match.

15.11 Cancelled Matches

- (A) Subject to [Rule 16.5](#), if any Match is cancelled in accordance with the Rules:
- (i) the Match does not contribute to either Team's "Match Ratio" pursuant to [Rule 16.3](#); and
 - (ii) the Match shall not count towards Player eligibility for finals.
- (B) A CMC decision made under Rule 15.11(A) is final and binding and is not subject of any appeal rights under these Rules or the Policy Handbook
- (C) Where two or more of a Club's home and away Matches are cancelled due to adverse weather or other reason, the CMC will determine whether alteration is to be made to Player eligibility for finals.

16 MATCH RESULTS

16.1 Determination of Match Results

- (A) Results of Matches will be determined by the CMC in accordance with these Rules and the *Laws of Australian Football*.

16.2 Ladder

- (A) A premiership ladder for each Competition shall be maintained in PlayHQ throughout the duration of the home and away season as determined by the CMC.
- (i) Under 10 is a non-competitive, development age group and a ladder will not be maintained.

16.3 Match Wins

- (A) Unless otherwise specified by the League, in home and away round Matches:
- (i) Match ratio will be used as the method of determining ladder position;
 - (ii) Match ratio is determined by dividing the number of wins by the number of Matches played;
 - (iii) in the case of a draw, this is determined as half (0.5) of a win and this calculation is used when determining Match ratio;
 - (iv) if a scheduled round of Matches is not played, the Club with the bye in that round does not receive a Match win;
 - (v) where more than one Team has the same Match ratio, Clubs will be positioned on the ladder in order of percentages calculated from the points scored for and against.

16.4 Loss of Points for Breach

- (A) Where a Team is determined as losing a Match as a result of a breach of the *Laws of Australian Football* or a policy breach under the Rules, the following applies:
- (i) the Competition points or 'win' for the Match concerned will be credited to the opposing Team;
 - (ii) the Team receiving the win shall:
 - (a) be attributed a "win";
 - (b) have its "points for" increased by the average of the points scored by the winners of the other matches in the round of that Competition;
 - (c) have no points added to its "points against".
 - (d) the Team losing the game team shall:
 - (e) be attributed a "loss";
 - (f) have no points added to its "points for";
 - (g) have its "points against" increased by the average of the points scored by the winners of the other matches in the round of that Competition.

16.5 Forfeits

16.5.1 Notice of Forfeit

- (A) Where a Team is unable to play a Match for which it is scheduled:
- (i) the Club of that Team is to advise the opposing Club, Umpire Manager and the League no later than midday the day prior to the Match, or as otherwise prescribed by the League;
 - (a) AFL North Coast Senior Competition: 9:00am on the Friday prior to the match concerned;
 - (b) AFL North Coast Junior Competition: 12:00pm on the Friday prior to the match concerned;
 - (c) Advice between Clubs is to be made President to President; and
 - (ii) the Match will be treated as a forfeit.
- (B) Should a Club fail to provide notice in accordance with Rule 16.5.1(A), a fine of up to one thousand (1,000) dollars may be imposed on the Club at the absolute discretion of the CMC.

16.5.2 Unable to Commence or Complete Match

- (A) If for any reason a Team is not ready to commence play fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled commencement time for a Match, or if a Team fails, refuses or neglects to complete a Match already commenced:
 - (i) the opposing Club may claim the Match as a forfeit, to be determined by the CMC; and
 - (ii) a fine of up to one thousand (1,000) dollars may be imposed on the Club of the forfeiting Team at the absolute discretion of the CMC.
- (B) Any Club with a Team deemed to have forfeited a Match in accordance with this Rule is, within 24 hours of the Match, to provide the CMC with a written explanation for the Team’s inability to play or complete the Match.
- (C) If an explanation is not provided in accordance with this Rule, or the explanation is not to the CMC’s reasonable satisfaction, an additional sanction or penalty, other than those specified in this Rule, may be imposed at the absolute discretion of the CMC.

16.5.3 Forfeit Results

- (A) In the event of a forfeit, the non-forfeiting Team will be declared the winner of the Match and the final score of the Match will be determined in accordance with Table 30.

Table 30 – Score for Forfeit

Grade		Score to Forfeiting Team (Points)	Score to Non-forfeiting Team (Points)
Junior Mixed	Age Groups below Under 13	Zero (0)	Sixty (60)
	Under 13 to Under 14	Zero (0)	Ninety (90)
Junior Girls Only	All Age Groups	Zero (0)	Sixty (60)
Junior Boys Only	Age Groups below Under 13	Zero (0)	Sixty (60)
	Under 13 to Under 18	Zero (0)	Ninety (90)
Women’s	All Senior Grades	Zero (0)	Ninety (90)
Men’s	All Senior Grades	Zero (0)	One hundred & twenty (120)

- (B) The Host Club remains responsible for entry of the correct score in PlayHQ.
- (C) Where a forfeit is applied, Competition ladders will be adjusted accordingly by the League.

16.5.4 Entry of Team Sheets

- (A) For Matches where there is a forfeit, the forfeiting Club must not enter a Team Sheet in PlayHQ and should it do so may be subject of sanctions by the CMC in its absolute discretion.
- (B) The non-forfeiting Club may enter a Team into PlayHQ for the purposes of Player eligibility, provided this is completed prior to the scheduled commencement time of the forfeited Match.

16.5.5 Multiple Forfeits by a Club in a Season

- (A) Should a Club’s Team forfeit three (3) matches in the same Grade in a Competition in the one season, the CMC may, in its absolute discretion:
 - (i) disqualify the Team from that Grade in the Competition for the duration of the season; and
 - (ii) impose a fine on the Club, not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000), in addition to any other fine or sanction applicable under this Rule.

16.5.6 Forfeit of a Higher Grade

- (A) Should a Club play in a reserve or lower Grade fixture and subsequently forfeit a higher Grade Match on the same weekend, that Club will not be awarded any points for the reserve grade Match and will be liable to disciplinary sanctions as the CMC may determine in its absolute discretion.

16.5.7 Additional Costs for Forfeiting Club

- (A) Where the League is unable to advise the appointed Umpires prior to such Umpires attending a forfeited Match, the League will pay the Umpires any Match fees or expenses and the forfeiting Club will be responsible to reimburse the League.
- (B) Where a Club forfeits a Match, the opposing Club may claim an amount of up to two hundred (200) dollars from the forfeiting Club to cover the loss of gate or canteen revenue where it is able to demonstrate such loss as a result of the forfeit.
- (i) where agreed by the two Clubs and League, hosting rights for the next fixtured meeting of the two Clubs can be reversed in lieu of the two hundred (200) dollar fee.

16.6 Results of an Incomplete or Delay-impacted Match

- (A) Subject to [Rule 16.5.2](#), where a Match that has commenced is unable to be completed, or where it has been shortened due to a significant delay, the result will be determined in accordance with Table 31.

Table 31 – Determining the Result of a Delayed / Incomplete Match

Circumstance	Result
Where less than the equivalent of one half of the Match has been played	The Match shall be deemed to be drawn and the scores of the Teams at the time the Match was interrupted shall be used in calculating the percentage of each Team.
Where the equivalent of one half or more of the Match has been played	Where a Match is able to resume after a significant delay, the result will be based on the final score of the Match at the conclusion of play. Where a Match is unable to resume for any reason including after a significant delay, the score at the time the Match was interrupted shall be deemed to be the final score, with the result of the Match based on this.

17 FINALS

17.1 Finals Structure

- (A) The CMC will determine the structure of the finals series for each Competition upon release of the Competitions Season fixture and prior to the first home and away Match of the season.

- (B) The format for the AFL North Coast Senior Competition Finals Series will be:

- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (i) | Match 1 | Elimination Final | Team 3 v Team 4 |
| (ii) | Match 2 | Qualifying Final | Team 1 v Team 2 |
| (iii) | Match 3 | Preliminary Final | Winner of Match 1 v Loser of Match 2 |
| (iv) | Match 4 | Grand Final | Winner of Match 2 v Winner of Match 3 |

- (C) The format for the AFL North Coast Junior Competition Finals Series will be:

- | | | | |
|-------|---------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| (i) | Match 1 | Semi Final | Team 1 v Team 4 |
| (ii) | Match 2 | Semi Final | Team 2 v Team 3 |
| (iii) | Match 3 | Grand Final | Winner of Match 1 v Winner of Match 2 |

- (D) There are no finals for the Under 10 age group.

17.2 Venue Selection

- (A) The CMC will determine the venues for finals series Matches in its absolute discretion.
- (i) The process for selecting venues is documented in the AFL North Coast Finals Venue Selection Policy.

17.3 Provision of Officials

During finals series Matches, non-competing Clubs may be required (as determined by the CMC) to provide personnel to assist with event and ground management duties including as gatekeepers, timekeepers, interchange stewards, scoreboard attendants and with other operational requirements.

17.4 Catering & Gate Receipt Rights

Catering and gate receipt rights for finals Matches will be determined by the League.

17.5 Match Conditions

- (A) Unless otherwise specified in the Rules, all Match conditions applicable to home and away season Matches will apply to all finals Matches.
- (B) Where Finals matches are played at C.ex Coffs International Stadium and the clock is stopped for the blood rule or when a Player is replaced using the stretcher:
- (i) the duration of breaks between quarters will not be reduced, nor will the length of quarters.
 - (ii) subsequent matches may not start and finish at the scheduled time. Subsequent matches may be rescheduled. This decision will be made by League staff considering the circumstances of the day and the Clubs involved.
 - (iii) advice will then be provided to all clubs involved regarding the decision.
- (C) There is no sharing of Players between teams in the Finals Series of either the AFL North Coast Senior or Junior competitions. The number of on-field Players are to be equal and the team with more Players is to run an extended bench.

17.6 Drawn Finals Match

- (A) In the event of scores being equal at the end of a finals Match, the following procedure will apply:
- (i) the goal Umpires will confirm the scores;
 - (ii) the field Umpire will re-commence the Match to play extra time, initially for a further duration of five (5) minutes, plus time on where time on applies, and the Teams will not change ends;
 - (iii) the siren will sound after the initial period of extra time, the Teams will change ends and a further five (5) minutes, plus time on where time on applies, is to be played;
 - (iv) if the game is still drawn after the second five (5) minute period, the siren will sound, concluding the period and the Umpires and Goal Umpires will consult to confirm the scores, and if the scores still remain tied, the following will apply:
 - (v) the teams will reset their position (not changing ends) with a centre bounce/ball up to recommence play; and
 - (vi) play will continue until the next score at which time the siren will sound; and
 - (vii) the first team to score a point or goal will be the winner;
 - (viii) the Coach will be allowed to address their team during a three (3) minute break after the final siren at the end of normal Match time, but will not be able to address the team further during extra time
- (B) For a Grand Final where the scores are less than six (6) points the difference with two (2) minutes remaining in the final quarter, an announcement is to be made by the Ground Manager that Supporters are not to enter the field of play after the final siren until the goal Umpires have confirmed the final score

17.7 Finals Match Unable to be Played

- (A) Where a finals series has commenced and where a scheduled finals Match is unable to be played for any reason other than a forfeit, the CMC will determine, in consultation with the clubs involved, if the match is able to be rescheduled.
- (B) If, under Rule 17.7(A), it is determined that:
 - (i) a Match is able to be rescheduled, the CMC will fixture it accordingly and notify the clubs of this as soon as practicable; or
 - (ii) a Match, other than a Grand Final, is unable to be rescheduled for any reason, the Match will be deemed to have been played, with the Team that is positioned higher on the ladder being declared the winner of the Match; or
 - (iii) a Grand Final Match is unable to be rescheduled for any reason, the Match will be recorded as having no result.
- (C) Where a finals series is yet to commence, but where it is evident that one or more finals Matches may be unable to be played for any reason other than a forfeit, the CMC:
 - (i) may, in its absolute discretion, alter the structure or fixturing of the finals series where it is required to ensure the viability of the finals series; and
 - (ii) notify all relevant clubs of any such alteration as soon as practicable.
- (D) If, under Rule 17.7(C), it is necessary to reduce the number of participating finals Teams, those Teams that qualified lowest on the ladder will be eliminated first.
- (E) Where it becomes evident that an entire finals series will be unable to be played for any reason, and where it is not practicable to reschedule that series, the CMC may, in its absolute discretion, make a decision to cancel that finals series.
- (F) If a Grand Final Match is unable to be played for any reason, the CMC may, in its absolute discretion, determine whether or not a premiership is to be awarded on an alternative basis.

17.8 Club Finals Eligibility

- (A) If any Club is financially in arrears to the League at a period of seven (7) days prior to the first scheduled Match of the final series, teams of that Club shall be ineligible to compete in finals series Matches.
- (B) In the event that this occurs, teams placed next on the respective Competition table shall fill the place of the ineligible team.
- (C) For the purpose of this Rule, Clubs which are under a financial arrangement with the League and are up to date with the payments of that arrangement, shall be considered financial.

17.9 Player Finals Eligibility

- (A) The League, in its ultimate discretion, may determine Player eligibility requirements for finals Matches and publish these in Appendix Two.
- (B) Clubs are responsible for ensuring all Players meet eligibility requirements to participate in finals Matches.
- (C) Any Club that fields an ineligible Player in a finals Match may be subject to disciplinary sanctions to be imposed by the League in its absolute discretion including, but not limited to, the loss of the finals Match.

18 OTHER MATCHES INCLUDING PRACTICE MATCHES

- (A) No Club shall arrange or play in any Match other than Matches outlined in the Season Fixture without the prior approval of the CMC.
- (B) For any practice Matches involving two different Clubs the following provisions will apply:

- (i) a Practice Match Request Form, as designated by the League, shall be completed and submitted to the League by midday the Tuesday before the practice Match;
- (ii) where a practice match is being organised involving Clubs from different Leagues or a carnival involving multiple Clubs is being organised, the Club hosting the event will be required to submit the Practice Match Request Form;
- (iii) all Players must be registered in PlayHQ prior to taking the field;

Guidance Note: *Registration of a player is a requirement for insurance coverage. Where a player is 'trying out' to see if they like the game, they are still to register, however the Club may forgo charging any registration fee to the Player until such time as they commit to the Club on an ongoing basis.*

- (iv) a Team Sheet for each Team, that details all participating Players and jersey numbers, is to be completed;
- (v) in all practice matches, the Umpire may report Players as per the *Laws of Australian Football*;
- (vi) where a Club requests the appointment of League Umpires for a practice match the League will determine the fees payable by the Club to the appointed Umpires.

19 REPRESENTATIVE FOOTBALL

19.1 Player Eligibility

- (A) Any Player selected in a representative Team must be a registered Player with a Club participating in a Competition of that League.
- (B) The RMC may, in its absolute discretion, establish any provisions that ensure consistency across competing Leagues in Player eligibility criteria for participation in a representative Team.

19.2 Player Selection and Participation

- (A) Competition representative Teams shall participate in inter-league Matches as directed by the League and sanctioned by AFL NSW/ACT from time to time.
- (B) The League shall have first call on the services of all Players for its representative Matches and representative training sessions.
- (C) Any Player who, without reasonable cause and without the written approval of the League, does not make themselves available or declines selection for representative training sessions and Matches, may automatically be suspended for the next two (2) Matches in which the Player's Club is participating immediately subsequent to the representative Match concerned.
- (D) Any Player who declares themselves unavailable because of injury or illness must, at the request of the League, provide medical evidence to support the injury or illness, or make themselves available for a medical examination by a medical practitioner of the League's choice.
- (E) Any Player who fails to attend a scheduled representative training session of which they have been properly notified must:
 - (i) submit an explanation to the CMC; and
 - (ii) if in the opinion of the CMC the Player's explanation is unacceptable, such Player may be dealt with as the League thinks fit.
- (F) Subject to Rule 19.1, the League will determine the process for selection of Players in the representative Team.
- (G) Except in exceptional circumstances as approved by the CMC, Players selected in a representative Team will not be permitted to play with their Club on the same weekend of the representative Match where the representative Match is played earlier than a Club Match; and

- (i) any Player who takes part in a Match in violation of this Rule shall be liable for further disqualification; and
- (ii) the Team with which the Player participates may lose any Competition points gained and their Club may be fined up to two hundred and fifty (250) dollars.

19.3 Match Venue & Catering

- (A) Where the League schedules a representative Match to be played, the CMC shall select a venue taking into consideration the standard of playing surface and facilities, ground hire costs and the ability to charge admission.
- (B) The League may allocate catering rights to the Host Club or any other Club which is prepared to undertake all ground management duties for the Representative Match.

19.4 Cost of Representative Event

- (A) Expenses incurred as a result of the Representative Program will be borne by the League except as otherwise determined by the CMC.
- (B) Any gate takings will be used by the League to offset the cost of the representative event.

19.5 Representative Team Uniform

- (A) The CMC will determine the design of the League's representative Team's Match uniform.
- (B) Any Match uniform must have the AFL NSW/ACT logo on the jersey and shorts as prescribed for a Club uniform in [Table 3](#) and [Table 4](#).

19.6 Offences

- (A) Any Player or Official reported in an inter-league or representative Match, or in a Match between Clubs of different Leagues, shall be subject to the disciplinary processes prescribed by Rule 25 and Rule 27, with reference to 'Club' in those Rules also extending to mean 'representative Team' where applicable.

Part D – HEALTH & SAFETY

20 RISK MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

- (A) In accordance with the terms of insurance under the AFL National Risk Protection Program, the Host Club must:
- (i) complete the [Marsh AFL Match Day Checklist](#) prior to the commencement of the first Match of the day, as well as at any other time during the day if conditions change to an extent that may impact the safety of participants, and have this signed by the competing Club at the time of any inspection undertaken;
 - (ii) retain completed checklists for a period of seven (7) years for future reference by the League or its insurers if so required.
- (B) Non-compliance with these requirements may result in the Insurer rejecting any claim made by a Club or Player.

21 INJURY MANAGEMENT

21.1 Injury Management Policy

- (A) Section 16 of the *Policy Handbook* establishes the requirements for Club compliance with ensuring the presence of appropriately qualified persons at each Match and training session.

21.2 Matchday Injury Treatment Resources

- (A) The Host Club must ensure at least one appropriately qualified person, as per Section 16 of the *Policy Handbook*, is present for the duration of each Match.
- (B) If the Host Club does not have a qualified person available for a Match, the visiting Club may provide a qualified person.
- (C) If neither Club has a qualified person available at the scheduled commencement of the Match:
- (i) a delayed start of up to twenty (20) minutes may be applied to allow the Clubs time to source an appropriate person; and
 - (ii) if there are additional Matches following, the Match should be shortened appropriately to not delay the commencement of those subsequent Matches.
- (D) If a qualified person, as per the requirements of the *Policy Handbook*, is unable to be sourced by either Club:
- (i) the Match must not proceed;
 - (ii) the Clubs are to discuss options for rescheduling the Match; and
 - (iii) the Host Club is to refer the matter to the CMC, within twenty-four (24) hours of the scheduled start time of the Match and include any details of any agreed rescheduled Match date and venue.
- (E) Where a referral is received in accordance with Rule 21.2(D), the CMC may, in its absolute discretion, determine:
- (i) that the Match is to be rescheduled by agreement between the Clubs as to the date and venue; or
 - (ii) that the visiting Club may be awarded a forfeit in its favour with the score determined in accordance with [Rule 16.5.3](#) and [Table 30](#); and
 - (iii) that an amount of up to two hundred (200) dollars is payable by the Host Club to the visiting Club for expenses incurred in the visiting Club's Team attending the venue.

- (F) If a Match proceeds without a qualified injury management person present, the Host Club will forfeit the Match and may be subject to a maximum fine of five hundred (500) dollars at the discretion of the CMC.
- (G) Where a qualified injury management person determines that an injured Player should not continue playing in a Match, the Player must not be allowed to return to the field.

21.3 First Aid Equipment & Ambulance Access

- (A) The Host Club must ensure there is:
 - (i) a “scoop” or similar stretcher in good condition must be located in a quickly accessible location for the duration of each Match;
 - (ii) an accessible and adequately stocked first aid kit; and
 - (iii) proper ambulance access to the field of play, if necessary.

21.4 Concussion

- (A) The [Management of Sport-Related Concussion in Australian Football](#) applies.

21.5 Active Bleeding

- (A) Law 24 of the Laws of Australian Football applies.

22 PREGNANT PLAYERS

- (A) Section 20 of the *Policy Handbook* applies.

23 EXTREME WEATHER

- (A) Section 18 of the *Policy Handbook* applies to the assessment and management of extreme weather conditions.

Guidance Note: Refer to Section 18.3 of the *Policy Handbook* for the 30/30 Lightning Safety Guideline

- (B) [Rule 15.9](#) applies where ground closures result from wet or extreme weather.

Guidance Note: [Sports Medicine Australia’s “Extreme Heat Policy”](#) provides some valuable guidance for Leagues and Clubs on how to determine whether a Match is safe to proceed taking into account the temperature and humidity, as well as strategies for helping manage Matches being played in hot conditions.

Part E – DISCIPLINARY & APPEALS

24 MATCH OFFENCES

24.1 Order Off Rule

24.1.1 Yellow Card

- (A) Subject to Rule 24.1.1(B), a player who commits a Reportable Offence may be ordered from the field of play by an Umpire under a yellow card.
- (B) At the discretion of the field Umpire, the Player ordered from the field under a yellow card may be reported.
- (C) A Player ordered off under a yellow card is;
- (i) required to leave the playing area immediately through the interchange area;
 - (ii) not permitted to resume playing in the Match for an amount of time equivalent to **one quarter** of consecutive playing minutes, excluding breaks between quarters.
 - (iii) in the Reserve Grade, Women's Grade, and all age groups in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition, a Player that is ordered from the field under a yellow card shall remain off the field for a period of ten (10) minutes. In these grades and age groups, all subsequent references to the time spent off the field in rule 24.1.1 is to be read as ten (10) minutes.
 - (iv) In the Senior Grade and Under 18 age group, a Player that is ordered from the field under a yellow card shall remain off the field for a period of fifteen (15) minutes. In this age group, all subsequent references to the time spent off the field in rule 24.1.1 is to be read as fifteen (15) minutes.
 - (v) in the Under 10 age group in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition, a Player that is ordered from the field under a yellow card shall remain off the field for a period of three (3) minutes. In this age group, all subsequent references to the time spent off the field in rule 24.1.1 is to be read as three (3) minutes.
 - (vi) in the Under 10 age group, where a Player has been issued a yellow card, the Coach must leave the Ground to provide immediate feedback as per [Rule 9.3.5](#).

Guidance Note: *The time the player is sent in one quarter is the same time the player may resume in the next quarter. For example, if a Player was sent off at the 13 minute mark of the second quarter, the Player would not be permitted to resume playing in the Match until 13 minutes into the third quarter.*

- (D) In the Under 10 age group, a Coach will automatically be ordered from the field under a yellow card if they pressure, instruct or make comment to or about officiating Umpires or decisions that they make. In such an instance a Coach will not be allowed to coach on field or from the interchange bench for a period of twelve (12) consecutive playing minutes, excluding breaks between quarters.
- (i) if they pressure, instruct or make comment to or about officiating Umpires or decisions that they make.
 - (ii) if they pressure, instruct or make comment to any member of the opposition team.
 - (iii) the Coach can be replaced on field whilst serving the sanction imposed under the Yellow Card, however the Coach may only be replaced by an individual holding the appropriate level of coach accreditation.
- (E) Where time-on is played in a particular Grade, the equivalent of one quarter will be the 'quarter length' as detailed in Table 28, prior to the addition of any time-on.
- (F) The penalty time will commence once the offending Player has left the field of play.
- (G) The offending Player's Club is responsible for obtaining approval from the timekeepers for the Player to resume playing in the Match at the end of the relevant penalty time.

- (H) Unless determined otherwise by the CMC, all Players who are ordered from the field of play with a yellow card can be replaced immediately.
- (i) in the Under 10 age group, Rule 24.1.1(H) applies.
 - (ii) in the AFL North Coast Junior Competition, the following provisions will apply:
 - (a) Where a Player is issued with a yellow card, the Player cannot be replaced, and the opposing team is not required to even up playing numbers. For the ten (10) minute period that the yellow card is in force the offending Player's team must play one (1) member short.
 - (iii) In all instances, the Player that was issued the yellow card can return to the field of play at the end of the penalty period.
- (I) All yellow cards issued are to be recorded in PlayHQ as part of the host Club's match reporting responsibilities.
- (J) Yellow cards issued in the Under 10 age group must be recorded on the Under 10 timesheet. As team sheets are not required to be produced in the Under 10 age group, where a yellow card is issued, a copy of the Under 10 timesheet must be submitted to the League by 9:00am the next day so that the Player can be identified.

24.1.2 Red Card

- (A) A Player shall be ordered from the field for the remainder of the Match by the field Umpire under a red card where the Player commits:
- (i) two yellow card offences in the same Match; or
 - (ii) two Reportable Offences in the same Match for separate incidents; or
 - (iii) a single Reportable Offence that is considered a serious breach of the Laws of Australian Football.
- (B) Serious breaches include, but are not limited to, where a Player:
- (i) intentionally, recklessly or negligently makes contact with or strikes an Umpire;
 - (ii) attempts to make contact with or strike an Umpire;
 - (iii) behaves in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an Umpire;
 - (iv) intentionally, recklessly or negligently kicks another person;
 - (v) commits an act of misconduct where the Umpire is of the opinion the act constituting misconduct is serious in nature.
- (C) A Player ordered off under a red card:
- (i) is required to leave the playing area immediately through the interchange area; and
 - (ii) is not permitted to sit on the bench or enter the playing arena at any time (including breaks) for the remainder of the Match.

Guidance Note: See Guidance Note in 24.1.1(C). The same applies.

- (D) Unless otherwise determined by the CMC in its ultimate discretion, a Player who is ordered from the field of play under a red card can be replaced after a period of time equivalent to **one quarter** of consecutive playing minutes, excluding breaks between quarters.
- (i) in Reserve Grade and Women's Grade, a Player that is ordered from the field under a red card can be replaced after a period of ten (10) minutes. In these grades all subsequent references to the time that a Player is unable to be replaced under rule 24.1.2 is to be read as ten (10) minutes.

- (ii) In the Senior Grade, Under 18 age group and the AFL North Coast Junior Competition, a Player who is ordered from the field of play under a red card can be replaced after a period of fifteen (15) consecutive playing minutes, excluding breaks between quarters.
- (iii) in the Under 10 age group, the following provisions will apply:
 - (a) Where a Player is issued with a red card, the Player cannot be replaced for a period of twelve (12) minutes of consecutive playing minutes, excluding breaks between quarters.
 - (b) The opposing team is not required to even up playing numbers. In this age group, all subsequent references to the time that a Player is unable to be replaced under rule 24.1.2 is to be read as twelve (12) minutes.
- (iv) In the Under 10 age group, where a Player has been issued a red card, the Coach must leave the Ground to provide immediate feedback as per [Rule 9.3.5](#).

(E) In the Under 10 age group, a Coach will automatically be ordered from the field under a red card and will not be allowed to coach on field or from the interchange bench for the remainder of the Match under the following circumstances:

- (i) if they pressure, instruct or make comment to or about officiating Umpires or decisions that they make.
- (ii) if they pressure, instruct or make comment to any member of the opposition team on a subsequent occasion having already been issued a yellow card.
- (iii) The Coach can be replaced on field whilst serving the sanction imposed under the Red Card, however the Coach may only be replaced by an individual holding the appropriate level of coach accreditation.

(F) Where time-on is played in a particular Grade, the equivalent of one quarter will be the 'quarter length' as detailed in Table 28, prior to the addition of any time-on.

(G) The penalty time will commence once the offending Player has left the field of play.

(H) The offending Player's Club is responsible for obtaining approval from the timekeepers for the replacement Player to commence playing at the end of the penalty period.

(I) An Official reported for a breach of the Laws of the Game will automatically be ordered from the field, regardless of whether they have been issued a red or yellow card, but can be replaced after the equivalent of one quarter of consecutive playing minutes has elapsed.

(J) All red cards are Reportable Offences and a Notice of Report must be submitted by the field Umpire in accordance with [Rule 25.2.2](#).

(K) All red cards issued are to be recorded in PlayHQ as part of the host Club's match reporting responsibilities.

(L) Red cards issued in the Under 10 age group must be recorded on the Under 10 timesheet. As team sheets are not required to be produced in the Under 10 age group, where a yellow card is issued, a copy of the Under 10 timesheet must be submitted to the League by 9:00am the next day so that the Player can be identified.

24.2 Melees

(A) A melee is defined in Law 1.1 of the *Laws of Australian Football*.

(B) Individual Players engaging in a melee may be reported by an umpire under the *Laws of Australian Football*

(C) A Club whose Players or Officials engage in a melee may be subject of disciplinary action and sanctions in accordance with Rule 24.2(E).

(D) The field Umpire is to record the details of the melee in the Umpire Match report including:

- (i) the approximate time of a match that the melee occurred;
- (ii) the approximate duration of the melee;

- (iii) the number of Players involved from each Team, or if the exact number is not able to be stated, the approximate number of Players involved from each Team;
 - (iv) the number of Officials involved from each Team, or if the exact number is not able to be stated, the approximate number of Officials involved from each Team;
 - (v) the number of Umpires, including any emergency Umpire, who had to intervene in the melee;
 - (vi) an assessment of the level of aggression displayed by Players and/or Officials during the melee.
- (E) Where a melee is reported in an Umpire Match report, the CMC will assess the melee in accordance with the melee matrix in Table 32 and the Club/s involved in the melee shall be sanctioned by way of a fine calculated in accordance with the melee matrix, and any other sanction the CMC considers is appropriate in its absolute discretion.

Table 32 – Melee Matrix

Melee Details		Fine Amount (\$AUD)
Players Actively Involved from ONE Team	<i>6 or less players</i>	50
	<i>7 – 9 players</i>	150
	<i>10 – 12 players</i>	400
	<i>13 or more players</i>	600
Duration of Melee	<i>0 – 30 seconds</i>	50
	<i>30 – 60 seconds</i>	150
	<i>60 – 120 seconds</i>	300
	<i>>120 seconds</i>	600
Level of Aggression in Melee	<i>Low (minor wrestling, push and shove)</i>	100
	<i>Medium (wrestling, jumper punches, headlocks)</i>	300
	<i>High (striking and/or reports)</i>	500
Umpire Intervention in Melee	<i>Not involved</i>	0
	<i>1 umpire asking players to break it up</i>	50
	<i>2 umpires asking players to break it up</i>	100
	<i>3 umpire or more asking players to break it up</i>	150
Officials Involved	<i>No officials involved</i>	0
	<i>2 or less manhandling own players</i>	100
	<i>3 or more manhandling own players</i>	200
	<i>2 or less manhandling opposition players</i>	400
	<i>3 or more manhandling opposition players</i>	600

- (F) Where a melee is reported in an Umpire Match report, the CMC will assess the melee in accordance with the melee matrix in Table 32 and the Club/s involved in the melee shall be sanctioned by way of a fine calculated in accordance with the melee matrix, and any other sanction the CMC considers is appropriate in its absolute discretion.

25 REPORTABLE OFFENCES

25.1 What is a Reportable Offence?

- (A) A Reportable Offence occurs when a Player or Official is alleged to have committed any of the offences set out in Law 22.2.2 of the *Laws of Australian Football*.
- (B) The listing of offences in Law 22.2.2 is a non-exhaustive list and additional offences may be classified by AFL NSW/ACT under these Rules.

- (C) For the purposes of this Rule 25, an Official includes any person listed in [Rule 9.3](#) and [Rule 9.5](#).
- (D) A Reportable Offence may occur:
- (i) during a match; or
 - (ii) on the day of the Match and within the immediate proximity of the venue where the Match is conducted.
- (E) A Reportable Offence may be a:
- (i) Low-Level Offence – one that does not require grading;
 - (ii) Classifiable Offence – one that requires grading; or
 - (iii) Direct Tribunal Offence – one that is referred directly to the Tribunal for a hearing and determination.

25.2 Making a Report (of a Reportable Offence)

25.2.1 Methods for Making a Report

- (A) A Player or Official who is alleged to have committed a Reportable Offence may be reported via:
- (i) Umpire report as per [Rule 25.2.2](#);
 - (ii) Club citing as per [Rule 25.2.3](#);
 - (iii) Review of footage as per [Rule 25.2.4](#);
 - (iv) Executive Officer report as per [Rule 25.2.5](#).

25.2.2 Umpire Report

- (A) Subject to Rule 25.2.2(C), if an Umpire reports a Player or Official during a Match for a Reportable Offence, the Umpire is to inform the Player or Official that they have been reported either:
- (i) immediately following the relevant incident;
 - (ii) before the commencement of the quarter following the relevant incident; or
 - (iii) if the relevant incident occurs in the final quarter, as soon as reasonably practicable after the completion of the Match.
- (B) The Umpire may inform the captain, acting captain or Club Officer of a report where it is impractical to inform the reported Player or Official.
- (C) The Umpire must, as soon as practicable after completion of the Match, complete and lodge a *Notice of Report* with the relevant Controlling Body via OfficialsHQ.
- (D) If an Umpire believes that a Player or Official may have committed a Reportable Offence during a Match but did not report that Player or Official during the Match:
- (i) the Umpire must, as soon as practicable after completion of that Match, but by no later than 5.00pm on the next business day after that Match, complete and lodge a *Notice of Report* with the relevant Controlling Body via OfficialsHQ; and
 - (ii) the relevant Controlling Body must, as soon as practicable following receipt of the Notice of Report, notify the reported Player or Official's Club of the report.
- (E) In completing a *Notice of Report*, an Umpire is required to reference the Offence Grade Template as outlined in Appendix Three.
- (F) Unregistered Club field Umpires, Club boundary Umpires and Club goal Umpires are not permitted to report a Player or Official.
- (G) An Umpire Coach or Umpiring Co-ordinator in attendance at a Match as an observer has the authority to report a Player or Official in accordance with this Rule.

25.2.3 Club Citing

- (A) If a Club has evidence that a Player or Official has committed a Reportable Offence during a Match, and the Player or Official has not been reported by the Umpire for that offence, the Club may complete and lodge a *Notice of Citing* with the relevant Controlling Body.
- (B) A Notice of Citing must be lodged by the Club with the relevant Controlling Body by no later than 5.00pm on the next business day after the relevant Match.
- (C) On application by a Club to the CMC by no later than 5.00pm on the next business day following the Match, an extension of the time for lodgement of a *Notice of Citing* may be approved by the CMC, but only where the CMC is satisfied the Club has provided evidence there are exceptional circumstances to justify this.

Guidance Note: *Simply not having evidence available would not be considered exceptional circumstances, unless for example, the Club was waiting for a statement from an injured Player who was in hospital and unavailable to provide a statement by the deadline.*

- (D) All evidence the Club relies upon to support the citing must be lodged with the *Notice of Citing*.
- (E) A *Notice of Citing* must be submitted for each separate incident.
- (F) A fee of five hundred (500) dollars is payable by the Club to the Controlling Body for each *Notice of Citing* lodged and evidence of payment must be attached to the *Notice of Citing*.
- (G) The Controlling Body may, in its absolute discretion, refund the citing fee in full or part if it is determined that the Player or Official subject of the *Notice of Citing* has committed a Reportable Offence.
- (H) A *Notice of Citing* in accordance with Rule 25.2.3(A) may not be withdrawn by the Club after it has been lodged with the relevant Controlling Body.
- (I) The Controlling Body must, as soon as practicable upon receipt of the *Notice of Citing*, notify the reported Player or Official's Club of the citing.

25.2.4 Review of Footage

- (A) A Club may request the MRP to review footage of an incident where it considers the footage shows a Player or Official has committed a Reportable Offence.
- (B) A request by a Club for the MRP to review footage must be submitted to the relevant Controlling Body by no later than 5.00pm on the first business day following the Match the incident arises from.
- (C) A Club making a request under this Rule must, within the time specified in 25.2.4(B):
 - (i) complete and lodge the *Request for Review of Footage* form together with the footage relied upon;
 - (ii) provide evidence of payment of the fee specified in Rule 25.2.4(D); and
 - (iii) where available, provide any incident or medical report in relation to the offended Player.
- (D) A fee of two hundred and fifty (250) dollars is payable by the Club to the relevant Controlling Body for each request to view footage of an incident and:
 - (i) is payable at the time of lodgement of the request; and
 - (ii) may, at the discretion of the relevant Controlling Body, be refunded to the Club in full or part where the offending Player accepts the reportable offence sanction or is found guilty by a Tribunal.
- (E) Following review of the footage, the MRP may determine to:
 - (i) proceed with the issuing of a *Notice of Charge* in accordance with [Rule 25.4](#); or
 - (ii) not proceed with a *Notice of Charge*.
- (F) Where the MRP determines to proceed with a *Notice of Charge*, the Controlling Body is, within one (1) business day of this, to:

- (i) notify the reported Player or Official's Club that the Player or Official has been charged following a review of footage; and
- (ii) provide the reported Player or Official's Club with a copy of that footage.

25.2.5 Executive Officer Report

If an Executive Officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a Player or Official has committed a Reportable Offence, the Executive Officer may report that Player or Official by completing a *Notice of Report* and notifying the Player or Official's Club.

Guidance Note: *This provision is to be used for serious reportable offences where it is clear that it was not practicable for any of the other reporting mechanisms to have been invoked. It is not to be used to circumvent those other mechanisms where it is reasonably evident that one or more of those could have been used.*

25.2.6 Reporting of Junior Players

- (A) The procedures for handling of reports of Junior Players 9 to 12 years old and any subsequent disciplinary processes will be determined by the relevant Controlling Body.
 - (i) all reports, irrespective of the age of the Player, will be dealt with via the prescribed penalty and Tribunal hearing process.

25.3 Assessing a Reportable Offence

25.3.1 Initial Assessment of a Report

- (A) As soon as practicable after the Controlling Body receives a *Notice of Report* under [Rule 25.2.2](#) or [Rule 25.2.5](#), or a *Notice of Citing* under [Rule 25.2.3](#), or a *Review of Footage* request under [Rule 25.2.4](#), the Controlling Body must undertake an assessment to determine if:
 - (i) it is satisfied there is evidence a Reportable Offence has been committed and can proceed directly to classification and grading of the offence under [Rule 25.4](#); or
 - (ii) further investigation of the Reportable Offence is required as per [Rule 25.3.3](#); or
 - (iii) the Reportable Offence is to be dismissed as per [Rule 25.3.4](#).

25.3.2 Match Review Panel ('MRP')

The Controlling Body may appoint a Match Review Panel ('MRP'), made up of no less than three (3) suitably qualified persons, or a Match Review Officer ('MRO') comprising only one (1) suitably qualified person, to conduct or assist with an assessment under [Rule 25.3.1](#).

25.3.3 Further Investigation

- (A) The Controlling Body, MRP or MRO may investigate any incident which occurred during a Match using reasonable measures, including by interviewing any relevant person and taking witness statements, to assess whether a Reportable Offence has been committed.
- (B) All Players, Officials and Clubs are to cooperate with an investigation under this Rule.
- (C) On completion of any investigation under this Rule, the Controlling Body, MRP or MRO is then to determine:
 - (i) if it is satisfied a Reportable Offence has been committed and a *Notice of Charge* is to be issued in accordance with [Rule 25.5](#); or
 - (ii) if the Reportable Offence is to be dismissed in accordance with [Rule 25.3.4](#).

25.3.4 Dismissal of a Report

- (A) After assessment and completion of any investigation, the Controlling Body, MRP or MRO may dismiss a matter if it considers there to be no or insufficient evidence of a Reportable Offence occurring.

- (B) Where a matter is dismissed in accordance with Rule 25.3.4(A), the Controlling Body is to notify the reported person's Club of this as soon as practicable after the decision is made.

25.4 Classification & Grading of Reportable Offence

25.4.1 Classification of a Reportable Offence

- (A) Where it is satisfied there is evidence that a Reportable Offence has been committed, the Controlling Body, MRP or MRO is to determine, in accordance with Clause 2 of Appendix Three (*Reportable Offence Categories*) whether the offence is:
- (i) a Low-Level Offence;
 - (ii) a Classifiable Offence;
 - (iii) a Classifiable Offence (Auditory); or
 - (iv) a Direct Tribunal Offence.

Guidance Note: *The classification of the Reportable Offence will determine the process for management of the Reportable Offence thereafter, including what sanctions are applicable, or whether the matter is to proceed directly to the Tribunal.*

25.4.2 Low Level Offence

- (A) Where a Reportable Offence is deemed under Rule 25.4.1 to be a Low-Level Offence, no grading of the offence is required, and the sanction for the offence is to be in accordance with Table 2 of Appendix Three.
- (B) Following determination of the relevant sanction for a Low-Level Offence, a *Notice of Charge* is to be issued in accordance with [Rule 25.5](#) and, unless otherwise determined in accordance with these Rules, the *Notice of Charge* is to specify the applicable sanction from Table 33.

25.4.3 Classifiable Offence

- (A) Where a Reportable Offence is deemed under Rule 25.4.1 to be a Classifiable Offence, the Controlling Body, MRP or MRO is to grade the offence in accordance with [Clause 4 of Appendix Three – Reportable Offences](#).
- (B) Following the grading of a Classifiable Offence, a *Notice of Charge* is to be issued in accordance with [Rule 25.5](#) and, unless the matter is to be referred to the Tribunal in accordance with Rule 25.4.3(D), the *Notice of Charge* is to prescribe the sanction applicable under the [Classifiable Offence Grading Matrix](#) in Clause 4.1 of Appendix Three.
- (C) The Controlling Body, MRP or MRO may refer a Classifiable Offence, including a Classifiable Offence (Auditory), directly to the Tribunal on the basis that:
- (i) it is a Classifiable Offence which the Controlling Body, MRP or MRO has graded as severe impact; or
 - (ii) it is a Classifiable Offence which attracts a base sanction that the relevant Controlling Body, MRP or MRO finds inappropriate; or
 - (iii) the offending Player or Officials has a bad Reportable Offence record, in which instance the Tribunal will not be bound by the *Classifiable Offence Grading Table* as per Table 3 of Appendix Three) or the *Classifiable Offence (Auditory) Grading Table* as per Table 5 of Appendix Three.

25.4.4 Classifiable Offence (Auditory)

- (A) Where a Reportable Offence is deemed under Rule 25.4.1 to be a Classifiable Offence (Auditory), the Controlling Body, MRP or MRO is to grade the offence in accordance with [Clause 5 of Appendix Three – Reportable Offences](#).
- (B) Where any auditory offence involves the use of words or sounds that are considered to constitute vilification or discrimination, the offence is to be dealt with under Section 10 of the Policy Handbook.

- (C) Following the grading of a Classifiable Offence (Auditory), a *Notice of Charge* is to be issued in accordance with [Rule 25.5](#) and, unless the matter is to be referred to the Tribunal in accordance with Rule 25.4.3(D), the *Notice of Charge* is to prescribe the sanction applicable under the [Classifiable Offence \(Auditory\) Grading Matrix](#) in Clause 5 of Appendix Three.
- (D) The Controlling Body, MRP or MRO may refer a Classifiable Offence (Auditory) directly to the Tribunal in accordance with Rule 25.4.3(D).

25.4.5 Direct Tribunal Offence

- (A) Where a Reportable Offence is deemed under Rule 25.4.1 to be a Direct Tribunal Offence, the Controlling Body, MRP or MRO is to:
 - (i) issue a *Notice of Charge* in accordance with [Rule 25.5](#) advising of a direct Tribunal referral; and
 - (ii) notify the Tribunal that a Hearing will need to be scheduled.

25.4.6 Reportable Offence in a Grand Final

The Controlling Body, MRP, MRO or Tribunal, as applicable, may apply at its absolute discretion, a loading of up to one hundred percent (100%) in relation to the base sanction for any Reportable Offence committed during a Grand Final.

25.4.7 Other Considerations in Classifying a Reportable Offence

- (A) The Controlling Body, MRP, MRO or Tribunal may, in classifying a Reportable Offence and determining the appropriate sanctions, take into account the matters detailed in the [Table 6](#) of Appendix Three.

25.4.8 Multiple Offences in One Match

- (A) Where a Player commits multiple reportable offences in a Match;
 - (i) each reportable offence is to be classified and graded separately; and
 - (ii) any suspension applicable to each reportable offence is to be served consecutively, not concurrently.

25.5 Notice of Charge

25.5.1 Purpose of a Notice of Charge

- (A) A *Notice of Charge* is issued to the reported Player or Official and their Club to detail the particulars of a Reportable Offence, any penalties that apply to the offence, the reported Player or Official's rights and the process to be followed.

25.5.2 Issuing and Form of a Notice of Charge

- (A) Where a *Notice of Charge* is to be issued under these Rules, the Controlling Body must, as soon as practicable, send the *Notice of Charge* to the reported Player or Official and their Club.
- (B) A *Notice of Charge* must contain the following particulars:
 - (i) date and time of the incident;
 - (ii) a description of the incident;
 - (iii) the charge and classification of the offence;
 - (iv) the grading of the offence where applicable;
 - (v) the sanctions applicable, including early guilty plea offer, or direct Tribunal referral;
 - (vi) the reported Player or Official's rights;
 - (vii) the reported Player or Official or Club's response requirements.

25.5.3 *Withdrawing a Notice of Charge*

- (A) The Controlling Body may withdraw a *Notice of Charge* at any time prior to a Tribunal hearing.
- (B) Where a *Notice of Charge* is withdrawn under this Rule, the Controlling Body is to notify the reported Player or Official and their Club of this as soon as practicable.

25.6 Early Guilty Plea

25.6.1 *Early Guilty Plea Offer*

- (A) An early guilty plea offer provides the means for the reported Player or Official to accept a penalty for a low level or classifiable Reportable Offence without the need for a Tribunal hearing.
- (B) The *Notice of Charge* to the reported Player or Official and their Club will detail any early guilty plea offer.
- (C) The Controlling Body may choose not to make an early guilty plea offer and refer the matter directly to the Tribunal to be determined under [Rule 27](#), and where this occurs, the reported Player or Official may not enter an early guilty plea.

25.6.2 *Response to an Early Guilty Plea Offer*

- (A) Where an early guilty plea offer has been made, the reported Player or Official or their Club must;
 - (i) respond to this to the Controlling Body by no later than 5:00pm on the next business day after receipt of the *Notice of Charge*, or by such other time as the Controlling Body determines; and
 - (ii) enter an early guilty plea to accept the penalty offered, or decline the early guilty plea offer.
- (B) Failure by a reported Player or Official or their Club to respond to an early guilty plea offer within the specified time will be deemed to constitute an early guilty plea by the reported Player or Official and acceptance of the penalty offered.
- (C) If the reported Player or Official or their club declines the early guilty plea offer:
 - (i) the Controlling Body must refer the matter to the Tribunal to be dealt with in accordance with [Rule 27](#); and
 - (ii) the reported Player or Official will not be entitled to any reduction to the penalty applicable to the Reportable Offence as per Appendix Three.

25.7 Reportable Offences Record Keeping

25.7.1 *Documents*

- (A) All documents associated with a Reportable Offence must be retained by the Controlling Body for a period of five (5) years, including:
 - (i) Notice of Report if not issued via OfficialsHQ;
 - (ii) Notice of Charge;
 - (iii) Witness statements;
 - (iv) Footage of the incident;
 - (v) Tribunal determination;

25.7.2 *Record of Reportable Offences*

- (A) Where a Player or Official accepts an early guilty plea, or is found guilty of a Reportable Offence by a Tribunal, that person's record is to be updated by the Controlling Body in PlayHQ to record any penalty applied.

Guidance Note: *Most Officials should be registered in PlayHQ to enable their names to be added to the Team Sheet. However, if an Official is not registered in PlayHQ, the League is to make arrangements for this to occur so the person's record of having committed a reportable offence can be made.*

26 POLICY BREACHES

26.1 What is a Policy Breach?

- (A) A policy breach may arise when a Party fails to follow a requirement established under the AFL's policy structure, including:
- (i) the Policy Handbook;
 - (ii) the Rules;
 - (iii) the AFL NSW/AFL Code of Conduct;
 - (iv) the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct;
 - (v) any of the policies listed in [Rule 6.4](#).
- (B) For the purpose of Rule 26, a *Party* means a Club, Coach, Official, Player, Club member, parent or guardian of a Player, spectator of a Match or any other person reasonably connected to Australian Football and within the purview of these Rules or the *Policy Handbook*.
- (C) Subject to Rule 26.2.2, a policy breach that is deemed to be a Reportable Offence is to be dealt with under [Rule 25](#).

26.2 Reporting a Policy Breach

A complaint of an alleged policy breach by a Party may be made by a Club, or any person including a member of the public, who has reasonable cause to believe that such a breach has occurred.

26.2.1 Complaint for Breach of the Rules or Code of Conduct

- (A) Where a complaint relates to an alleged breach of the Rules, including the *AFL NSW/ACT Code of Conduct*, the process for making a complaint is detailed in Table 34.

Table 34 – Complaint for Breach of the Rules or Code of Conduct

Complaint Procedure	
How to make a complaint	Complete a <i>Notice of Complaint</i> form and attach any supporting evidence.
Who to submit the complaint to	If the complaint relates to a Club, Club Official, Player, Parent / Guardian or supporter , submit to the Controlling Body. If the complaint relates to a League or a League Official , submit to the Executive Officer of AFL NSW/ACT.
Timeline for submitting a complaint	A Notice of Complaint is to be submitted by no later than 5.00pm on the third (3rd) calendar day after the occurrence of the alleged breach.

- (B) The Controlling Body may allow for a complaint to be submitted outside of the specified timeframe where there is evidence of exceptional circumstances as to why it was not practicable for the complaint to have been made by the required day and time.
- (C) Subject to Rule 26.2.1(D), a complaint lodged with the Controlling Body under Rule 26.2.1(A) will be dealt with in accordance with these Rules.
- (D) Where the Controlling Body considers that a complaint relates to a potential breach of one of the *Policy Handbook* sections referred to in [Rule 26.2.3](#), the Controlling Body may refer to the complaint to the AFL national team for management in accordance with Section 23 of the *Policy Handbook*.
- (E) A complaint submitted in accordance with Rule 26.2.1(A) may not be withdrawn by the submitting Club or person after it has been submitted unless otherwise approved by the Controlling Body.

26.2.2 Complaint for Vilification or Discrimination

- (A) Where a complaint relates to an alleged Prohibited Conduct breach as defined in Section 10 of the Policy Handbook, the reporting party is to submit a *Notice of Complaint - Vilification & Discrimination* form, together with any supporting evidence, to the Controlling Body.
- (B) Any Complaint made under Rule 26.2.2 is to be managed by the Controlling Body in accordance with Section 10 of the Policy Handbook.

26.2.3 Complaint for Breach of National Policy

- (A) Where a complaint relates to an alleged breach of any of the following sections of the *Policy Handbook*, the complaint is to be made in writing via the AFL's electronic complaint submission platform, accessible at www.AFL.com.au:
 - (i) Section 11 – Safeguarding Children & Young People
 - (ii) Section 13 – Gambling & Match Fixing
 - (iii) Section 14 – Respect & Responsibility
 - (iv) Section 15 – Anti-doping
- (B) A complaint made via the AFL's electronic complaint submission platform will be dealt with by the AFL national team in accordance with Section 23 of the *Policy Handbook*.

26.2.4 Offending Party Right to Respond to Complaint

- (A) Unless determined otherwise by the Controlling Body, any Party named as the offending Party in a complaint lodged under Rule 26.2.1 has the right to:
 - (i) be provided by the Controlling Body with a copy of the Complaint as well as any evidence submitted in support of the Complaint; and
 - (ii) provide a response to the Complaint to the Controlling Body within any timeframe determined by the Controlling Body.

26.3 Assessing a Policy Breach

26.3.1 Initial Assessment of a Complaint

- (A) Upon receipt of a complaint made in accordance with [Rule 26.2.1](#), the Controlling Body is to review the complaint, together with any evidence submitted in support of the complaint, and then may:
 - (i) initiate an investigation of the complaint in accordance with [Rule 26.3.2](#);
 - (ii) where the complaint relates to a competition matter, refer the complaint to the CMC for assessment under this Rule 26.3 and determination under [Rule 26.4](#);
 - (iii) where any information suggests the complaint may relate to a breach of any national policy as per [Rule 26.2.3](#), refer the complaint to the AFL national team for management;
 - (iv) proceed directly to the determination in accordance with [Rule 26.4](#) where there is evidence immediately available to do so.

26.3.2 Investigation of a Complaint

- (A) A Controlling Body or CMC, as applicable, may initiate an investigation into a complaint and in doing so may:
 - (i) nominate an investigating officer to conduct any such investigation;
 - (ii) use reasonable measures to establish the facts of any alleged breach, including by interviewing any relevant person and taking witness statements.

- (B) Where an investigation is commenced in accordance with Rule 26.3.2(A), the Controlling Body or CMC must notify the Party subject of the complaint that an investigation is being undertaken and afford that Party the opportunity to submit any evidence they have in response to the complaint.

Guidance Note: *The notification to the Party under this Rule is not a “Notice of Breach”. It is simply to notify the Party that a complaint has been made of an alleged breach, that an investigation into this has now commenced, and to invite the Party to provide any evidence they have that will help with assessment and determination of the complaint.*

- (C) A Party subject of, or relevant to, an investigation, must:
- (i) co-operate with that investigation;
 - (ii) answer questions and provide statements truthfully during the investigation;
 - (iii) not make any false or misleading statements or act in a manner calculated to or which is likely to mislead.
- (D) Where a Party involved in an investigation under Rule 26.3.2 is a person under the age of eighteen (18) years then during the investigation that person must always be supported by:
- (i) a Club Officer; and/or
 - (ii) a parent or guardian of the Person.

26.4 Determining a Policy Breach

- (A) In determining a complaint for a policy breach, the League or CMC, as applicable, may:
- (i) where it considers there is sufficient evidence to confirm that a policy breach has occurred, proceed with the issuing of a *Notice of Breach* in accordance with [Rule 26.5](#).
 - (ii) where it considers there is evidence to confirm the complaint is untrue, has no merit or is frivolous, or where there is insufficient evidence to confirm a policy breach has occurred, dismiss the complaint and notify the complainant and subject Party accordingly; or
 - (iii) where it considers a *Notice of Breach* is not an appropriate means of resolving a policy breach, determine an alternative process for resolution of the matter.

Guidance Note: *This Rule provides discretion for a League or CMC to deal with particular complaints (e.g. minor in nature) in a practical and alternative manner that does not require the formality of a Notice of Breach. For example, a complaint may be made that a Player from a Team was wearing the wrong socks or coloured shorts in a Match, in which case the League or CMC may feel it is sufficient to obtain a commitment from the Player and the Player’s Club that there will adherence to the uniform requirements for all future Matches. The League or CMC must still make a record of the complaint and the agreed resolution in the event there is a recurrence of the offence that may then require a more formal process to be adopted.*

26.5 Notice of Breach

26.5.1 Issuing a Notice of Breach

- (A) Where a *Notice of Breach* is to be issued under these Rules, the Controlling Body or CMC, as applicable, must send the *Notice of Breach* as soon as practicable to the following:
- (i) where the subject Party is a Club, to the Club;
 - (ii) where the subject Party is a person, to the person and to the person’s Club.
- (B) A *Notice of Breach* to a Party may, where applicable, contain details of more than one breach by the Party arising from an incident.

(C) A *Notice of Breach* must contain the following particulars:

- (i) date of each breach;
- (ii) a summary of each breach;
- (iii) a statement of the Rule or policy section breached;
- (iv) the details of the sanctions that may be accepted under an early guilty plea;
- (v) the details of any direct referral for a Tribunal Hearing under Rule 26.5.1;
- (vi) the subject Party's rights;
- (vii) the subject Party's response requirements.

26.5.2 Direct Referral to Tribunal

In issuing a *Notice of Breach* in accordance with Rule 26.5.1, the Controlling Body may, in its absolute discretion, refer a Party directly to the Tribunal for a Tribunal Hearing under [Rule 27](#).

26.5.3 Withdrawing a Notice of Breach

The Controlling Body or CMC, as applicable, may withdraw a *Notice of Breach* at any time prior to a Tribunal hearing, and where this occurs the League is to notify the subject Party of this as soon as practicable.

26.5.4 Response to a Notice of Breach

- (A) The Party subject of the *Notice of Breach* must respond in the manner, and by no later than the prescribed time and date, as specified in the *Notice of Breach*, or by other such time and date where agreed to by the Controlling Body or CMC.
- (B) In responding to the *Notice of Breach* a Party may:
 - (i) enter an early guilty plea in relation to the policy breach and accept the sanctions prescribed by the Controlling Body or CMC; or
 - (ii) decline to enter an early guilty plea in relation to the breach.
- (C) Where a Party declines to enter an early guilty plea, or fails to respond to a *Notice of Breach* as required, the Controlling Body must refer the matter to the Tribunal to be dealt with in accordance with [Rule 27](#).

26.6 Record of Policy Breach

26.6.1 Documents

All documents associated with a Policy Breach must be retained by the Controlling Body for a period of five (5) years.

26.6.2 Record of Sanctions

Where a Player or Official accepts an early guilty plea or is found guilty of a Policy Breach by a Tribunal, and the sanction involves a suspension, that Player or Official's record is to be updated by the Controlling Body in PlayHQ to record any penalty applied.

Guidance Note: *If an Official is not registered in PlayHQ, the Controlling Body is to make arrangements for this to occur so the person's record of having been suspended can be made.*

27 TRIBUNAL HEARINGS

27.1.1 Scope of the Tribunal

- (A) The Tribunal may hear and determine a matter referred to it in accordance with:
 - (i) [Rule 25](#) – Reportable Offences

- (ii) [Rule 26](#) – Policy Breach

27.1.2 Appointment of Tribunal Panel

- (A) AFL NSW/ACT is to appoint a Tribunal Panel in accordance with Section 25.2 of the *Policy Handbook*.
- (B) By agreement with AFL NSW/ACT, a League may elect to use the Tribunal Panel appointed by AFL NSW/ACT for the duration of a Season.
- (C) AFL NSW/ACT may determine that a fee is payable by a League where a League elects to use the Tribunal Panel appointed by AFL NSW/ACT.
- (D) Where the League elects not to use the Tribunal Panel appointed by AFL NSW/ACT, the League is to appoint a Tribunal in accordance with Section 25.2 of the *Policy Handbook*.

27.1.3 Tribunal Procedure and Evidence

Section 25.3 of the *Policy Handbook* applies to the procedural and evidentiary requirements of a Tribunal hearing.

27.1.4 Tribunal Decision

Section 25.4 of the *Policy Handbook* applies in relation a decision of a Tribunal.

27.1.5 Appeal of Tribunal Decision

A decision made by a Tribunal may be appealed in accordance with Rule 28.

28 APPEALS

28.1 Appeal Board

28.1.1 Function of Appeal Board

The function of the Appeal Board is to hear and determine appeals as allowed for under Section 26.1(a) of the *Policy Handbook* or under these Rules.

28.1.2 Appeal Board Panel

Section 26.2 of the *Policy Handbook* applies.

28.2 Appeal Lodgement

28.2.1 Grounds for Appeal

- (A) Where the right to appeal a decision to the Appeal Board is allowed for under the *Policy Handbook* or these Rules, a Player, Official, Club or Controlling Body may appeal to the Appeal Board on one or more of the following grounds:
 - (i) the decision involved an error of law;
 - (ii) the decision was so unreasonable that no Controlling Body or Tribunal (as the case may be) acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it;
 - (iii) the classification of the Reportable Offence or Policy Breach was manifestly excessive or inadequate; or
 - (iv) the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive or inadequate.
- (B) For the avoidance of doubt, the Grounds in Rule 28.2.1(A) do not override the grounds, if any, set out in the *Policy Handbook*.

28.2.2 Notice of Appeal

- (A) A Notice of Appeal must:
 - (i) be in writing;

- (ii) lodged with the Executive Officer of the Controlling Body within the timeframe specified in Rule 28.2.3;
 - (iii) state the grounds of appeal and any submissions in respect of the Chairperson's decision to be made under Rule 28.2.3(C); and
 - (iv) attach confirmation of payment of the appeal fee as per Rule 28.2.4.
- (B) The Executive Officer will refer the *Notice of Appeal* to the Chairperson of the Appeals Board for consideration at the earliest opportunity, and where the Chairperson decides that an appeal has:
- (i) reasonable prospects of success, an Appeals Board will be convened and the hearing will be held in accordance with Rule 28.3; or
 - (ii) no reasonable prospects of success, the Chairperson may dismiss the appeal.

28.2.3 Timeframe for Appeal

- (A) The Appellant must lodge a *Notice of Appeal* by:
- (i) where an appeal relates to a determination of a Tribunal, no later than 5.00pm on the day following decision of the Tribunal; or
 - (ii) where an appeal relates to a determination other than a Tribunal determination, no later than 5.00pm on the third (3) business day following the relevant determination being made; or
 - (iii) where an appeal relates to a failure to make a decision when the decision ought reasonably to have been made, no earlier than twenty-eight (28) days after the relevant request was made for a determination.

28.2.4 Appeal Fee

- (A) The appeal fee is one thousand (1,000) dollars and is payable to the Controlling Body on lodgement of the appeal.
- (B) Fifty (50) percent of the appeal fee paid in accordance with Rule 28.2.4(A) is not refundable.
- (C) Fifty (50) percent of the appeal fee paid by the Appellant under Rule 28.2.4(A) will be refunded to the Appellant only where an appeal is:
- (i) successful; or
 - (ii) abandoned in accordance with Rule 28.4.3(A).
- (D) Where an appeal is not successful, no part of the appeal fee paid in accordance with Rule 28.2.4(A) will be refunded unless the matter involves a monetary sanction and the Appeals Board determines that it would be manifestly unjust and unfair not to refund part of the appeal fee, in which case such amount as may be determined by the Appeals Board will be refunded.
- (E) For the purposes of Rule 28.2.4(C) and Rule 28.2.4(D), an appeal is:
- (i) successful if the Appeal Board determines that one or more appeal grounds has been established; or
 - (ii) unsuccessful if the Appeal Board determines that no appeal ground has been established, or where it is dismissed by the Chairperson in accordance with Rule 28.2.2(B).

28.3 Appeal Hearings

28.3.1 Appeal Hearing Date & Place

- (A) Except where Rule 28.2.2(B)(ii) applies, upon receipt of a valid *Notice of Appeal*, the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Chairperson, shall:
- (i) fix the date, time and place for the hearing of the appeal as soon as reasonably practicable; and
 - (ii) advise all parties with an interest in the appeal in writing of those particulars.

- (B) The Appeal Board is empowered to meet when and where it considers necessary, having regard to a fair and efficient resolution of the appeal.
- (C) The Appeal Board, through the Executive Officer can vary the date, time or place of the specified hearing and upon doing so must immediately provide all parties with an interest in the appeal written notice of the variation.

28.3.2 Composition of Appeal Board for Hearing

Section 26.3(a) of the Policy Handbook applies.

28.3.3 Representation and Costs

- (A) Section 26.3(b) of the Policy Handbook applies to representation at an appeal.
- (B) Section 26.3(i) of the Policy Handbook applies to costs.

28.3.4 Attendance at Appeal Board Hearing

Section 26.3(c) of the Policy Handbook applies.

28.3.5 General Conduct of Appeal Board Hearing

- (A) Other than provided for in this Rule 28.3.5, Section 26.3(d) of the Policy Handbook applies.
- (B) The hearing before the Appeal Board shall be:
 - (i) inquisitorial in nature; and
 - (ii) conducted with as little formality and technicality and with as much expedition as the proper consideration of the matters permits.
- (C) In the hearing and determination of an appeal, the Appeal Board shall decide all questions of law and fact and without limitation, shall determine the meaning of any words.

28.3.6 Review of Evidence by Appeal Board

- (A) Other than provided for in this Rule 28.3.6, Section 26.3(e) of the Policy Handbook applies.
- (B) The Appeal Board may have regard to the record of the proceeding before the Tribunal or other body against whose decision an appeal is made, including a record of any evidence taken in a Tribunal hearing.
- (C) The Appeal Board may require the Parties to provide a written submission to the Appeals Board in accordance with a timeframe determined by the Appeals Board.

28.3.7 Onus and Standard of Proof

Section 26.3(f) of the Policy Handbook applies.

28.3.8 Adjournments

Section 26.4(c) of the Policy Handbook applies.

28.4 Appeal Outcomes

28.4.1 Decision of Appeal Board

Section 26.4(a) of the Policy Handbook applies.

28.4.2 Person to Serve Sanction Until Appeal is Determined

Section 26.4(b) of the Policy Handbook applies.

28.4.3 Abandoning an Appeal

- (A) An Appellant may abandon an appeal prior to any Appeal Board hearing by giving written notice to the Controlling Body, in which case part of the appeal fee paid by the Appellant will be refunded in accordance with Rule 28.2.4(C).
- (B) If an Appellant abandons an appeal during the conduct of the Appeal Board hearing, no part of the appeal fee paid by the Appellant under Rule 28.2.4 will be refunded.

28.4.4 Validity of Appeal and Hearing

Section 26.4(f) of the Policy Handbook applies.

28.4.5 Exhaust Appeal Rights

Section 26.4(h) of the Policy Handbook applies.

29 PROHIBITED CONDUCT

29.1 Contact Intended to Mislead

A Person issued with a *Notice of Charge* or *Notice of Breach*, that Person's representative or any Person acting in concert with a Person issued with a *Notice of Charge* or *Notice of Breach*, must not contact, or procure another Person to contact, a Person who may be required to give evidence before the Tribunal, where that contact is intended to or may otherwise mislead the Tribunal or unfairly affect the conduct of the Tribunal hearing.

29.2 Public Comment

(A) A Person must not comment publicly on:

- (i) the contents of a *Notice of Charge* or *Notice of Breach* or *Notice of Appeal*; or
- (ii) any matter relating to an investigation under the Rules or the *Policy Handbook*,

prior to the conclusion of any Tribunal hearing, Appeal Board hearing and/or completion of a matter, unless the Person establishes, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Controlling Body, that such public comment was not intended to influence or affect the conduct of a Tribunal hearing, or Appeal Board hearing, or the process of an investigation, or determination of a Controlling Body.

29.3 Criticism of Decision

(A) A Person must not make any unfair, unreasonable or excessive public criticism of:

- (i) a Controlling Body decision made under Rule 25 or Rule 26, or of any Controlling Body official, staff or representative involved in that process or decision, or any other matter relevant to that decision;
- (ii) a Tribunal decision or of any Tribunal member or any other matter relevant to the Tribunal or a determination made by it; or
- (iii) an Appeal Board decision or of any Appeal Board member or any other matter relevant to the Appeal Board or a determination made by it.

29.4 Prohibited Conduct Breach

- (A) Where a person is deemed to have committed a breach under Rule 29.1, Rule 29.2 or Rule 29.3, that person, notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules or the *Policy Handbook*, may be dealt with in such manner as the Controlling Body, Tribunal or Appeal Board, as applicable, sees fit.
- (B) In addition to any sanction imposed or determination made in respect of a person under Rule 29.4(A), the Controlling Body may impose a sanction on that person's Club, except where the Club satisfies the Controlling Body that the person engaged in the relevant conduct without the knowledge of the Club.

30 DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

30.1 Sanctions for Reportable Offence

- (A) Sanctions for a classifiable Reportable Offence are detailed in Appendix Three.
- (B) Where a matter proceeds to the Tribunal, the Tribunal is to determine sanctions in accordance with the Section 25.4 of the *Policy Handbook*.

30.2 Sanctions for Policy Breach

Guidance Note: *In determining appropriate sanctions for a policy breach, the League or CMC is to have regard for the nature and severity of each breach. Where there are multiple confirmed breaches arising from an incident, the League or CMC may determine to impose sanctions for each individual breach, or may impose one set of sanctions that apply to the amalgamation of all breaches.*

- (A) Where a policy breach is established, the League, CMC or RMC, as applicable, may impose one or more of disciplinary sanctions detailed in Table 35.

Table 35 – Disciplinary Sanctions Table

Item No	Sanction
(i)	Suspending a Player or Official from participation in one or more Matches, where any such suspension operates in accordance with Rule 30.3 .
(ii)	Revoking a Coach's accreditation for a period of time.
(iii)	Suspending a person from holding any post as an Official, administrator or committee person for a defined period.
(iv)	Banning a person from holding any post as an Official, administrator or committee person.
(v)	Requiring an individual to undertake specific Official duties for a period of time.
(vi)	Requiring a written apology, including in any terms or manner specified.
(vii)	Requiring mediation between parties including on specified conditions.
(viii)	Requiring that the individual participate in an education, remedial or counselling program.
(ix)	Appointing a mentor to an individual for a period of time.
(x)	Imposing an official warning on a Club or individual.
(xi)	Imposing a fine on a Club of up to \$1,000 for a first offence.
(xii)	Imposing a fine on a Club of up to \$2,000 for a subsequent offence.
(xiii)	Imposing the loss of Competition points upon a Team.
(xiv)	Imposing a suspension on a Team from participation in one or more Matches, including a finals Match.
(xv)	Deducting Club of the Year Award points for the season in which the indiscretion has taken place.
(xvi)	Suspending or terminating the Club Participation Agreement.
(xvii)	Amending the terms of the Club Participation Agreement.
(xviii)	Requiring immediate rectification of a Club policy, system or process that led to, or contributed to, the breach.
(xix)	Requiring a remedial action plan to be submitted by a Club.

(xx)	Requiring notification to all Club members of the requirements of a Rule or AFL Policy.
(xxi)	Imposing a suspended penalty of any of the above.
(xxii)	Imposing any other sanction as determined by the League with the prior approval of the RMC.

- (B) A sanction has immediate effect unless otherwise notified by the League or CMC, as applicable.
- (C) In determining sanctions, the League may also take into account:
- (i) any acknowledgement by a Club or individual of a breach prior to the issuing of a Notice of Breach;
 - (ii) the extent of any remorse shown by a Club or individual to whom a policy breach applies;
 - (iii) the extent of any corrective actions taken, prior to the issuing of a Notice of Breach, by a Club or individual to whom a breach applies;
 - (iv) the number of policy breaches by a Club or individual in the past three (3) years.
- (D) Where a breach of policy matter proceeds to the Tribunal, the Tribunal is to determine sanctions in accordance with the Section 25.4(a)(ii)(B) of the *Policy Handbook*.

Guidance Note: Under Section 25.4 of the *Policy Handbook*, the Tribunal has discretion to impose sanctions for a policy breach “on any terms and conditions” except for deregistration of a person. In determining such sanctions, the Tribunal may have regard to one or more of the sanctions listed in Rule 30.2.

30.3 Suspension of a Person

- (A) The provisions of this Rule 30.3 apply to the suspension of a person for a Reportable Offence or a breach of policy under these Rules.
- (B) A Player or Official suspended by a Controlling Body is, for the period of the suspension, or while the suspension remains unserved, prohibited from playing or participating in a Match conducted by the Controlling Body imposing the suspension and a Match conducted by any other Controlling Body.
- (C) A suspended person must serve a suspension in the Grade in which the person played, or was officiating in, immediately prior to such suspension or disqualification.
- (D) For the purposes of this Rule 30.3, a ‘Match’ shall mean a competition Match of the same Grade in which the person committed the offence, and shall also include as the one Match, the Matches in all Grades in a particular round for which the person would, but for the suspension be eligible, regardless of whether all Matches in that round are played on the one day or not.

Guidance Note: The effect of this Rule (D) is that a Player cannot count towards his/her suspension matches in more than one grade in each round, even if he/she regularly ‘doubles up’.

- (E) Where a suspension is expressed as one or more Matches, the suspension shall take effect from and include the next competition Match following the suspension for which the person would, but for the suspension, be eligible to participate in.
- (F) Where a suspension for a policy breach is expressed as a period of time, the period shall commence from the time the penalty is pronounced and conclude at midnight on the last day of the period, unless the Controlling Body, Tribunal or Appeal Board orders otherwise.
- (G) A suspension will apply to all Matches other than pre-season or off-season Matches unless otherwise determined by the Tribunal in exceptional and compelling circumstances.
- (H) A person suspended may not serve the suspension in:
- (i) any pre-season or off-season Matches but may participate in such Matches unless otherwise determined by the Controlling Body; or

- (ii) any practice or trial matches but may participate in such Matches unless otherwise determined by the Controlling Body.
- (I) Unless otherwise determined by a Controlling Body, a person suspended may not serve the suspension in any cancelled Matches.
- (J) A person suspended may not serve the suspension in a round where the Player's Team in the relevant Grade has a bye or its Match is cancelled for any reason.
- (K) A person suspended during a split round may not serve the suspension in that same round in another Grade, including representative football.
- (L) A person who was suspended in a Junior Competition and is graduating to a Senior Competition must serve the suspension in the Senior Competition.
- (M) A person transferring from one Competition to another Competition will carry over any suspension to the new Competition, and the suspension shall apply to the Grade in the new Competition that:
 - (i) is most closely aligned to the Grade in which the person was suspended; and
 - (ii) for which the person is eligible to participate in.

Example: *A player, who is 14 turning 15 in the season, and was suspended in an under 15's match, moves to a new competition that has under 14s and under 16s, will serve the remaining period of suspension in the under 16s in the new competition (as they are not eligible to play under 14s).*

Guidance Note: *A person who is not registered is not eligible to participate in a match and therefore any matches during a period of non-registration will not count toward the suspension.*

- (N) Where a suspension carries over to a subsequent season, a person who was suspended must be registered in that subsequent season prior to any matches or period being counted toward the suspension, unless otherwise determined by the CMC.
- (O) A person, other than a Player suspended for a Reportable Offence, may not communicate with any Football Official on matchday for the duration of their suspension.
- (P) A person, other than a Player suspended for a Reportable Offence, may not enter the playing area or Club change rooms at any Match on matchday for the duration of their suspension.
- (Q) A suspended person may not play or perform any football Official duties on matchday for the duration of their suspension unless the Controlling Body, Tribunal or Appeal Board orders otherwise.

Guidance Note: *For example, a suspended Player cannot play nor perform the role of runner or assistant coach for the duration of the suspension. Equally, a suspended Official, who is also a registered Player, cannot play for the duration of the suspension.*

- (R) Unless otherwise specified by the relevant Controlling Body in exceptional and compelling circumstances, a suspended Person will not be eligible to play, coach or otherwise be involved in representative football if the representative fixture occurs while the Person is serving the suspension.
- (S) The representative fixture will not count as part of the suspension for any person who may have been eligible to have played or officiated in a representative Match.
- (T) Where a person is suspended as a result of an offence arising in a representative fixture match, any period of the suspension that is unable to be served during the representative fixture shall carry over and apply to the Competition in which the person usually participates.
- (U) Where the Controlling Body or Tribunal imposes a sanction on a person that prevents the person from participating in a Match, the person must serve that sanction pending the determination of any appeal.

(V) Law 22.4 of the *Laws of Australian Football* will apply in conjunction with this Rule 30.3 in relation to all persons suspended by the Controlling Body or Tribunal or Appeal Board.

Part F - MISCELLANEOUS

31 AFL MARKS AND LOGOS

- (A) Clubs and the League must not make use of AFL Marks without the prior written consent of the AFL and/or AFL NSW/ACT which consent may be given or withheld at the AFL and AFL NSW/ACT's discretion (reasonably exercised).
- (B) Clubs of the League, Leagues and Associations affiliated or directly associated with the League or Leagues controlled by AFL NSW/ACT must submit details of any proposed use of AFL Marks to AFL NSW/ACT prior to any use thereof including use for advertising or promotional purposes.
- (C) Clubs and the League acknowledge that the AFL and AFL NSW/ACT are the owners of the AFL Marks and of the goodwill attaching to the AFL Marks and agree that the AFL Marks must remain vested in the AFL and/or AFL NSW/ACT and agree not to challenge the validity or ownership of the AFL Marks.
- (D) Clubs and the League must not register any trade marks, company or business names, logos, symbols, emblems, designs, or other indicia using the AFL Marks or any component thereof.
- (E) Clubs and the League agree not to alter the AFL Marks in any way nor to affix, incorporate or use the AFL Marks, in connection with or as part of another trade mark, distinctive mark, name, brand or thing.
- (F) Clubs and the League recognise the great value of the AFL Marks and acknowledge the goodwill attached thereto and that all rights, title and interest therein including the copyright thereto vests in and belongs to AFL and/or AFL NSW/ACT.
- (G) Clubs and the League agree that they will not at any time do any act, matter or thing intended to or which might otherwise have the effect of interfering with, restricting, limiting or challenging the proprietary rights of AFL and/or AFL NSW/ACT in and to the AFL Marks.

32 APPROVED SUPPLIERS

- (A) AFL NSW/ACT approved suppliers are licensed and authorised as the only suppliers to use the AFL NSW/ACT logo.
- (B) The current list of AFL NSW/ACT approved suppliers is on the AFL NSW/ACT website.

33 BROADCASTING RIGHTS

- (A) In this Rule, the term "broadcast" means any service (by whatever means or process) which is or in the future becomes a content service for the purposes of the Telecommunications Act 1997 (Cth) and includes, but is not limited to any internet or online service, any television or radio transmission or any service making available to any member of the public (simultaneously with or consecutively to any other member of the public) text, sounds or images.
- (B) Each Club acknowledges and agrees that the League and AFL NSW/ACT has the exclusive right to authorise the public broadcast of all matches played in the Competition or such other Competition/s conducted by the League.
- (C) Clubs shall not participate in any match played in the Competition or such other Competition/s conducted by the League which is broadcast by any provider of a broadcast other than a provider of a broadcast authorised or approved by the League.
- (D) Where a Club is the ground hirer or occupier of a venue at which matches are played in the Competition or such other Competition/s conducted by the League or AFL NSW/ACT;
 - (i) it shall use its best endeavours to provide any provider of a broadcast authorised by the League or AFL NSW/ACT with access to the necessary facilities required for the provision of the broadcast of matches played in the Competition and shall use its best endeavours to provide assistance to any provider of a broadcast authorised by the League or AFL NSW/ACT and its servants and agents as is necessary to ensure that the League or AFL NSW/ACT fulfils, to the maximum extent possible, its obligations to the provider of a broadcast authorised by the League or AFL NSW/ACT; and

- (ii) where it is within the Club's control, it shall not permit, allow or assist any other person to permit or allow the admission into the venue of any equipment used in the provision of a broadcast including television and video cameras, on a day when any match in the Competition/s or such other Competition is played at the venue, save as permitted by the preceding Rule and save as is otherwise specifically authorised by the League or AFL NSW/ACT.
- (E) Where a Club is not the ground hirer or occupier of the venue at which the Club plays its home matches in the Competition, or such other Competition/s conducted by the League or AFL NSW/ACT, the Club shall use its best endeavours to ensure that the ground hirer or occupier of such venue complies with the provisions of this Rule.

34 SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA STATEMENTS

- (A) The following applies to the use of social media and media statements:
- (i) Section 12 of the *Policy Handbook*;
 - (ii) the AFL NSW/ACT Code of Conduct;
 - (iii) any relevant provisions of these Rules.
- (B) Only authorised and approved personnel may make public statements regarding League matters.
- (C) For the Rules, "statement" includes any declaration, comment or remark, whether verbal, in print or by electronic media or social media.
- (D) A Club whose Official or Player has made a statement contrary to the provisions of this Rule 34 or Rule 32.1.2 in the case of any other person, with the apparent authority, agreement, consent or approval of the Club, may be referred to the CMC which may, in the event of a breach, levy a fine of up to a maximum of one thousand (1,000) dollars and forfeit past or future Match points.

35 RECORDING & USE OF IMAGES

The Guidelines in Appendix Four are designed to assist Clubs, Officials, Players, families and Supporters in dealing with the use of electronic and other images in Matches.

FORM / TEMPLATE LINKS

Form / Template	Rule	Link
Age Dispensation Application to Play Up	11.2.2	
Age Dispensation Application to Play Down	11.2.3	
Fixture Change Request	13.2	
Joint Venture Agreement	13.2	
Notice of Appeal	28.2.2	
Notice of Citing	25.2.3	
Notice of Complaint	26.2.2	
Practice Match Request Form	18(B)	
Request for Review of Footage	25.2.4	
Student Permit Form	11.4.4	
Uniform Design Approval Form	8.7.2	
Vilification & Discrimination Notice of Complaint	26.2.3	
Working With Children Check Register	6.6.2	

APPENDICES

Number	Appendix Name
Appendix One	AFL NSW/ACT Code of Conduct
Appendix Two	Player Finals Eligibility
Appendix Three	Reportable Offences
Appendix Four	Recording & Use of Images Guide

This *Code of Conduct* is established under Rule 6.3 of the *AFL NSW/ACT Rules* and is intended to ensure Australian Rules football is a positive and enjoyable experience for everyone. All players, officials, parents and supporters are expected to abide by the *Code of Conduct*. Any person who fails to comply with the *Code of Conduct* will be subject of disciplinary proceedings for a breach of policy under Rule 26 of the *AFL NSW/ACT Rules*.

PART A General Code of Conduct Requirements

Any person involved in Australian Rules community football must:

1.	Comply	Comply with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) this <i>Code of Conduct</i>; (ii) the <i>AFL NSW/ACT Rules</i> (“the Rules”); (iii) the <i>AFL Community Football Policy Handbook</i> (“the Policy Handbook”); (iv) the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i>; and (v) any other rules or policy formally approved and/or adopted by the AFL from time to time.
2.		Comply with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) any direction given or procedure imposed by the Controlling Body in accordance with the Rules or the Policy Handbook; and (ii) any sanction imposed by the Controlling Body or Tribunal under the Rules or Policy Handbook.
3.		Comply with all relevant laws including anti-discrimination and child protection laws.
4.	Protect	Prioritise the safety and welfare of children.
5.	Respect	Respect the spirit of fair play and behave accordingly, and participate in Competition Matches in accordance with the <i>Laws of Australian Football</i> and the <i>Rules</i>
6.		Be ethical, fair, honest and respectful in all dealings with other people.
7.		Contribute to a safe sporting environment and respectful culture which is accepting of individual differences.
8.		Recognise that AFL is an inclusive environment and respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of gender, ability, sexual orientation, cultural background or religion, and never engage in any act of vilification or discrimination toward anyone.
9.		Recognise and respect the significant contribution of volunteers in our game.
10.		Respect and use appropriately the facilities and equipment made available for administration, coaching, training, Competition Matches and events, including facilities and equipment provided by the opposing teams.
11.	Never	Never ridicule any mistake or loss and understand that everyone makes mistakes.
12.		Never engage in physical and/or verbal intimidation or verbal abuse, including sledging and abusive language, toward another person.
13.		Never engage in any type of violence either on or off the field and condemn the use of violence in any form by another person.
14.		Never make a threat of violence toward another person or undertake actions that may incite violence toward another person.
15.		Never publicly criticise a participant – raise any concerns you have with your Club’s officials.
16.		Never engage in conduct that is unethical, unbecoming or likely to cause harm to the reputation of the game of Australian Football, the AFL, the League or the Club into disrepute.
17.		Never take part in any form of harassment or bullying including via the use of social media.
18.		Never make or post inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory comments in public, including via social media, about Players, Clubs, Umpires, Officials, the League or the AFL. Social media includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, text messages, phone messages, digital images, online postings (including social media such as, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, websites and blogs).

This *Player Finals Eligibility* Appendix is established under Rule 17.9 of the *AFL NSW/ACT Rules*. As per that Rule:

- Clubs are responsible for ensuring all Players meet eligibility requirements to participate in finals Matches.
- Any Club that fields an ineligible player in a finals Match may be subject to disciplinary sanctions to be imposed by the League in its absolute discretion including, but not limited to, the loss of the finals Match.

1. Application

(A) These Player finals eligibility requirements apply to the following Leagues and Competitions:

League	Competition
AFL North Coast	AFL North Coast Seniors
	AFL North Coast Juniors

2. Finals Eligibility for Senior Players

(A) Except as provided for under items 2(B), 2(E) or 2(F) below, to be eligible to play finals in a particular Grade, a player must have played the following minimum number of home and away Matches in the current season for the Club in that Grade or a lower Grade:

Competition	Grade	Minimum Number of Home & Away Matches in Season
AFL North Coast Seniors	Men’s Senior Grade	50% of completed matches
	Men’s Reserve Grade	40% of completed matches
	Women’s Senior Grade	50% of completed matches
	Under 18	40% of completed matches

- (i) Men’s Senior Grade – in establishing Finals eligibility, a Player can count Matches completed in First Grade, Reserve Grade, or Under 18 grade, including matches won on forfeit.
 - (ii) Reserve Grade – in establishing Finals eligibility, a Player can count Matches completed in Reserve Grade or Under 18 grade, including matches won on forfeit.
 - (iii) Women’s – in establishing Finals eligibility, a Player can count Matches completed in the Women’s grade, including matches won on forfeit.
 - (iv) Under 18 – in establishing Finals eligibility, a Player can count Matches completed in the Under 18 age group, including matches won on forfeit, and must not have any monies outstanding to the League for representative football commitments.
 - (v) For the avoidance of doubt, when calculating the required percentage of completed home and away competition Matches, all fractions of numbers will be rounded down to the whole number.
- (B) Subject to 2(E) or 2(F), any senior men’s or women’s Player who has played in a combined total of eight (8) or more home and away matches in any higher men’s or women’s division(s), shall not be eligible to play finals matches in a lower division.
- (C) Where a Club has multiple, consecutively ranked senior Teams (men’s or women’s) playing in finals on the same weekend, to be eligible to play in any of those finals a Player must have played the “Minimum Number of Home & Away Matches in Season”, as detailed in 2(A), in the Grades that are participating in finals that weekend, or in a lower Grade.
- (D) On application by a Player’s Club, the CMC may vary the number of qualifying Matches required:

- (i) where Services personnel are posted a significant distance away during the home and away Matches; or
- (ii) where a Player misses a significant number of Matches due to serious injury (four (4) or more consecutive regular season Rounds), pregnancy or transfers in employment; or
- (iii) under other exceptional circumstances as determined by the Competition Management Committee.

Guidance Note: Any transfer in employment should follow three (3) calendar months of continuous employment preceding the transfer date with the existing employer, unless otherwise approved by the League

- (E) For the avoidance of doubt, exemptions will not be granted on the following grounds:
 - (i) registering late within the current season if there were sufficient rounds remaining to establish eligibility following receipt of the registration; or
 - (ii) long service with a club; or
 - (iii) the requirement to perform shift work, other than in the instance of a fly-in, fly-out worker where an exemption may be granted if the individual is able to provide copies of rosters that demonstrate they were away from their primary residence on enough match days as to be unable to achieve eligibility.

3. Finals Eligibility for Junior Players

- (A) A Player must have played the equivalent of at least 40% of completed home and away matches for their Team in the relevant age group, including matches won on forfeit, and must not have any monies outstanding to the League for representative football commitments.
- (B) For the avoidance of doubt, when calculating the percentage of completed home and away competition matches, all fractions of numbers will be rounded down to the whole number.
- (C) A Player that intends to play finals in more than one age group must independently meet the eligibility criteria for each of these age groups by playing the required number of home and away Matches in each age group as required by 3(A), i.e. Matches played in one (1) age group do not count towards establishing finals eligibility in another age group.

This *Reportable Offences* Appendix is to be used by the MRP, MRO or other person responsible for assessing a Reportable Offence under Rule 25.4, to determine the appropriate classification of offence, sanction or course of action prior to any Tribunal involvement under Rule 27

1. Application

This Appendix applies to Reportable Offences arising from Matches, including practice matches and representative matches, conducted in an AFL NSW/ACT League or Competition.

2. Reportable Offence Classification

Table 1 (*Reportable Offence Classification*) is to be used to classify a Reportable Offence in accordance with Rule 25.4.1.

Table 1 – Reportable Offence Classification

Classification	Reportable Offence Type
Low-Level Offence	Attempt to Strike / Kick / Trip
	Careless Contact with an Umpire
	Disputing Decision of an Umpire
	Engaging in a Melee
	Instigator of a Melee
	Interfering with a Player Kicking for Goal
	Not Leaving the Playing Surface
	Obscene Gesture
	Pinching
	Prohibited Boots, Jewellery or Equipment
	Scratching
	Shaking, Climbing or Interfering with Goal or Behind Post
	Spitting at Another Player
	Staging
	Time Wasting
	Tripping
	Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Injured Player
	Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Umpire
	Wrestling
Any Other Act of Low-Level Misconduct which is not a Classifiable Offence or Direct Tribunal Offence	
Classifiable Offence	Charging
	Forceful Front-On Contact
	Headbutt or Contact Using Head
	Kicking
	Kneeing
	Rough Conduct
	Striking
	Tripping
Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact to the Eye Region	

	Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact to the Face
Classifiable Offence (Auditory)	Using Abusive, Insulting or Obscene Language
	Using Abusive, Insulting or Obscene Language Towards or in relation to an Umpire
Direct Tribunal Offences	Attempting to Strike an Umpire
	Behaving in an Abusive, Insulting, Threatening or Obscene Manner Towards or in Relation to an Umpire
	Eye Gouging
	Intentional Contact with an Umpire
	Spitting on Another Person
	Spitting on or at an Umpire
	Stomping
	Striking an Umpire
Serious Misconduct	

3. Low Level Offence

3.1. Sanction for a Low-Level Offence

(A) The prescribed sanction for a low-level offence is to be in accordance with Table 2

Table 2 – Low-Level Offence Sanctions Table

1 st and 2 nd Low-Level Offence		3 rd and Subsequent Low-Level Offence	
Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea	Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea
1 Match	Reprimand	2 Matches	1 Match

(B) A reference in Table 2 to second, third and subsequent Low-Level Offences is a reference to a second, third or subsequent Low-Level Offence occurring at any time in the previous 12 months (as at the date of the current offence); and

- (i) the second, third or subsequent Low-Level Offence need not be the same offence as the first Low-Level Offence;
- (ii) for the avoidance of doubt, a prior offence other than a Low-Level Offence will not count as a first offence for the purposes of the above table.

4. Classifiable Offence

4.1. Grading Matrix

Table 3 - *Classifiable Offence Grading Matrix* is to be used to grade a Classifiable Offence in accordance with Rule 25.4.3.

Table 3 – Classifiable Offence Grading Matrix

Conduct	Contact Area	Impact	Base Sanction (Matches)	Early Guilty Plea (Matches)
Intentional	High / Groin / *Chest	Severe	5+ (Tribunal)	N/A
		High	4	3
		Medium	3	2
		Low	2	1

	Body	Severe	4+ (Tribunal)	N/A
		High	3	2
		Medium	2	1
		Low	1	Fine or reprimand
Careless	High / Groin / *Chest	Severe	4+ (Tribunal)	N/A
		High	3	2
		Medium	2	1
		Low	1	Fine or reprimand
	Body	Severe	3+ (Tribunal)	N/A
		High	2	1
		Medium	1	Fine or reprimand
		Low	1	Fine or reprimand

*if the offended person is female

4.2. Conduct

4.2.1. Intentional Conduct

- (A) A Person intentionally commits a Classifiable Offence if the Person engages in the conduct constituting the Reportable Offence with the intention of committing that Reportable Offence.
- (B) An intention is a state of mind and may be formed on the spur of the moment.
- (C) Whether or not a Person intentionally commits a Reportable Offence depends upon the state of mind of the Person when the Person engages in the conduct with which they are charged. What the Person did is often the best evidence of their intention. In some cases, the evidence that the conduct itself provides may be so strong as to compel an inference of what the Person's intent was, no matter what they may say about it afterwards. If the immediate consequence of conduct is obvious and inevitable, the deliberate engaging of the conduct carries with it evidence of an intention to produce the consequence.
- (D) As an example, a strike will be regarded as Intentional where a Person delivers a blow to another Person with the intention of striking them.
- (E) The state of a Person's mind is an objective fact and has to be proved in the same way as other objective facts. The whole of the relevant evidence has to be considered. If the matter is heard by the Tribunal, the Tribunal will weigh the evidence of the Person as to what their intentions were along with whatever inference as to their intentions can be drawn from their conduct or other relevant facts. The Person may or may not be believed by the Tribunal. Notwithstanding what the Person says, the Tribunal may be able to conclude from the whole of the evidence that the Person intentionally engaged in the conduct constituting the Reportable Offence.

4.2.2. Careless Conduct

- (A) A Person's conduct will be regarded as Careless where it constitutes a breach of the duty of care owed by the Person to all other Persons. Each Person owes a duty of care to all Persons not to engage in conduct which will constitute a Reportable Offence being committed against other Persons.
- (B) To constitute a breach of that duty of care, the conduct must be such that a reasonable Person would not regard it as prudent in all the circumstances.
- (C) Further, a Person will be careless if they breach their duty to take reasonable care to avoid conduct which can be reasonably foreseen to result in a Reportable Offence

4.3. Contact

- (A) High Contact is not limited to contact to the head and includes contact above the shoulders.
- (B) A classification of High Contact may apply for a Careless or Intentional Dangerous Tackle which has the potential for injury to be caused through dangerous high contact with the ground but where high contact does not actually occur.
- (C) Contact to the Groin includes contact to the crease or hollow at the junction of the inner part of each thigh with the trunk together with the adjacent region and including the testicles.
- (D) Contact to the Chest means contact to the breast(s) of the victim Person (females only).
- (E) Where contact is both High and to the Body, it will be classified as High Contact.
- (F) Where contact is both to the Chest and to the Body, it will be classified as Contact to the Chest (applicable to females only).
- (G) Contact will be classified as High, to the Groin or to the Chest (females only) where a Person's head, groin or chest makes contact with another Person or object such as the fence or the ground as a result of the actions of the offending Person. By way of example, should a Person tackle another Person around the waist and as a result of the tackle, the tackled Person's head made forceful contact with the fence or the ground the Contact in these circumstances would be classified as High, even though the tackle was to the body.

4.4. Impact

Impact is to be determined in accordance with Table 4.

Table 4 – Impact Assessment Table

Matters for Consideration		Criteria
Degree of Actual Impact	Low	<p>Player: Minimal or no impact on the Match - the Player continued to play the majority of the Match and suffered no or minimal ongoing issues.</p> <p>Person (other than Player): Person continued in their relevant capacity in relation to the Match for the majority of the Match and suffered no or minimal ongoing issues.</p>
	Medium	<p>Player: Clearly some impact on the Player, and/or the Player left the field for a lengthy period of time, and/or some possible lower level ongoing treatment(s) required and/or likely to miss one Match.</p> <p>Person (other than Player): Clearly some impact on the Person, and/or the Person was prevented from continuing in their official capacity in relation to the Match for a lengthy period of time, and/or some possible lower level ongoing treatment(s) required.</p>
	High	<p>Player: Major impact on the Player, and/or the Player was unable to participate in the remainder of the Match, and/or major ongoing issues that require medical intervention and/or may miss some Matches.</p> <p>Person (other than Player): Major impact on the Person, and/or the Person was unable to continue in their official capacity in relation to the Match for the remainder of the Match, and/or major ongoing issues that require medical intervention and/or likely to miss some Matches.</p>
	Severe	<p>Person (including Player): Major impact and serious injury to the Person, and/or likely to miss a significant number of Matches.</p>
Force & Injury		<p>The extent of force and, in particular, any injury sustained by the Person who was offended against (as set out in the relevant Medical Report).</p> <p>The absence of injury does not preclude the classification of Impact as Severe.</p>

Potential to Cause Injury	<p>Low Impact is the minimum impact required for a Classifiable Offence which requires more than just negligible impact. However, the potential to cause injury may result in an upgrade to the level of Impact, including from negligible to a higher level of Impact.</p> <p>Strong consideration is to be given to the potential to cause injury, particularly in relation to the following conduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) intentional strikes, such as those with a swinging clenched fist, raised forearm or elbow; (ii) high bumps, particularly with significant head contact and/or momentum; (iii) any head-high contact with a Player who has their head over the ball, particularly when contact is made from an opponent approaching from a front-on position; (iv) forceful round arm swings that make head-high contact to a Player in a marking contest, ruck contest or when tackling; (v) any contact that occurs when the victim Person should not reasonably be expecting or is not reasonably prepared for contact (i.e. contact off the ball); (vi) spear tackles; and (vii) driving a Person into the ground when the Person's arms are pinned.
Distance From Ball	<p>Strong consideration is to be given to the distance the incident occurs from the ball and the expectation of contact of the victim Person (especially in the case of intentional strikes)</p>
Additional Impact	<p>Consideration is to be given not only to the impact between the offending Person and the victim Person, but also any other impact to the victim Person as a result of that impact.</p> <p>Guidance Note: For example, where a victim Person as a result of the impact from an offending Person is pushed into the path of a fast-moving third Person, the impact to the victim Person may be classified as High or Severe Impact, even though the level of impact between the victim Person and offending Person was only Low or Medium Impact.</p>
Body Language	<p>The body language of the offending Person in terms of flexing, turning, raising or positioning the body to either increase or reduce the force of impact</p>

5. Classifiable Offence (Auditory)

- (A) Subject to Clause 5(B) of this Appendix, Table 5 - *Classifiable Offence (Auditory) Grading Matrix* is to be used to grade a Classifiable Offence (Auditory) in accordance with Rule 25.4.4.
- (B) Where the conduct of a Player or Official is graded as a *Threat* or *Abusive / Obscene*, an additional one (1) Match penalty may be added to the Base Sanction where it is considered by the Controlling Body, MRP, MRO, or other person responsible for grading the offence, that the offending Player or Official has been unremorseful or unrepentant in relation to the auditory offence.

Table 5 – Classifiable Offence (Auditory) Grading Matrix

Conduct	Directed At	Loudness	Base Sanction (Matches)	Early Guilty Plea (Matches)
Threatening	Umpire	Any	Tribunal	N/A
	Another Person	Loud	Tribunal	N/A
		Medium or Low	3	2
Abusive / Obscene	Umpire	Loud	4	3
		Medium or Low	3	2
	Another Person	Loud	3	2
		Medium	2	1
		Low	1	Fine or reprimand
Insulting	Umpire	Loud	3	2
		Medium or Low	2	1
	Another Person	Loud	2	1
		Medium	1	Fine or reprimand
		Low	Fine or reprimand	

(A) The following definitions apply to *conduct* of an auditory offence.

- (i) **Threatening** – displaying (including verbalising) an intention to cause bodily harm or causing someone to feel vulnerable or at risk.
- (ii) **Abusive** – using harsh or coarsely insulting language
- (iii) **Obscene** – extremely offensive, repugnant, foul or disgusting language.
- (iv) **Insulting** – disrespectful or scornfully abusive language, or that degrade the person.

(B) The following definitions apply to the *loudness* of an auditory offence.

- (i) **Loud** – could be heard more than 50m away or by spectators.
- (ii) **Medium** – could be heard less than 50m away, but more than 10m, and/or by other Player/s or by Official/s .
- (iii) **Low** – could be heard less than 10m away, and/or conversational.

6. Additional Considerations for Particular Reportable Offences

(A) In accordance with Rule 25.4.7, the Controlling Body, MRP, MRO or Tribunal may take in account the matters detailed in Table 6 below in classifying a Reportable Offence and determining the appropriate sanctions.

Table 6 – Additional Considerations Table

Offence Type	Additional Considerations	
Striking / Kicking	Interpretation	Striking and kicking are interpreted in accordance with their ordinary meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a strike would usually be by hand, arm or elbow and would generally not apply to other contact using the body. (ii) a kick is generally applied to contact by foot or leg.

	Negligible Impact	<p>A strike or kick requires more than negligible impact to be a Classifiable Offence.</p> <p>Where a strike or kick does not have more than negligible impact, it is open to a Controlling Body to charge a Person with Striking or Kicking under Table 5 (Low-level Offences) where it is satisfied that notwithstanding the result, the intention of the Person was to commit a Reportable Offence. Where no contact is made, a Controlling Body may charge a Person with an Attempt to Strike or Kick, which are both Low-level Offences.</p>
Striking	Intent	Notwithstanding any other part of this Handbook, the fact that an act of striking occurred behind the play or off the ball or during a break in play or with a raised forearm or elbow is usually consistent with the strike being intentional
	Impact	<p>Notwithstanding any other part of this Handbook, any Careless or Intentional strike which is of an inherently dangerous kind and/or where there is a potential to cause serious injury (such as a strike with a raised elbow or forearm) will usually not be classified as Low Impact even though the extent of the actual physical impact may be low. Such strikes will usually be classified at a higher level commensurate with the nature and extent of the risk of serious injury involved.</p> <p>Strong consideration will also be given to the distance the incident occurs from the ball and the expectation of contact of the victim Player.</p>
Misconduct	Interpretation	Misconduct has a wide meaning and generally is any conduct which would be reasonably regarded as unacceptable or unsportsmanlike or where it has the effect or potential to prejudice the reputation of any Person, Club or Controlling Body or to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute.
	Serious Misconduct	Acts of Serious Misconduct will be referred directly to the Tribunal
	Sanctions	<p>Any other act of Misconduct will be a Low-level Offence unless the Controlling Body determines that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the Low-level Offence sanction is inappropriate; and (ii) the act of Misconduct is not Serious Misconduct, <p>In this circumstance the Controlling Body may impose a sanction of either a 2 Match or 3 Match suspension, with the relevant Person entitled to receive a reduction in the sanction equivalent to the reduction applicable in Table 2 (Classification Table) with an Early Guilty Plea (i.e. a 2 Match suspension reduced to a 1 Match suspension with an Early Guilty Plea).</p>
Forceful Front-on Contact	Assessment of	<p>Bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front-on when that opponent has their head down over the ball is a Reportable Offence.</p> <p>Unless Intentional, such conduct will be deemed Careless except where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the Player was contesting the ball and it was reasonable for the Player to contest the ball in that way; or

		<p>(ii) the bump or forceful contact was caused by circumstances outside the control of the Player which could not reasonably be foreseen,</p> <p>in which case such conduct will not constitute a Reportable Offence.</p> <p>A Player may bump another Player's body from side-on but any contact forward of side-on will be deemed to be front-on.</p> <p>A Player with their head down in anticipation of winning possession of the ball or after contesting the ball will be deemed to have his head down over the ball for the purposes of this provision.</p>
Rough Conduct	Interpretation	<p>Rough Conduct is interpreted widely and may be any contact which is unreasonable in the circumstances.</p> <p>It is a Reportable Offence for a Person to intentionally or carelessly engage in Rough Conduct against another Person which is unreasonable in the circumstances.</p> <p>Without limiting the wide interpretation of Rough Conduct, regard will be had to the following recognised forms of Rough Conduct.</p>
	High Bumps	<p>A Person will be guilty of Rough Conduct where, in the bumping of another Person (whether reasonably or unreasonably), the Person causes forceful contact to be made with any part of his or her body to that Person's head or neck.</p> <p>Unless Intentional, such conduct will be deemed to be Careless, except where:</p> <p>(i) the Person was contesting the ball and it was reasonable for the Person to contest the ball in that way; or</p> <p>(ii) the forceful contact to the other Person's head or neck was caused by circumstances outside the control of the Person which could not be reasonably foreseen,</p> <p>in which case such conduct will not constitute a Reportable Offence.</p> <p>The purpose of this provision is to, as far as practicable, minimise the risk of head injuries to Persons and this purpose must be front of mind for all Persons and will guide the application of the provision.</p> <p>For the purposes of this provision, head clashes that occur when a Person has elected to bump are circumstances that can reasonably be foreseen.</p> <p>Players will ordinarily be liable if they elect to bump if not contesting the ball.</p>
	Bump to the Body	<p>Where a bump is not classified as a "high bump", a Person may still be guilty of Rough Conduct if the Person's conduct was unreasonable in the circumstances.</p> <p>In determining whether a bump was unreasonable in the circumstances the following factors will be considered (without limitation):</p> <p>(i) whether the degree of force applied by the Person bumping was excessive for the circumstances;</p> <p>(ii) whether the Person being bumped was in a vulnerable position; and</p> <p>(iii) whether the Person could reasonably expect the contact having regard to the Person's involvement in play or ability to influence the contest.</p>

	Dangerous Tackles	<p>The application of a tackle may be considered Rough Conduct where the tackle is unreasonable in the circumstances.</p> <p>In determining whether the application of a tackle constitutes a Reportable Offence and whether the tackle is Careless or Intentional, the following factors will be considered (without limitation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) whether the tackle consists of more than one action, regardless of whether the Person being tackled is in possession of the ball; (ii) whether the tackle is of an inherently dangerous kind, such as a spear tackle or a tackle where a Player is lifted off the ground; (iii) whether the Person being tackled is in a vulnerable position (for example, arm(s) pinned) with little opportunity to protect themselves; or (iv) whether the Person being tackled is slung, driven or rotated into the ground with excessive force.
	Contact Below the Knees	<p>Under the Laws of the Game, making contact with an opponent below the knees is prohibited.</p> <p>A Person who keeps their feet is vulnerable to serious injury from other Persons who lunge, dive or slide toward them and make contact below the knees.</p> <p>This provision aims to protect such Persons from the risk of foreseeable injury.</p> <p>A Person may be guilty of Rough Conduct if the Person makes contact below the knees of another Person and does so in a manner which is unreasonable in the circumstances.</p> <p>It is not a defence that the Person who made contact below the knees was contesting the ball or was first to the ball.</p> <p>The primary responsibility of Persons with respect to contact below the knees is to avoid the risk of foreseeable injury.</p> <p>In determining whether contact below the knees is unreasonable in the circumstances, the following factors will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the degree of momentum and/or force involved in the contact; (ii) whether the Person causes contact below the knees by sliding with their foot, feet, knee or knees in front of them; (iii) whether the other Person was in a position that was vulnerable to contact below the knees (for example, standing over the ball or approaching from the opposite direction); and (iv) whether the Person making contact had any realistic alternative ways of approaching the contest or situation. <p>Where contact is not made below the knees of the other Person but to another part of that Person's body, a Person may still be guilty under the general definition of Rough Conduct for making unreasonable contact by sliding or dropping in to another Person with their knees or feet first</p>
Contact With an Umpire	Intentional Contact	<p>Contact with an Umpire that is aggressive, forceful, demonstrative or disrespectful will be deemed intentional and the Person will be referred directly to the Tribunal.</p>

		In determining the sanction for Intentional Contact with an Umpire, the Tribunal must have regard to the number of elements of the offence (aggressive, forceful, demonstrative and/or disrespectful) which are established.
	Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact	Where contact with an Umpire is not aggressive, forceful, demonstrative or disrespectful but could otherwise be regarded as intentional, it will be classified as Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Umpire which is a Low-level Offence.
	Careless Contact	<p>A charge of Careless Contact with an Umpire is a Low-level Offence. In determining whether the contact was careless, the following factors will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) whether contact occurs at a centre bounce or ball up; (ii) whether the Person has set up behind the Umpire; (iii) whether the Person has taken a path that intersects the Umpire's exit line from a stoppage; (iv) the force of the contact; (v) whether the Umpire's decision making is impeded; (vi) whether the Umpire goes to ground as a result of the contact; (vii) any mitigating factors (for example, effort to avoid contact, offline bounce or throw, pushed by opponent into Umpire's path). <p>A Player may also be charged with the offence of Careless Contact with an Umpire by pushing or holding another Person into an Umpire or their direct path.</p>
Melee	Engaging in a Melee	<p>A Melee is defined as an incident involving three or more Persons who are grappling or otherwise struggling with one another and which is likely to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute or prejudice the interests or reputation of the Controlling Body.</p> <p>In determining if a Person's conduct constitutes Engaging in a Melee, the following factors will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the duration the Person is involved in the Melee; (ii) the vigour applied by the Person; (iii) whether the Melee occurs at a break in play, particularly at quarter breaks and half time; (iv) whether the Person contributed to an escalation of the Melee; and (v) the role of the Person (for example, Player or Football Official).
		<p>Where a Person's conduct results in retaliatory action which leads to a melee, that Person's conduct may constitute a Reportable Offence of Instigator of a Melee.</p> <p>The Reportable Offence of Instigator of Melee is separate to the Reportable Offence of Engaging in a Melee and a Person may be found guilty of both Reportable Offences.</p>
Staging	Interpretation	<p>Staging includes excessive exaggeration of contact in an unsportsmanlike manner.</p> <p>In determining whether a Person's conduct constitutes the Reportable Offence of Staging, the following factors will be considered:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) whether the conduct affected, or was likely to affect, the Umpire decision-making; (ii) whether the conduct incited a melee; and/or (iii) whether the conduct was in the spirit of the game.
Tripping	Interpretation	<p>Tripping is interpreted in accordance with its ordinary meaning. In determining whether a Person's conduct constitutes the Reportable Offence of Tripping, the following factors will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) how fast the opponent was moving; (ii) whether the trip was by hand or by foot/leg; and (iii) whether contact was made with a swinging motion.
	Extent of Contact	<p>To constitute a Classifiable Offence, Tripping requires more than negligible impact.</p> <p>Where a trip does not have more than negligible impact, it is still open to the Controlling Body or Tribunal to charge a Person with Tripping under Table 5 where it is satisfied that notwithstanding the result, a Reportable Offence was committed.</p> <p>Where no contact or minor contact is made, the Panel can charge a Person with an Attempt to Trip, which is a Low-level Offence.</p>

General Terms

This Appendix:

- (A) sets out the terms and conditions on which the recording of images, video and/or audio by way of electronic or any other means (recording) of League activities can take place; and
- (B) seeks to balance the reasonable expectations of privacy by the participants and the reasonable use of such recordings for legitimate purposes

In this Appendix, participant means all Players, Club appointed Umpires and Team Officials, and does not include Supporters and officially appointed Umpires.

The law surrounding the taking and use of recordings, particularly of minors, is complex. AFL NSW/ACT takes this issue very seriously and the provisions below are designed to assist Clubs, Officials, Players, families and Supporters, as stakeholders, to deal with this complex issue. However, these provisions are not legal advice, and all stakeholders must make their own enquiries. Whilst AFL NSW/ACT will provide information, guidance and assistance on these issues, the responsibility to ensure compliance with all legal (including statutory) provisions lies with individual stakeholders, as appropriate.

When a person enters private land, they consent to any requirements that the property owner may impose on them. This may include restrictions, including prohibitions on the making of a recording of events held on their land. There is nothing, however, to prevent a person from making a recording from outside of the borders of private land, regardless of the property owner's preferences. In the absence of conduct that is offensive or threatening and unlikely to interfere with the public enjoyment of a public place, there is nothing to prevent a person from making a recording of minors in public places. It is thus not generally illegal to make a recording of minors at sporting events, but a common-sense approach needs to be taken.

Persons making a recording and persons using such recordings must be mindful of the complex issues surrounding privacy.

Unless consent is specifically withdrawn by a Player or Player's Parent / Guardian at the time of registration, the Player's image in any form or medium is able to be used for general marketing and promotional activities.

Recordings may only be used within the spirit of the game and within the Laws of the Game and consistent with the Rules and Code of Conduct.

By agreeing to the Registration Terms and Conditions, the participant irrevocably consents to the use of participant's footage and likeness for Competition management and administrative purposes

Procedural Requirements

- (A) The recorder may only record Matches and other AFL related activities such as practice Matches, training and drills (activity or activities) for legal, instructional, Coaching and promotional purposes (the accepted purposes) and must not record activities for commercial, indecent, inappropriate or illegal purposes.
- (B) Subject to the direction and supervision of the League, and the direction or ruling by the relevant Conduct Committee or Tribunal, such recording may be used for legitimate purposes in Code of Conduct investigations and/or Tribunal hearings.
- (C) The recorder must inform the Ground manager (where appointed), the Coach and/or Team manager of the Club and any Club (other Club) whose participants are involved in the activity to be recorded, before the recording is commenced. The other Club may not object to the recording being made. The Coaches and/or Team managers must use their best endeavours to inform participants, and the Parents of all participants who are minors, of the recording.
- (D) If a copy of the recording is requested by an official of the other Club (the requestor), the recorder must provide a copy within 3 working days after being provided by the requestor with suitable media on which to copy the recording. The requestor shall pay the amount of forty (40) dollars. The League may request

Appendix Five – AFL NSW/ACT COVID-19 Directives

a copy of the recording and advise the recorder of the media on which it wishes to receive the recording and such copy shall be provided to the League without charge within 3 working days.

- (E) None of the recorder, the requestor or the League shall provide a copy of the recording to any other party except with the written consent of both Clubs.
- (F) None of the recorder, the requestor or the League shall post, stream or otherwise share the recording, including on the internet or social media. The recording may be shared for instructional, Coaching, Tribunal /Code of Conduct purposes but only by the Club, the other Club or the League. Except where used for the accepted purposes, none of the Applicant, the requestor or the League may make any other form of publication of the recording.
- (G) The requestor and the League may only use the recording for the purposes outlined in the clause above.
- (H) A recording may be used for promotional purposes unless the consent of the Parent of any Players who are minors for the use of such recording has been withdrawn prior to its use (informed consent).
- (I) Where informed consent is required, it is the sole responsibility of the party who is required to obtain the informed consent to obtain such informed consent.
- (J) The provisions of this document apply to recordings however and by whomever made or obtained.
- (K) Table 1 sets out various activities and how they are covered by this Appendix. However, the Table is for guidance only, and if there is any discrepancy between the Table and this Appendix, the provisions of this Appendix prevail.
- (L) Breach of the procedural requirements of this Appendix may be dealt with as a breach of policy under the Rules.

Table 1

Consent of Participants Not Required	Prior consent to use not required but consent may be withdrawn prior to use	Prohibited
Instruction Coaching Tribunal / Breach of Policy (No post, stream or otherwise sharing of the recording, including on the internet, social media)	Promotional (for example, use in Club newsletter, Club Annual report, Club social media or by the League)	Commercial Illegal Inappropriate Indecent