

**NORTHERN NETBALL FOOTBALL
LEAGUE INCORPORATED**

**2025 FOOTBALL
BY-LAWS**



**Adopted
November 2024**



2025 FOOTBALL SEASON BY-LAWS

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1. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

1.1. The following terms, unless the contrary intention appears, are in relation to all matters relating to the Northern Football Netball League:

Boundary Umpire Running Lane: The area that must be marked between the boundary line and coaches box area in which no person in the coaches box area is allowed to encroach in for the safety of boundary umpires.

CEO: Appointed by the Board to manage the NFNL.

Coaches Box Area: The designated marked set area coaches and team officials are allowed in and must stay inside during a match.

Coaches Box (EXTENDED AREA): The area which is provided next to the coaches box area and is a permissible area only for bench players to warm up and/or for trainers to attend to injured players. (not coaches).

Finals Matches: Matches played at the end of the home and away matches.

Football Season: The first home and away football match through to the final football match (Grand Final) of the competition season.

GM Football Operations: A staff member of the League who is appointed by the CEO to manage all competitions and related matters regarding football.

Home and Away: The matches played which determine those teams who are to play finals matches.

Junior Competition: Matches graded by age from Under 9 to Under 18.

Junior Player: Any player eligible to play in the Junior Competition.

Laws of Australian Football: The laws of the game of Australian Football adopted by the Australian Football League as modified for the League, set out in Schedule 1.

League: The Northern Football Netball League Incorporated.

Member: A financial member of an Affiliated Club or in the case of a player, a family member of that player.

NFNL: The Northern Football Netball League Incorporated.

NFNL Levy: All players are required to pay an administration fee when registering for each competition year and any players registered to another league playing in the NFNL on a permit.

Player: A registered player with an Affiliated Club within the NFNL.

Reserves: Reserve senior football competition for open age players that does not restrict the playing of Under 19.5 or Junior footballers. For Senior Womens clubs with 2 teams, the second team is considered the Reserves team.

Seniors: Senior Men and Women football competition for open age players that does not restrict the playing of Under 19.5, Under 18 Girls or Junior footballers.



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Senior Competition: Football matches scheduled as Senior Men and Women, Reserve and Under-19.5.

Senior Player: Any player eligible to play in the Senior Men and Women, Reserve and Under 19.5 competitions.

Supporter: A member of the public who may not have a formal affiliation with a Club but is present on match day watching NFNL competition.

Team Official: Any person assigned by a club to perform game day duties as per Schedule 8.

Under 18 Girls: Competition of junior girls football.

Under 19.5: Competition of senior football restricted to players as defined by By-Law 4 or Junior competition footballers.

VFL/VFLW Player: A player that is listed in that competition year with a VFL/VFLW club and/or has played a VFL/VFLW game in that competition year.

1.2 The appendices and schedules attached should be read in conjunction with and form part of the By-Laws of the Northern Football Netball League.

By-Laws that have been altered from the previous year or are new are indicated in blue.

2. LAWS OF THE GAME & AFL NATIONAL COMMUNITY POLICY

2.1 All football games shall be played in accordance with the “Laws of Australian Football” determined by the AFL, as adopted in Schedule 1 by the League. *(Noting: NFNL Local Law variances to rules are contained in the Schedule 1 document)*

2.2 Adoption of AFL National Community Policy Handbook

- 2.2.1 Section 3. Player Registration and Transfers
- 2.2.2 Section 5. Coach Accreditation
- 2.2.3 Section 6. Umpire Accreditation
- 2.2.4 Section 7. De-registration
- 2.2.5 Section 8. Gender and Diversity (participation of transgender and non-binary people)
- 2.2.6 Section 9. Member Protection
- 2.2.7 Section 10. Vilification and Discrimination
- 2.2.8 Section 11. Safeguarding Children and Young People
- 2.2.9 Section 13. Gambling and Match Fixing
- 2.2.10 Section 14. Respect and Responsibility
- 2.2.11 Section 15. Anti-Doping
- 2.2.12 Section 16. Injury Management
- 2.2.13 Section 19. Concussion
- 2.2.14 Section 20. Pregnant Players
- 2.2.15 Section 21. Infectious Diseases



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3. AFFILIATION FEE AND OUTSTANDING ACCOUNTS TO THE LEAGUE

- 3.1** Each affiliated Junior or Senior Football Club shall pay an annual affiliation fee of the sum prescribed by the Board.
- 3.2** Debts: All monies outstanding to the League are to be paid no later than thirty (30) days after the date of the invoice issued by the League.
- 3.3** Clubs must be within the determined NFNL trading terms by 3pm on the Friday prior to the following rounds to be eligible for match points in all football and netball matches:
- a) Round 1 of Senior and Junior Football matches;
 - b) Round 5 of Senior and Junior Football matches;
 - c) Round 9 of Senior and Junior Football matches;
 - d) Round 14 of Senior and Junior Football matches.
- 3.4** If a Junior or Senior Football Club is deemed to be un-financial all football teams from the un-financial club will become ineligible for match points until the club is deemed to be financial by the CEO.
- 3.5** Where a match takes place with a club who is ineligible for match points, the opposition club must win the match to receive the match points. If the unfinancial club wins the match, neither team shall receive the match points.
- 3.6** The NFNL Board shall have the right to approve an agreed payment plan for un-financial clubs. If a club breaches the agreed payment plan they will forfeit the right to another payment plan and will become ineligible for match points until they are deemed to be financial by the CEO.
- 3.7** All affiliated clubs participating in final series matches must be financial with the league before the conclusion of the home and away matches. If a participating club is not financial, the league may at its discretion, remove all or any of its teams from their position in the final series matches and promote the next entitled financial teams in their place to participate in the final's series.
- 3.8** Senior football clubs who are unfinancial with the NFNL at the close of business on the 31st October each year will have their Total Player Payments (TPP) for the following season reviewed by the NFNL Board.
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4. CLUB & PLAYER REGISTRATION

4.1 Football Registration, MoU Permits and Interchange League Agreements

- 4.1.1** The understanding of the registration process of players is vital for clubs when considering the promotion of juniors to senior football during the home and away season or for the selection of juniors in senior finals football.



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4.1.2 Every club is responsible for sighting a player's proof of age document to ensure their age eligibility for participating in a competition that has a minimum or maximum age requirement. The following documents are acceptable as proof of age:

- (i) Birth certificate
- (ii) Drivers Licence or Permit
- (iii) Passport
- (vi) School identification card
- (v) Statutory Declaration.

4.1.3 For Senior Clubs that provide a pathway (sponsor) to senior football for a standalone Junior Affiliated club, they must provide the NFNL with a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Presidents of both Clubs in order to have junior footballers from that Junior Affiliated Club eligible to play senior football with the sponsoring Senior Club. AFL Victoria has final approval on all MoU's.

4.1.4 Any senior club wishing to play a junior player via the pathway must submit a Season Permit via PlayHQ which must be approved online by the NFNL prior to that junior player playing in any senior game.

For a junior player to be eligible to play in a senior NFNL competition in any given year, the player's junior club they are registered to for that season must be aligned with the senior club via the applicable approved AFL Victoria MoU.

Registered junior players (NFNL or other junior leagues) are only permitted to play on a permit with their senior approved club.

The league does not allow junior players to transfer in and out to other outside non-permitted senior clubs their junior club is attached to during a season.

Transfers would only be allowable if the junior player has decided to now play senior football for the remainder of that season. Any such junior player would not be approved by the league to then play back in juniors that season.

Case Examples:

- St Marys Junior player (YJFL) is only permitted to apply for a permit to St Marys Senior Football Club as per the MoU.
- A Research JFC player is not permitted to play on a permit with North Heidelberg Senior Football Club as they do not have a MoU agreement in place.
- A Eltham JFC registered player in that season is not permitted to submit for a transfer to Old Eltham Collegians for one off games.

4.1.5 Interchange League Agreements

The NFNL has an interchange league agreement for the 2025 season with:

- Yarra Junior Football League – (For NFNL Senior clubs aligned in a MoU with a YJFL junior club)



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- Riddell District Football Netball League – (MoU for Wallan JFC with Wallan Senior Football)
- AFL Victoria Country - Student and Family permits
- AFL Masters
- FIDA
- VFL/VFLW/Coates League
- Other (Interstate application)

4.1.6 No person may play in any matches authorised or conducted by the League, other than practice matches, unless that person has registered with an NFNL Club with player details recorded on Play HQ.

4.1.7 Any player registered with the League and permitted to play with an Affiliated Club who wishes to play with another Affiliated Club must apply to the League for a transfer within the League in accordance with the AFL National Transfer Regulations.

4.2 NFNL Juniors playing in NFNL Senior competitions.

4.2.1 Juniors playing Senior Football - Once a junior player plays **9 or more** accumulative home and away matches of senior football (Under 19.5, Reserves, Seniors) in that season they are ineligible to play again in any junior competition matches, including finals.

4.3 NFNL Junior competitions - Playing Out of Age Group/Grade/Team

4.3.1 All players in the Under 9 to Under 18 football age groups (inclusive) may play out of their registered age group/grade/team. However:

- a) No junior player may play NFNL juniors more than two years above his/her junior age group, regardless of whether or not competitions are available in those junior age groups. *Applications under exceptional circumstances only will be considered by the GM Football Operations and must be submitted by the league directed process for review.*
- b) Once a Junior player has played 5 or more home and away matches in a higher junior age group, they are ineligible to play in a lower age group for the remainder of the season, including finals. **Exception: Players in non competitive age group divisions of Under 9 or Under 10 player.**
- c) Once a Junior player has played 5 or more home and away matches in a higher junior division, they are ineligible to play in a lower division team for the remainder of the season, including finals.
- d) For junior clubs with 2 teams in the same division, once a player has played 5 or more home and away games with a team, they are ineligible to again play for the club's other team in that same division for the remainder of the season, including finals.
- e) The hierarchical order is Senior Men/Women, Reserves, Under 19.5, Juniors age group, competitive junior division number grade.
- f) Refer to final's eligibility for clarification of movement between age groups/grades and teams for finals participation.



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- g) Under exceptional circumstances only, clubs may apply for a special exemption for players to play additional games above this cap during the home and away season only. *Such submissions must be submitted in writing to the GM Football Operations.*

4.4 Under 19.5 Senior Clubs with 2 teams entered

(a) Senior Clubs that submit two Under 19.5 teams are required to submit a Restricted Player List (RPL) of the age group's best 15 players in their highest division team prior to the commencement of the season. Clubs may be required to verify these RPL players through the supplying of club best and fairest votes from the previous season. The league shall have final approval on all RPL's submitted.

The RPL players are not eligible to play in the lower division team at any stage. These RPL players make up the nucleus of the higher division team for that season.

Fringe 1st and 2nd team Players and the lower division team.

All other players can play between the first and second teams during the home and away season.

However, players may only qualify for finals in the lower division team if they have played more games in the lower division during the home and away season. If the player has played an equal number of games in both division teams then they will be eligible for the higher division team only on the basis that they have also met all other eligibility requirements.

(b) Senior Women clubs with 2 teams are classified as a Senior (Team 1) and Reserves (Team 2) team model. There are no restrictions on player movement between the "senior" and "reserves" team in different divisions during the home and away season.

4.5 Player Age Groups

- a) A player must be at least 7 years old as of April 30 in each year to be eligible to be registered with an NFNL affiliated club.
- b) A player's age group shall be based on a player's age as of January 1 in each year.
- c) Football competitions that extend the age of a competition must adhere to January 1 as the age determination date, e.g., for a U/19.5 competition in 2025, the age shall be extended back to July 1, 2024, thus allowing the player to be 19 ½ on January 1, 2025.

Example:

Under 17.5 – Any player born prior to July 1, 2007, would not be eligible to play in the 2025 Under 17.5 competition.

Under 19.5 – Any player born prior to 1 July 2005 would not be eligible to play in the 2025 Under 19.5 competition.

- d) The league does **not** permit or consider any applications under any circumstances for any junior player to play below their correct age group as per their date of birth.



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- e) Any request for a player to play down an age group in junior football competitions would only be reviewed where the player meets the criteria set out in **Schedule 34 – NFNL Medical Overage Exemption Policy**. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- f) Any request for an overage player to play down in Under 19.5 or Under 18 Junior Girls football competitions will only be reviewed where the player meets the criteria set out in **Schedule 35 – NFNL U18 Girls-U19.5 Development Player Policy**. NO EXCEPTIONS.

4.6 Penalty for Playing Non-Permitted Players

4.6.1 Any Affiliated Club that allows a player to play in any home and away games or finals series where that player is:

- a) Not registered with the League; or
- b) Not permitted to play with that Affiliated Club; or
- c) Under suspension; or
- d) Not qualified under rule 4.1,4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5

Shall be liable to:

- A fine for breach not exceeding \$1000; and/or
- Disqualification from the competition; and/or
- Loss of all premiership points and scores obtained in matches in which the player played and the awarding of those points to the appropriate opposing teams. Individual stats such as goals and Best & Fairest votes will NOT be removed for players other than the offending player.
- The Board may also deal with the player concerned as it sees fit.

4.6.2 No person shall be qualified to play for a League Club in any match played under the auspices of the League:

- a) Who is not for the time being a duly registered playing member of such Club and the holder of a permit to play.
- b) Who is under any disqualification or who has not paid any fine for breach imposed by any competent authority. A record of such disqualification or fine for breach (as far as known) shall be kept by the League and shall be available for inspection by all officials at any time.
- c) Unless he/she is the holder of all required transfers and permits.

4.7 Reported Players

A reported player may continue to play with his/her Affiliated Club until his/her case is heard by the appointed Tribunal and any suspension that may be given shall date from the date of the Tribunal's decision. The CEO must approve all deferred tribunal hearings. Any suspension shall make a player ineligible from playing in all competition/age groups until after the NFNL fixture home and away and/or finals games played equal to the player's suspension has been.



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4.8 Fees – Football

- 4.8.1 All players shall pay an administration levy of \$30 when registering in any senior or junior competition. (NFNL Levy)
- 4.8.2 Any player not directly registered with the NFNL but playing on a permit from another league must pay a \$30 NFNL player levy fee. Each affiliated club is responsible for this payment and will be invoiced at the end of the season. Clubs should collect this \$30 fee from the permit player and is recommended clubs collect this before their first match.

4.9 Poaching and Payment of Players – Junior Competitions

- 4.9.1 Recruiting top tier level junior players in NFNL junior competitions through the means of financial compensation, whether as match payments, sign on payments or incentives of any kind such as free merchandise, free club membership, free external membership product groups, whatsoever, either to the player, parent or agent will not be permitted.

The level of a player's ability i.e. If they are top tier, will be for the determination of the GM Football Operations.

Enticements of any kind are not permitted. A club may still be investigated under this rule if the transfer is not completed.

Normal match day awards, trophy awards, discounted registration fees or assistance towards the purchase of playing equipment where financial hardship exists will be permitted only.

- 4.9.2 Any club wishing to lodge a formal grievance where they believe that rule 4.9.1 has been breached is required to lodge a bond for the appointment of an Investigation Officer as per NFNL By Law 19. Refer to Schedule 20 for bond amounts.

After completion of the investigation any club determined to be guilty by the GM Football Operations of a breach of rule 4.9.1 will receive a penalty or other sanction to be determined by the GM Football Operations. The GM Football Operations at their discretion may refer the matter direct to the NFNL Board to determine sanctions.

4.10 Player and Official De-Registration -

- 4.10.1 [As per AFL Victoria National Community Football Policy Handbook - 7 De-registration.](#)

- 4.10.2 De-registration (16 matches accumulative total is a life ban de-registration from AFL Victoria)

As per Section 7.2 (b) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook: '**7.2 Criteria for Dereistration – Reportable Offences**'

Please note the age of person suspension when this is commenced as per 4.10.3

4.10.3 Suspensions attained once 16 years or older apply

Only suspensions, sanctions and Citation Notices relating to Reportable Offences or Policy Breaches committed by a Player or Football Official after attaining the age of 16 years will count for the purposes of this Section 7 of AFL policy.



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5. PLAYER TRANSFERS

5.1 All intra-league transfers will be dealt with in accordance with the **AFL Victoria National Community Football Policy Handbook** – [3. Player Registrations and Transfers](#).

5.2 Contracted Players - Players are solely responsible for thoroughly reviewing and understanding all terms of their club contract before signing. Upon signing, the leagues position is the player is then bound to the agreed terms and duration of the contract with that club they have signed with. Any early termination or modification of the contract can only occur with formal authorisation from the club to which the player is contracted. Players should also ensure they receive a copy of the signed contract for their records.

5.3 Appeals on declined player transfer requests must be submitted within 1 day of the declining of a transfer by the players destination club with bond monies of \$500 and grounds of appeal. AFL Victoria rules state that there is no restriction on the number of times a player may submit for a transfer and it be declined.

The other club will have 6 days from time of notification of the lodged appeal to submit bond monies of \$500. If the club fails to submit bond monies within the timeframe outlined as required the players transfer request will be approved the league.

Club that submitted Appeal:

- If the appeal on the declined transfer is unsuccessful for the destination club the league will retain all bond monies from this club.
- If the appeal is successful by the club that lodged the appeal 20% of their bond monies is retained by the league as administration fee.

Club who declined the transfer:

- Their full bond monies will be returned to this club if the destination clubs appeal is unsuccessful.
- If the appeal by the destination club is successful 50% of this clubs bond monies will be retained by the league.

5.4 No more than three (3) junior players per age group will be permitted to be transferred from an affiliated club to another Affiliated Junior Club per season unless both Affiliated Junior Clubs consent to this number being exceeded.

5.5 Any junior representative player nominated by their club is ineligible to transfer from the club that nominated them to another NFNL club in that season, unless authorised by the GM Football Operations based on exceptional circumstances information provided.



6 COMMUNITY CLUB SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM – SENIOR MEN

6.1 Player Points System

6.1.1 Player points will be allocated as prescribed in Schedule 25 'AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy'. **Exception: 6.1.6.**

6.1.2 The total player points (TPP) cap for season 2025 is:

- 46 points for Division 1 Senior Men
- 46 points for Division 2 Senior Men
- 46 points for Division 3 Senior Men

6.1.3 The total player points cap does not apply to Senior Women, Reserve, Under-19.5 or Junior competitions.

6.1.4 A request for additional TPP points (see NFNL Schedule 25 – AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy, Section 8) must be submitted to the GM Football Operations by no later than March 1st of the year the request is for. Any submissions made after this date will not be assessed.

The submission must outline the reasons for the request in line with the guidelines in NFNL Schedule 25 – AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy, Section 8.

6.1.5 A club may lodge an appeal, to be heard by the CEO, on the player points assessment completed by League operation staff within 7 days of notification.

A bond of \$500 must be paid to the office of the CEO at the time of lodgement.

The bond, may be returned upon resolution of the appeal, except in the case where it is determined that the appeal was frivolous or vexatious, in which case the CEO at their discretion may retain whole or part of the bond.

6.1.6 Under 19.5 Season of Service Deductions Applications

Any NFNL Senior Club that meets the following criteria:

- Does not have its own juniors or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a Junior Club, and/or
- Has a Junior Club that fielded a minimal number of teams in the previous junior season

May submit a written application to the CEO by March 1 of that competition year for a 1-point season of service deduction for Under 19.5 players from the previous season.

If approved by the CEO:

- A player who has played 10 or more Under 19.5 games in the previous season (2024) will receive a 1-point season of service deduction with their club. (No deductions apply for earlier seasons.)



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- If a player participated in both Under 19.5 and Reserves games during the previous season, the deduction will be based on their total number of matches.
Example: A player who played 7 Under 19.5 games and 4 Reserves games (totalling 11 games) would qualify for a 1-point deduction.

The NFNL reserves the right to assess and determine point reductions on a case-by-case basis.

6.1.7 To assess applications under AFL CCSP By-Law 7.3 for a player points deduction, the league will only consider situations where a player's move would otherwise result in additional points being assigned under the player points system. This applies particularly to cases where a player has relocated to Melbourne from Country Victoria or interstate for school, work, or similar commitments. For instance, if this required relocation causes the player to accumulate an extra point due to playing for multiple clubs—*such as representing three different clubs in three consecutive seasons*—the league may review the application to avoid unfairly penalising the player with the additional 1 point as per the policy for circumstances beyond their control.

6.2 Player Payment Policy

- 6.2.1** Player Payment Policy will be actioned as prescribed in Schedule 28 'AFL VICTORIA PLAYER PAYMENTS POLICY'. *Exceptions NFNL By Laws 6.2.2, 6.2.3*
- 6.2.2** Player payments must be made for each home and away round in accordance with the players contract as it stands at the commencement of the season.
- 6.2.3** No monetary adjustment decreases on any player contracts are allowed by a club during the season.
- 6.2.4** The total player payments cap for season 2025 is:
- \$125,000 for Division 1 Senior Men
 - \$100,000 for Division 2 Senior Men
 - \$75,000 for Division 3 Senior Men

6.3 Player Declarations (Senior Men teams Division 1, 2, 3)

- 6.3.1** Players are required to use the Northern Football Netball League standard playing declaration if receiving match payments. The declaration can be found as Schedule 29 (AFL Victoria Standard Player Declaration) in the Northern Football Netball League Rules and By-Laws.
- 6.3.2** If a club elects to sign a player and does not use the AFL Victoria Standard Player Declaration, in the case where there may be a dispute between player and club over contract arrangements the Northern Football Netball League may not be able to help resolve the dispute, as it states in the declaration.

7 MISREPRESENTATIONS

- 7.1** Any player or club representative who makes any misstatement or misrepresentation in applying for registration, clear may be dealt with by the Board by way of:



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- a) Fine not exceeding \$1000; and/or
- b) Disqualification from the competition; and/or
- c) Loss of all premiership points obtained in matches in whom that player played and awarding of those points to the appropriate opposing teams.

8 FOOTBALL COMPETITIONS

8.1 Team Numbers

Senior Men	
Seniors	22 Players (18 on-field, 4 bench)
Reserves	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-19.5	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Junior Boys	
Under-17.5	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-16	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-15	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-14	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-13	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-12	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-11	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-10	24 Players (18 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-9	24 Players (15 on-field, 9 bench)

Senior Women	
All Divisions	22 Players (16 on-field, 6 bench)

Junior Girls	
Under-18	22 Players (16 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-16	22 Players (16 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-14	22 Players (16 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-12	22 Players (16 on-field, 6 bench)
Under-10	24 Players (15 on-field, 9 bench)

- a) While the NFNL recommends clubs cap the number of registered players in a junior team to a maximum of **26 players in boys** and **24 players in girls**, to ensure all players can play finals, and in addition are not regularly rostered off from playing during the home and away season. There is no limit to the number of players that can be registered at any one time by a junior football team. However, players participating in matches are subject to the NFNL junior rules regarding interchange players in the



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home and away season and finals team number cap allowances to a maximum of 26 players.

- b) In junior age groups the emphasis is placed on participation and enjoyment. Additional goals are the acquisition of football skills and the nurturing of physical and emotional development and well-being. League expectation is that in these underage matches, all players will play at a minimum half a game of football.
- a) No approval will be given to junior football teams to expand the interchange bench for home and away matches in the competitive age groups of Under 11 to Under 18.
- b) If a junior football team in the non-competitive age groups of Under 9 and Under 10 wishes to have more than the permitted number of players on the interchange bench during a game, they will need to seek approval of the League.

8.2 Headcount (Football)

- 8.2.1** The captain or acting captain of a team may at any time during a match request that the field umpire count the number of players of the opposing team who are on the playing surface.
- 8.2.2** Where the number of players on the field exceed the permitted number the field umpire will first note the scores at the time of the count and award a free kick to the captain of the opposing team to be taken at the centre circle or where play was stopped, whichever is the greater penalty against the offending team. A 50-metre penalty is then added to the position where the free kick was awarded. The League will determine the final result of the game at a later stage. The Board will determine at a later date if any other penalty is imposed.
- 8.2.3** Where player numbers are found to be correct and/or the request was without merit the field umpire will award a free kick to the captain of the opposing team to be taken at the centre circle or where play was stopped, whichever is the greater penalty against the offending team. A 50-metre penalty is then added to the position where the free kick was awarded. If the field umpire(s) are of the opinion a request was made to delay play or the request lacked merit, the umpire(s) shall report the captain for time wasting.

8.3 Ball Requirements

Women		Junior Boys	
Senior	Size 4 Leather	Under-17.5	Size 5 Leather
Men		Under-16	Size 5 Leather
Senior	Size 5 Leather	Under-15	Size 5 Leather
Reserves	Size 5 Leather	Under-14	Size 4 Leather
Under-19.5	Size 5 Leather	Under-13	Size 4 Leather
Junior Girls		Under-12	Size 3 Leather
Under-18	Size 4 Leather	Under-11	Size 3 Synthetic
Under-16	Size 4 Leather	Under-10	Size 2 Synthetic
Under-14	Size 4 Synthetic	Under-9	Size 2 Synthetic
Under-12	Size 3 Synthetic		
Under-10	Size 2 Synthetic		



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- a) All footballs used must have the NFNL approved sponsor's logo.
- b) In senior matches, two new and approved footballs must be supplied. One must be provided to the umpires, and the spare kept on the home bench for the duration of the game.
- c) In Reserves and Under 19.5 matches, two approved footballs in good condition must be supplied. One must be provided to the umpires, and the spare kept on the home bench for the duration of the game.
- d) In non-competitive junior age groups (Under 9 and Under 10) one football in good condition must be supplied.
- e) In competitive junior age groups (Under 11 to Under 18) two approved footballs in good condition must be supplied, preferably one of these balls to be new.
- f) In wet weather, prior to the commencement of the match a senior official from both clubs will come together to decide on the number of balls used in that match. In the event of a dispute, the senior official from the home club shall have the right to decide.
- g) For day matches, red balls can be substituted for yellow balls, but only if agreed to by an away club senior official or directed to by the umpire/league. The color selected shall be used throughout the match.
- h) Yellow balls are to be used for any scheduled twilight or night senior match, or otherwise allowed or directed by the league (Example: Under 9 - [Under 10](#) non-competitive division competitions this would be allowable).

8.4 Start Times for All Competitions

- a) The starting times for junior and senior matches will be determined by the NFNL office as per fixturing. A guide of overage football start times is as follows:

Senior Men	2:10pm (Saturday)
Reserve	11:55am (Saturday)
Under 19.5	9:40am (Saturday) or as otherwise stated to be scheduled to start by the league due to ground availability at that time.
Senior Women	3:00pm (Sunday) or as otherwise stated to be scheduled to start by the league due to ground availability at that time.

8.5 Length of Quarters

- a) **Senior Men and Women Competitions**

Senior Competitions	
Senior Men	20 Minutes + Time On (All Qtrs.)
Reserves Men	1st & 2nd Qtr. 20 Minutes (No Time On)
	3rd & 4th Qtr. 20 Minutes + Time On
Under 19.5	1st & 2nd Qtr. 20 Minutes (No Time On)
	3rd & 4th Qtr. 20 Minutes + Time On



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Senior Women Division 1 & 2	20 Minutes (No Time On) (All Qtrs.)
Senior Women Division 3	15 Minutes (No Time On) (All Qtrs.)
All Senior Women's Finals	1st & 2nd Qtr. (No Time On)
(Qtr. length as above)	3rd & 4th Qtr. + Time On

b) Junior Competitions

Junior Boys	
Under 17.5	20 Minutes
Under 16	20 Minutes
Under 15	20 Minutes
Under 14	15 Minutes
Under 13	15 Minutes
Under 12	15 Minutes
Under 11	15 Minutes
Under 10	12 Minutes
Under 9	12 Minutes
Junior Girls	
Under 18	15 Minutes
Under 16	15 Minutes
Under 14	15 Minutes
Under 12	15 Minutes
Under 10	12 Minutes

Note: All Junior finals are played with time on in the 3rd and 4th quarter.

8.6 Breaks

Senior Men & Women Competitions	
1/4 Time	5 Minutes
1/2 Time	15 Minutes
3/4 Time	5 Minutes
Junior Competitions	
1/4 Time	5 Minutes
1/2 Time	10 Minutes
3/4 Time	5 Minutes

8.7 Promotion/Relegation – Senior Men Football

- 8.7.1** A senior men's club shall be entitled to participate in the division in which it participated in the previous season with the exception of the club whose team were premiers in Division 2, who shall be promoted to Division 1, and the club whose senior team finished bottom in Division 1, who shall be relegated to Division 2. The same shall apply between Division 2 and Division 3.



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8.7.2 The Board may otherwise promote, relegate or refuse to promote any club in the event that:

- a) The club cannot field a full complement of teams for the forthcoming season.
- b) Playing facilities of the club are not of a sufficient standard for the division in which the team is to compete in the next season.
- c) There are any other circumstances which, in the opinion of the Board, require a club to be promoted, relegated or refused promotion, including those clubs that have not met their financial commitments to the NFNL.

8.8 23rd Player Rule -Senior Men

- a) An eligible Under 19.5 player may play as a 23rd player in the affiliated club's senior team. The NFNL shall nominate four (4) rounds prior to the commencement of the season where clubs are able to play the 23rd player. This player cannot be the same player in all four games; it must be a different player in each of these games, and the player must be nominated on the team sheet.
- b) If a player has played three (3) or more career games in the senior team (Firsts), he is unable to be used as the 23rd player in any of the nominated rounds.
- c) A 23rd player's points allocation under the AFL Victoria Community Club Sustainability Program (Schedule 25) **shall not count towards their team's points total when that player is playing under the 23rd man rule.**
- d) A 23rd players payment is not included in the overall salary cap for that season.
- e) All clubs must inform the NFNL, by 11am on the Friday prior to the selected round, the name of their 23rd player.
- f) 23rd players can be an approved permit player under a MoU. ***Refer to Rule 4.1.4***

8.9 Joining Clubs

8.9.1 A club joining the League shall be entitled to participate only in the division determined by the Board and then be subject to promotion and relegation.

8.10 Ground Equipment

8.10.1 The home Affiliated Club shall be responsible for due appointment and marking of grounds, the provision of suitable bell or siren and other usual and suitable equipment, such as goal posts pads and medical stretcher. The failing shall be reported and be subject to the same procedure and penalties as provided in the case of an Affiliated Club not ready to commence play.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

8.11 Playing Surface

8.11.1 The Playing Surface shall be:

- a) Oval in shape.
- b) Between 150 metres and 185 metres in length.
- c) Between 95 metres and 155 metres in width.



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- 8.11.2** A white line shall be marked on the ground to identify the Playing Surface. This white line shall be drawn in the shape of an arc from the behind post at one end of the Playing Surface to the behind post at the other end of the Playing Surface. The white lines which are drawn are called the Boundary Line.
- 8.11.3** At a ground that is fully enclosed by a fence, the distance between the marked boundary line and the fence at all points must be at least three (3) metres. Where the ground is not enclosed by a fence a second line must be marked four (4) metres outside the marked boundary line. No spectator is to encroach over this 'second' line during the playing of quarters.
- 8.11.4** Clubs with unfenced grounds must also ensure that an area behind the goal and behind posts is sectioned off to a distance of five (5) metres.
- 8.11.5** Once a team has entered the playing arena for the conduct of a match (at their programmed commencement time), they are not permitted to leave the arena other than for the recognised halftime break and on the conclusion of the match (after the final siren has sounded).
- 8.11.6** The following areas shall be marked on the Playing Surface:
- a) A square, to be called the Centre Square, which shall be located in the centre of the Playing Surface and be 45 metres long by 45 metres wide.
 - b) A Centre Circle, Located in the middle of the Centre Square - an inner circle 3m in diameter and an outer circle 10m in diameter. Both circles are divided into two semicircles by drawing a straight line parallel with each goal line.
 - c) Coaches Box Area – Rule 8.12.5
 - d) Extended coaches box area for bench player warm ups and/or for trainers to attend to injured players. Refer 8.12.6
 - e) Player Interchange area/zone. Refer 8.12.2
 - f) A Goal Square at each end of the Playing Surface.
 - g) A Goal Line and Behind Line at each end of the Playing Surface.
 - h) 45 metre or 50 metre arcs at each end of the Playing Surface.
 - i) Four Water Carriers/Trainers boxes, marked along the fence line at each point of the 50m arcs. All water carriers/extra trainers must be stationed in this marked area.

8.12 Coaches Boxes & Extended Areas

- 8.12.1** Coaches boxes or benches as a guide should be at least 35 to 40 metres from the other coaches box area if on the same side of the ground if allowable.
- 8.12.2** If coaches boxes are fixed on the same side of the ground, the interchange area can be marked exactly in the middle between the two boxes or alternatively in front of the separate coaches box areas at the determination of the home club.



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- 8.12.3** Coaches boxes/benches and the interchange area are encouraged to be placed on the same side of the ground.
- 8.12.4** Fines will be imposed when home clubs fail to meet this requirement, or any alternative requirement imposed by the CEO.
- 8.12.5** The coaches box designated area should have a line marked either side of the coaching box perimeter area and also a line marked in front of the coaches box area on the surface halfway between the boundary line and the fence/coaches box known as the Boundary Umpire Running Lane (*as a guide an allowance of 1.5m minimum running lane provided from the boundary line to the coaches box area for the safety of boundary umpires and players on field*).
- No official (other than the runner or trainers) is to encroach outside the designated coach box area during the game's playing time.
- 8.12.6** While Coaches and team officials must remain inside the actual designated coaches box area.
- An extended area beyond the designated coaches box area should be marked to provide for player warmups and/or for trainers to attend to injured players etc.
- This extended area should be marked no more than 15 metres either side of the edges of the coaching box. This extended area is to ensure no unauthorised person can enter this area.
- This extended area (as per the coaches box area line) should be marked with a line between the boundary fence and boundary (*with an allowance of approximately 1.5m minimum running lane provided from the boundary line to the coaches box area for the safety of boundary umpires and players on field*).
- 8.12.7** In Junior Football, coaches boxes must be roped off a minimum distance of 3 metres either side of the coaches box on the outside of the ground.
- 8.12.8 Seniors/Reserves/Under 19.5:** Where coach's boxes are situated on the playing surface outside the boundary line, teams are restricted to interchange players, a maximum of two (2) trainers and five other club officials, one of which is the runner. Umpires may award a free kick against any support staff who do not comply with this rule.
- 8.12.9 Juniors:** Where coach's boxes are situated on the playing surface outside the boundary line, teams are restricted to interchange players and four club officials, one of which is the runner, plus a maximum of two (2) trainers. Umpires may award a free kick against any support staff who do not comply with this rule.
- 8.12.10** Umpires shall report any infringement of By-Law 8.12.
- 8.12.11** Officials are not permitted to smoke within the playing arena.
- 8.12.12** It is the responsibility of the home club to provide appropriate seating at each Coaches Box area.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.



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8.13 Timekeepers & Time on specifications

8.13.1 For all junior and senior competitions matches both teams are required to supply a timekeeper.

8.13.2 Sirens Instructions

Pre-match: Sound the siren as the umpire enters the field holding the ball in air, and then sound the siren twice at both 2 minutes and again at 1 minute prior to the scheduled match commencement time.

To start the match: Sound the siren when the field umpire holds the ball up in the air to signal the start.

End of quarter: Sound the siren once the total time has elapsed for that quarter (including time on if applicable)

Quarter breaks: At each break, sound the siren twice, two (2) minutes, and again one (1) minute before the scheduled recommencement. Then sound the siren when the umpire holds the ball in the air to signal the commencement of the quarter.

8.13.3 Time On – Football Competitions

Senior Men - Home & Away , All Finals	All Quarters
Reserves Men - Home & Away , All Finals	3rd & 4th Quarters only
Under 19.5 - Home & Away, All Finals	3rd & 4th Quarters only
Senior Women - Finals Only	3rd & 4th Quarters only
Juniors - Finals Only	3rd & 4th Quarters only

8.13.4 Time on Information

- Goal or behind is scored:** Clock stops as soon as the goal umpire signals a goal or behind; clock restarts when the central umpire throws the ball up or when the ball is kicked in, or the player plays on.
- Boundary Throw In or out on the full:** Clock stops when boundary umpire signals a boundary throw in; clock restarts when the ball is released by the boundary umpire for a throw in and/or player kicks the ball or is signalled to play on.
- Injured Player/Stretcher:** In the event of an injured player or stretcher on the ground, the field umpire shall signal or verbalise to the timekeepers to stop the clock. The timekeepers shall restart the clock once play has recommenced.
- Umpire signals Time Off:** Umpire will signal time off by placing one hand straight up in the air and blowing their whistle (clock stops), this time off is only to occur if there is a significant break in play (stretcher, player being treated around the ball etc). When play restarts the clock restarts.



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8.13.5 Significant Delays - Stretcher, Ambulance, Severe Weather

Umpires, in consultation with both team managers, will make all attempts to achieve a match result within the allocated time for that match. (Noting: half the total minutes of the match playing time constitutes a match result). Umpires have total discretion to alter the length of quarters and breaks to achieve a result. Where possible the breaks and or quarters must be shortened into equivalent time periods and be consistent throughout the remainder of the match.

Example: Under 16 junior game timings are 4*20 minute quarters = 80 minutes.
40 total minutes of playing time would constitute a match result.

For further clarification on match day, a league staff member should be contacted.

Games must be finished 5 minutes before the scheduled starting time of the next game, or by no later than 5pm.

Example 1:

Under 19.5 matches must be finished at least 5 minutes before the scheduled start time of the next game.

If the Reserves commence at 11.55am, the final siren must sound no later than 11.50am.

Example 2:

Under 17.5 junior game starting at 3.15pm must be finished by 5pm.

Note – The NFNL at their discretion in consultation with the umpires may extend the match past 5pm.

Refer to Schedule 15 Match Delay Policy

8.14 Admission Prices

- 8.14.1** The Board shall advise as of March 1 yearly the recommended maximum admission prices for home and away matches (exclusive of any fee for parking or football record). Admission cannot be charged for NFNL home and away matches until 10am.

9 FIXTURES

9.1 Preparation

- 9.1.1** The League shall be responsible for the organisation of matches in each division by preparing fixtures for each team in each division/section for each season. The League may amend a fixture as required.



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- 9.1.2** For Senior men competition fixturing each affiliated club shall have the opportunity to submit, when requested, their preference for any special consideration for the fixturing for the following football season by no later than the end of October.
- 9.1.3** Junior, Senior Womens and Under 19.5 clubs are required to submit team nominations in that competition year by the specified date. Teams will be placed in divisions for the season as determined by the league.
- 9.1.4** Re-divisionalisation of a team may occur in any round up to Round 5 or by an alternate round number if determined by the GM Football Operations is required in the Juniors, Senior Womens and Under 19.5 competitions. *Refer to By Law 10.3*

9.2 Home and Away

- 9.2.1** The League shall conduct for mens competitions a series of 18 (or such number as the Board shall from time to time determine) Home and Away football matches for senior, reserves and under-19.5. The League shall conduct a series of a minimum of 14 (or such number as the Board shall from time to time determine) Home and Away football matches for Under 18 age groups and below (excluding Under 9 and Under 10).
- 9.2.2** The League shall conduct for Senior Women competitions a series of a minimum of 14 (or such number as the Board shall from time to time determine) Home and Away football matches.

9.3 Failure to Fulfill Engagements

- 9.3.1** Should any Affiliated Club fail to fulfill its engagement to play in any premiership match, the League may disqualify them from further premiership matches or otherwise deal with such Affiliated Clubs as it thinks fit.
- 9.3.2** Any Affiliated Club failing to fulfill its engagement shall pay all umpires expenses relative to the said fixture plus an additional Fine for breach as set by the Board.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

9.4 Alterations

- 9.4.1** Clubs desiring to conduct Senior Men or Women, Reserves, Under 19.5 or Junior grade football matches on a day or time other than that published by the league in the official fixture may do so providing the following requirements have been satisfied:
- a) That written agreement for a change to the fixture has been obtained from an office bearer of the opposing club.
 - b) That all appropriate licences and permissions to conduct the game have been received and copies forwarded to the League office prior to the game.
 - c) With exception to extraordinary circumstances as determined by the League, the League must receive the fixture change request, with accompanying agreement and reasoning, at least 14 days prior to the proposed game date.
 - d) The league at their discretion may schedule a game outside the stated general times to accommodate any ground availability issues and general fixture requirements.



10 LADDERS

10.1 Seniors - Point Allocation and Match Ratio Calculations

10.1.1 In the Home and Away matches, four (4) points will be allotted for a win, four (4) points for a team in whose favour a forfeit or walkover is ruled, two (2) points for a draw and zero (0) points for a loss.

10.1.2 In competitions involving an uneven number of byes for competing teams, the League shall also prepare a match ratio which reflects the number of wins by each team against the number of matches played by each team.

10.1.3 In the event that selection for the finals series is between teams with the same number of points, the team(s) with the highest percentage will be entitled to participate in the finals series ahead of a team(s) with lower percentage. In the event that selection for the finals series is between teams with the same match ratio, the team(s) with the highest percentage will be entitled to participate in the finals series ahead of a team(s) with lower percentage. All decisions of the League in respect of the calculation of the points and percentages shall be final and binding.

10.2 Juniors – Win/Loss Match Ratio Calculations.

10.2.1 All junior ladders are based on win/loss match ratio percentage from games played within that division. Note: No points for or against percentages in juniors.

If teams are tied on the same match ratio percentage at the end of the home and away season the below tie-break system will be used to establish the respective ladder positions. Two Team Tie break system - Final ladder position at the end of the home away season will be established by applying the following in order until the teams can be separated:

1. Match ratio
2. Win-Loss record of head-to-head competition between the two teams
3. Points against/ conceded in head-to-head games between the teams
4. Win-Loss Record against highest common opponent (Proceeding downwards as necessary)
5. Average points against

Three team (or more) tie break system:

1. Best winning percentage of games played among the tied teams
2. Points against in head-to-head games between the tied teams
3. Record against highest common opponent (Proceeding downwards as necessary)
4. Average points against

10.3 Juniors, Senior Women, Under 19.5 Ladders - Divisionalisation (Re-Divisionalisation)



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(a) In the event of any team(s) being re-divisionalised from a competition, ladders for a division will be established by win/loss match ratio from all games played within that division.

The following procedure will take effect to allow the competition to proceed:

(i) Teams moving up a division will have results deleted and will commence the new division with a points ratio, match ratio and for/against ratio of zero. Teams are therefore eligible for finals based off games they have played in their new division.

(ii) Teams moving down a division will have results deleted and will commence the new division with a points ratio, match ratio and for/against ratio of zero. Teams are therefore eligible for finals based off games they have played in their new division.

(b) In the event of any new team(s) being added to the competition, the new team will commence with a points ratio, match ratio and for/against ratio of zero.

(c) In the event of any team(s) being removed / withdrawn from the competition, they will have their results removed from the competition ladder, with the remaining fixtures to be amended.

10.4 Scores Used to Calculate

10.4.1 The scores used by the League to calculate the points and percentages for each competition shall be based upon the scores contained in the goal umpire's cards. Should the goal umpires scores differ, the timekeeping cards will be used as the basis for calculating points and percentages.

11 CONDUCT OF MATCHES

11.1 Entering Playing Surface

11.1.1 No trainer, non-playing Affiliated Club official or unauthorised person shall enter the playing area during a match, except:

- a) Trainers and other authorised Affiliated Club Officials during $\frac{1}{4}$ time and $\frac{3}{4}$ time intervals.
- b) Approved trainers and medical practitioners (doctors, physios etc.) as is necessary to attend to an injured player or to replace such player.

11.1.2 Where a person enters the Playing Surface when he or she is not permitted to do so, the Field Umpire shall:

- a) Stop play immediately.
- b) Seek assistance of the person(s) authorised to remove the unauthorised person(s) from the Playing Surface.
- c) Until the situation is rectified, all umpires will be accompanied from the Playing Surface by the Umpire Escorts of the two competing clubs who will remain with them until it is mutually agreed that they may leave.
- d) A decision on whether the game will be resumed will be at the sole discretion of the Field Umpire(s)/Venue Manager based on consideration relating to personal safety and the general wellbeing of all umpires.



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11.1.3 Where Runners, Trainers or Water Carriers remain on the ground after they have completed their immediate duty, an umpire shall offer one warning to the offending official(s). If the official(s) reoffend, they shall be ordered off the ground and cannot be replaced. The official will not be permitted to be used again for the remainder of the game in any on-field role.

11.1.4 A free kick is to be paid against a team if its runner or any other on-field official is positioned within the 45 or 50 metre arcs when a player is kicking in after a behind has been scored. In the event the free kick is against the team bringing the ball back into play, the opposing team shall take the free kick from the top of the 45 or 50 metre arcs in that half of the ground. If the free kick is against the defending team, the player bringing the ball back into play shall advance to the top of the 45 or 50 metre arcs in that half of the ground. An umpire may show discretion only in the event a trainer is in the area to attend to an injured player.

11.2 Match Day Players and Officials

11.2.1 Prior to the commencement of all football matches (practice, home and away, and finals), each team of a Club shall prepare a “team list” of all players, coaches, runners, water carriers and trainers, who are actively involved with the team on that day. This list must contain an accurate statement of the players and their numbers allotted for that day. No two players are permitted to play in the same team wearing the same number. The team list shall be completed on the online competition software platform and printed out prior to the match. *Refer to By Law 14.3*

11.2.2 At or prior to half time of each football match, team managers must hand to the field umpire of the match the signed copy of their team lists.

11.2.3 Players arriving late must be identified on the team sheet by their team manager prior to playing and will not be permitted to participate in the match until they have been checked and ticked off by the team manager with the field umpire.

This can only be done at the quarter or half-time breaks.

Any player arriving after the commencement of the third quarter cannot participate in the fixtured match.

11.2.4 For Team Officials requirements and responsibilities, refer to [Schedule 8](#).

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

11.3 Lodgment of Scores – Home Team responsibility

11.3.1 For all official Senior, Reserves and Under 19.5 games, all home fixture clubs are required to lodge on-line with the league the final scores, by no later than 5:30pm on the day of the match

11.3.2 For all official Junior games all home clubs are required to lodge on-line with the league the final scores. by no later than 12 noon Monday following the match.

11.3.3 For all official Senior Men or Women, Reserves and Under 19.5 matches live scoring must be implemented by the home club.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.



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11.4 Online final team sheet accuracy & Lodgment of Best Players and Goal Kickers – Both Teams responsibility

11.4.1 Both clubs are responsible for ensuring post-match that their own final team sheet matches 100% with what is displaying online for that match. Fines will be issued for any discrepancies. Refer to By Law 14.3

11.4.2 Both club teams are responsible for entering online their own best players and goalkickers by the stated competition deadline.

11.4.3 For junior competitions age groups Under 11 and above only teams are to submit their best players and goal kickers online. (Not allowable in non-competitive divisions of Under 9 and 10)

11.5 Interchange Procedure of Injured Players

11.5.1 If a football player is taken from the field on a stretcher or carried from the field, the player shall not resume playing for a period of 20 minutes (excluding intervals between quarters) from the time when the player left the arena. After the 20-minute period has expired, the player may be interchanged in provided the player is able, having due regard to his or her health and safety, to resume playing in the match.

11.6 Team Officials – Match Day Requirements

11.6.1 For Officials roles and requirements and responsibilities for all senior and junior competitions, refer to [Schedule 8](#) – Officials Role Descriptions.

11.6.2 Required for Junior Football Matches

Coach (Accredited)	All Age Groups on Bench Head Coach permitted on ground in Under 9 and Under 10 only
Assistant Coach (Optional)	All Age Groups
Team Manager	All Age Groups
Trainer (Accredited)	All Age Groups
Runner (Optional)	Not Permitted Under 9 & Girls/Boys Under 10
Water Carrier (Optional)	Not Permitted Under 9 & Girls/Boys Under 10
Timekeeper	All Age Groups
Boundary Umpire	Not Required Under 9 & Girls Under 10
Goal Umpire	All Age Groups
Umpire Escort	All Age Groups

11.6.3 In age groups Under 12 and below, the age of the Runner must be 15 years or older. In all other age groups, the Runner must be 18 years or older.



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11.7 Centre Square

11.7.1 Coaches and/or player huddles are not permitted to enter the centre square while the umpires are there for the duration of the game, including quarter time, half-time, three-quarter time breaks (unless as a player moving to their playing position).

11.7.2 Only the umpire squad, umpire escorts and those instructed by the umpires are permitted inside the centre square during quarter time or three-quarter time breaks.

11.8 Forfeit of Matches

- a) In competitive male junior age groups (Under 11 to Under 17.5) and all Senior men competitions (Under 19.5, Reserves and Seniors in all divisions), a minimum of 14 players from each team is needed for the match.
- b) In competitive female junior age groups (Under 12 to Under 18), a minimum of 12 players from each team is needed for the match. In competitive Senior Women competitions, a minimum of 12 players from each team is needed for the match.
- c) If a match is forfeited due to lack of numbers, the teams may agree to conduct an unofficial practice match, and the field umpires may be requested to assist if necessary.
- d) If any club forfeits a scheduled match, in either Senior or Junior competition, penalties may be imposed as below:
 - I. Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20
 - II. In addition to any financial penalty, the Board may, at its discretion, withhold match points for the relevant competing team.
 - III. Junior clubs may receive a fine at the discretion of the CEO, if they forfeit a game in the first four rounds.

(e) If a Senior Men's/Womens Football club has a shortage of players, a Senior team (Firsts) is not permitted to forfeit a match whilst their Reserves team (Seconds) plays in the same round.

(f) Ladder calculation: In the event of a game being forfeited, the defaulting team shall not include the game in club playing records. The team against whom the forfeiting team was to play shall be awarded match points and shall be entitled to include the game in the records of its players for finals qualification in that season. Scores will be calculated by taking the average winning score and average losing score from matches played in that division during that round and be awarded accordingly.

11.9 Withdrawal of Team

11.9.1 In the event that a Club wishes to withdraw any team from any competition for the remainder of the season, they must make such notification in writing to the GM Football Operations two (2) days prior to the next scheduled match. A notice must be provided two (2) days prior to scheduled match; otherwise, the match shall be considered forfeited.

11.9.2 Clubs may be fined if a team is removed from a competition for the remainder of the season. The fine will be applied at the discretion of the NFNL Board.



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11.10 Juniors Evening Up Rule

11.10.1 Competitive matches – U11-U18 - Where one team has between 14 and 18 players (mixed/boys competitions) or between 12 and 16 (girls competitions), and the second team has more players than the first team, both teams shall field the same number of players, therefore an equal number of players shall be on the field at all times.

Only Exception: The team with the shortage has one of their players receive a yellow card. This team that is short would then need to play 1 player short for the 15 minutes the player is off the ground.

11.10.2 Non Competitive matches - Under 9, Under 10 and Under 10 Girls - Clubs must loan or accept the number of players required to even up the teams. Loaned players may play in a bib where that club does not have jumpers available of a suitable and appropriate size for the players being loaned to them.

11.10.3 Team Managers, particularly from the team that requires the evening-up rule to apply, must ensure that the process is organised as early as possible and prior to the teams taking the field.

11.10.4 Where an imbalance is caused during a match due to injury, playing numbers shall be evened-up for the remainder of the game.

11.10.5 Late Arrivals: Should a player arrive late and no later than before the commencement of the 3rd quarter, that player may take the field provided the following procedure is adhered to:

- a) The Team Manager shall inform the officials of the other team.
- b) The addition to the playing numbers on the field can only be made providing the numbers on the field remain equal for both teams.

11.10.6 Where a head count is conducted and uneven playing numbers are evident, the scores at the time of the head count shall be noted and the matter referred to the League for determination of the result of the match.

11.10.7 Any non-compliance to the evening up rule will be referred to the NFNL who will determine if the matter is referred to the NFNL Board for sanctions. Penalties may include referral of coach to AFL Victoria for de-registration, loss of premiership points and/or score by the offending team and/or the Club of the offending team shall be penalised in accordance with Schedule 20 fines.

11.10.8 The Evening-Up Rule shall not be applied in finals matches.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

11.11 Juniors Mercy Rule

11.11.1 When a team is 60 points or more in front of the opposing team, the mercy rule will come into play. *This means that the ruckman of the trailing team will automatically receive a free kick at the next centre bounce after a goal (or at the commencement of a quarter if the margin is 60 points or more).* If the margin drops to under 60 points at any



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stage, the mercy rule will no longer apply and the umpire shall throw the ball up for a ruck contest as per normal protocol.

11.11.2 The mercy rule is not applied in any junior finals matches.

11.12 Match Delays & Non-Completion of Matches

11.12.1 Case Example: Significant delay due to Stretcher, Ambulance

Umpires in consultation with both team managers, will make all attempts to achieve a match result within the allocated time for that match and have total discretion on the alteration of timings of length of quarters and breaks to achieve a result. (Noting a match result requires half the total minutes of the matches playing time being played) Where possible the breaks and or quarters must be shortened into equivalent time periods and be consistent throughout the remainder of the match.

Example: Under 16 junior game timings are 4*20 minute quarters = 80 minutes.

40 total minutes accumulative played in that match would constitute a match result.

For further clarification on match day, the league contact number for that day should be contacted.

Games must be finished 5 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the next game or by no later than 5pm.

Example 1:

Under 19.5 matches must be finished at least 5 minutes before the scheduled start time of the next game.

If the Reserves commence at 11.55am, the final siren must sound no later than 11.50am.

Example 2:

Under 17.5 junior game starting at 3.15 must be finished by 5pm.

Important - If the game is to continue for a few minutes after the 5pm deadline to achieve equal playing time, then common sense must prevail amongst umpires and team managers and the game is to continue.

The league at their discretion may override and extend matches past 5pm for the best interests of the competition.

Refer to Schedule 15 Match Delay Policy

11.12.2 If any match has been started and cannot be completed or recommenced, for reasons beyond the control of the affiliated Senior or affiliated Junior Club or Clubs, or where a match has been cancelled at the direction of the officiating umpire, the following procedures shall apply:

11.12.3 If a game is concluded prior to half time and the match cannot proceed within the scheduled time, the match will be declared a draw. Each team will be awarded two (2) premiership points and the scores of the teams at the time the match was interrupted would be used to calculate the percentages.



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- 11.12.4** If half a game has been completed and is unable to proceed within the scheduled time for the match, the scores of the teams at the time the match was interrupted shall be deemed to be final scores of the match and shall be used to calculate percentages. The team with the highest score will be declared the winner and awarded four premiership points.
- 11.12.5** In either of the above circumstances, goals scored during the time played will still be allocated to the respective players. Best & Fairest votes will be given if play had commenced.
- 11.12.6** If a match has started and cannot be completed within the time scheduled **for reasons within the control of any club**, such club will be dealt with by the Board at its absolute discretion in any way it sees fit.

11.13 Adverse Weather Conditions – Match Cancellation

- 11.13.1** If the air temperature, as reported on the Weatherzone website (<http://www.weatherzone.com.au/>), is below 5 degrees Celsius or **in excess of 35 degrees Celsius** on a training night, an umpire training session shall be cancelled.
- 11.13.2** If the air temperature in the suburb of the host venue, as reported on the Weatherzone website (<http://www.weatherzone.com.au/>), is below 0 degrees Celsius, or **in excess of 35 degrees Celsius**, one hour prior to the scheduled start time of an official Northern Football Netball League match at any grade the match shall be cancelled.
- 11.13.3** In the event that any game is cancelled in accordance with these By-Laws (“Match Cancellation”) a match ratio shall be applied to the ladder for that division in that grade.
- 11.13.4** In the event that a senior, reserves or under-19 game has commenced, and in the opinion of both club captains the weather conditions have become too hazardous, the game will be abandoned, and the provisions of By-Law 11.13 shall be applied.
- 11.13.5** In the event that any junior grade (under-9 to under-18) game has commenced, and in the opinion of both club coaches the weather conditions have become too hazardous, the game will be abandoned, and the provisions of By-Law 11.13 shall be applied. If the Board, or its representative, during the review of a match, is not convinced that match should have been cancelled or abandoned or the reason for the cancellation or abandonment was not in good faith, it reserves the right to award points or any penalty as it sees fit.
- 11.13.6** Unless the NFNL Board determines otherwise, if two or more games are cancelled or abandoned due to adverse weather in the same grade and division, the round will be declared void and no premiership points, percentages or best and fairest votes will be awarded or applied for that round.
- 11.13.7** If the Board, or its representative, during the review of a match, is not convinced that match should have been cancelled or abandoned or the reason for the cancellation or abandonment was not in good faith, it reserves the right to award points or any penalty as it sees fit.



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11.14 Adverse Weather - Match Suspension – Refer to Schedule 15 Match Delay Policy

- 11.14.1** In the event of severe inclement weather immediately prior to commencement or during a game, such as lightning, very heavy rain, hailstorm or fog, the game can be suspended. In all senior grade games, matches may be suspended upon the agreement of the competing captains in consultation with the field umpire(s); and for all junior grade games upon agreement of the competing coaches.
- 11.14.2** A match may be suspended for such time as the competing captains/coaches/umpires, in consultation with the League, consider appropriate. But once it becomes apparent that half the total game match minutes will not be achievable, played or completed within the scheduled time allotment for that match, after consultation with the league the match may be abandoned. (Half a total match minutes constitutes a match result).
- 11.14.3** Umpires in consultation with both team managers, will make all attempts to achieve a match result within the allocated time for that match and have total discretion on the alteration of timings of length of quarters and breaks to achieve a result. (Noting: To constitute a match result half the total minutes of the matches playing time must be played) Where possible the breaks and or quarters must be shortened into equivalent time periods and be consistent throughout the remainder of the match.

Example: Under 16 junior game timings are 4*20 minute quarters = 80 minutes.
40 total minutes accumulative played in that match would constitute a match result.

For further clarification on match day the **league contact number for that day** should be contacted.

Games must be finished 5 minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of the next game or by no later than 5pm of the final game scheduled for that day.

Example 1:

Under 19.5 matches must be finished at least 5 minutes before the scheduled start time of the next game.
If the Reserves commence at 11.55am, the final siren must sound no later than 11.50am.

Example 2:

Under 17.5 junior game starting at 3.15 must be finished by 5pm.

Important - If the game was to continue for a few minutes after the 5pm deadline to achieve equal playing time, then common sense must prevail amongst umpires and team managers and the game is to continue.

The league at their discretion may override and extend matches past 5pm for the best interests of the competition. Refer to Schedule 15 Match Delay Policy



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11.15 Ground Inspections

- 11.15.1** All 'home' clubs are required to complete a ground inspection sheet on each Tuesday night prior to a home game. As a result of this inspection, should any risk issues including, but not limited to, the items listed in the ground inspection sheet, be identified, the club must notify the GM Football Operations of these issues prior to 10:00 am on the following Wednesday immediately prior to the scheduled match. Any ground issues that present later in the week close to game day should be reported through immediately to the league.
- 11.15.2** In the event that an away club has a concern in regard to a ground, they are to make notification to the NFNL by 12:00 pm on the Wednesday prior to the scheduled round.
- 11.15.3** The League retains the right to take whatever action it deems necessary to address any issue arising from the ground inspection report, or concerns raised, including but not limited to, moving the game to another venue, cancelling the game or re-scheduling the game to another day or time.
- 11.15.4** On the day of any official match arranged by the League, all players and officials must make a full inspection of the ground on which the match will be played prior to the match commencing. A representative from each club shall complete the official Match Day Checklist (Schedule 7) and a representative of each club shall sign the checklist which is to be retained by the home club for seven years.
- 11.15.5** Prior to any player or official signing the team sheet for a match (or ticking dependent on league processes for that season), the home club must make all players aware of the following waiver:

"By signing the club's team sheet prior to the commencement of or during the course of a game, each player and official DOES HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE that:

He/she has inspected the playing surface of the venue where the game is to be played and all fixtures and fittings thereon including but not limited to change rooms and toilet facilities, goal and point posts (and padding thereon), sprinklers, fencing, score and line markings; and

Such playing surface, change rooms and toilet facilities and all other fixtures and fittings referred to above are in such a condition that it is safe and reasonable to allow the game to proceed; and

He/she will release the Northern Football Netball League Inc, its servants or agents and voluntary workers, his/her club, its servants or agents and voluntary workers from all liability for any injury, loss or damage suffered by the player as a result of the use by the player of the venue, its facilities and fixtures."

- a) Immediately prior to signing the team sheet, an official of the club is required to notify the player or official of the presence of the above waiver on the team sheet.
- b) If any player or official is of the opinion that the venue is unsafe for play for whatever reason, he/she should not sign the team sheet.
- c) Any player or official, who does not sign the official team sheet, is ineligible to take part in the match for which the team sheet is required.



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- d) Where a team has elected to allow players to tick off their names, the team manager must sign the team sheet as true and correct and sign off that all players have been communicated the waiver as per 11.15.5.
- e) If on the day of any junior grade (Under 9 to Under 18) match, the umpire and both team coaches deem that the playing surface is unsafe for play to commence or continue, the game may be called off and the result shall be determined by the League.
- f) In the event a game has commenced, the provisions of By-Law 11.13 shall be applied.

11.16 Conduct of Behaviour at Matches

- 11.16.1** Affiliated Clubs are held responsible for the conduct of acceptable social behavior prior to, during and after the matches of any team officials and spectators/parents connected with their team (includes intervals in the match).

For any reports received of unacceptable social behaviour, club persons shall be: issued a penalty as determined by the GM Football Operations or referred by the CEO to the Board for consideration and determination. Alternatively, a formal report may be lodged so that the matter is sent direct to the Tribunal.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

- 11.16.2** A team official or person connected (i.e Parent/spectator) with an Affiliated Club disputing a decision of an umpire or using abusive language or threatening or insulting language before, during or after a match shall be issued a penalty as determined by the GM Football Operations which can include banning, reported and sent direct to the Tribunal or the matter may be directed to the CEO and NFNL Board.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

- 11.16.3** All team officials are required to perform their duties as per Schedule 8. Any team official that fails to perform their duties to the expected and required NFNL standards shall be issued a penalty as determined by the GM Football Operations.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

12. FINALS

12.1 Senior Men, Reserves and Under 19.5 Finals Eligibility

- 12.1.1** Seniors: Players must play at least three (3) matches (Senior, Reserve, and/or Under 19.5) with their Affiliated Club in the home and away matches to qualify to play in the Senior final's series.
- 12.1.2** Reserves: Players must play at least three (3) Reserve matches with their Affiliated Club in the home and away matches to qualify to play in the Reserves finals series.
- 12.1.3** Under 19.5: Players must play at least three (3) Under 19.5 matches with their Affiliated Club in the home and away matches to qualify to play in the Under 19.5 finals series.



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- 12.1.4** Where a club fields multiple teams (Seniors/Reserves/Under 19.5) in a finals series on the same day or weekend, a player must have played a combination of at least three (3) games for the competing teams to be eligible.
- 12.1.5** Any player playing more than 50% of a Club's Senior home and away matches is ineligible to play with that Club's Reserves or Under 19.5 teams in the finals series, with exception where a Club fields multiple teams (Seniors/Reserves/Under 19.5) in a finals series on the same day or weekend, as per By-Law 12.1.4.
- 12.1.6** Any player playing more than 50% of a Club's Reserve home and away matches is ineligible to play with that Club's Under 19.5 team in the finals series, with exception where a Club fields multiple teams (Reserve/Under 19.5) in a finals series on the same day or weekend, as per By-Law 12.1.4.
- 12.1.7** Any player drafted by an AFL club, placed on an AFL supplementary or rookie list or included on an official VFL list can, provided he has qualified under the rules, return to play with the League in the finals in the **Seniors only**.
- 12.1.8** Any player once they have played twelve (12) or more Home and Away matches in that season of Coates State league Under 18/Under 19 competition is ineligible to be selected in an Under 19.5 finals match **even if the club has multiple teams playing finals that weekend**. They may return to play with the League in a finals match of the Senior or Reserve grades **only**.
- 12.1.9** Where a club has two Under 19.5 teams in separate divisions and a player has played for both teams during the home and away season, for finals eligibility for the lower division team:
- players are only eligible to participate in the lower teams finals if they have played more games in the lower division team than the higher division team during the home and away season.
 - If the player has played an equal number of games in both division teams, then they would not be eligible for the lower division team.
- 12.1.10** Where a player plays in more than one grade on the same day or the same weekend during the home and away season, the higher-grade match shall be counted towards the finals eligibility only.
- 12.1.11** A player may only play in one NFNL Final per weekend
- 12.1.12** The hierarchical order for grades is Senior, Reserve, Under 19.5 and Junior.
- 12.1.13** No player that has played VFL or Coates League that weekend is permitted to be listed and/or play in any NFNL match that weekend. Fine sanctions will apply.
- 12.1.14** Any VFL listed player in that competition year must play three (3) Senior (1sts) games to qualify for Senior finals. NFNL Reserves/Under 19.5 games do **not** count towards their finals eligibility.

12.2 Senior Women's Home and Away & Finals Eligibility

- 12.2.1** Players must play at least three (3) matches with their Affiliated Club/respective team in the home and away matches to qualify to play in a finals series.



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- 12.2.2** Where a club fields multiple teams (i.e., Division One/Division Two/Division Three) in a finals series on the same day or weekend, a player must play a combination of at least three (3) games for the competing teams to be eligible.
- 12.2.3** Any player who has played more than 50% of games in the VFL Women's team home and away matches is ineligible to play in that Club's NFNL team in the finals series.
- 12.2.4** Any player playing more than 50% of a Club's higher division home and away matches is ineligible to play with that Club's lower division team in the finals series, with exception where a Club fields multiple teams (i.e., Division One/Division Two) in a finals series on the same day or weekend.
- 12.2.5** Where a player plays in more than one grade on the same day or the same weekend during the home and away season, the higher grade match shall be counted towards the finals eligibility only.
- 12.2.6** A player may only play in one NFNL Womens Final per weekend.
- 12.2.7** Any player drafted by an AFLW club, placed on an AFLW supplementary or rookie list in the current season is not permitted to play in any NFNL Competitions.
- 12.2.8** At the completion of a VFLW teams season, VFLW players are not permitted to play with their NFNL community club in the NFNL home and away season once they have played more than 10 VFLW home and away matches in that VFLW season.
- 12.2.9** Any player included on an official VFLW list can, provided she has qualified under the rules, return to play with the League in the Senior Women's finals only.
- 12.2.10** No player that has played VFLW or Coates League that weekend is permitted to be listed and/or play in an NFNL match that weekend. Fine sanctions will apply.
- 12.2.11** Where a player plays in more than one grade on the same day or the same weekend during the home and away season, **the higher match as per the hierarchical order shall be counted towards the finals eligibility only.**

The hierarchical order is Senior Women, Reserves (Clubs with 2 women's teams in separate divisions), Juniors (U18 Girls)

12.3 Junior Home and Away & Finals Eligibility

- 12.3.1** Players must play at least three (3) home and away matches with **that team** which has made the junior finals to qualify to play in the finals series for that particular team.
(Noting all Exceptions contained in 12.3)

Case Example:

A clubs Division 1 team has made finals and a clubs Division 2 team has not made finals.

A Junior player has played 2 home and away games in Division 1 team & 4 home and away games in Division 2 team that season.

The player is NOT eligible to play finals with the Division 1 team as they have not played 3 games with that team in Division 1.



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- 12.3.2** Players may only play finals for one (1) junior team per season. The team a player plays their first final match with will remain their 'finals team' for the remainder of the current season. Exemptions may be granted where a team has a genuine shortage (By-Law 12.3.12).
- 12.3.3** Once a Junior player plays an accumulative 9 or more home and away matches of senior football (Under-19.5, Reserves, Seniors) in that season they are ineligible to play again in any junior boys or girls competition home and away matches.
- 12.3.4** If a junior player has played 8 or less senior home and away games in that season prior to the commencement of week 1 of the junior finals series they are eligible to play in that seasons whole NFNL junior series.
- 12.3.5** Once a Junior player has played 5 or more home and away matches in a **higher junior age group**, they are ineligible to play in a lower age group for the remainder of the season (including finals). *Unless granted written approval from the GM Football Operations under an exceptional circumstance application.*

Exception: Players in non-competitive age group divisions of Under 9 and Under 10.

- 12.3.6** Once a Junior player has played 5 or more home and away matches in a **higher division**, they are ineligible to play in a lower division for the remainder of the season (including finals). *Unless granted written approval from the GM Football Operations under an exceptional circumstance application.*
- 12.3.7** For clubs with 2 teams in the same division, once a player has played 5 or more home and away games with a team, they are ineligible to again play for the club's other team in that same junior division for the remainder of the season, including finals. *Unless granted written approval from the GM Football Operations under an exceptional circumstance application.*
- 12.3.8** Where a player plays in more than one grade on the same day or the same weekend during the home and away season, the higher match as per the hierarchical order shall be counted towards the finals eligibility only. The hierarchical order is Senior Men/Women, Reserves, Under 19.5, Juniors age group, Junior division number.
- 12.3.9** Teams are permitted to play to a maximum of 26 eligible players in junior **boys** finals and to a maximum of 24 eligible players in junior **girls** finals. (8 bench players maximum allowable in finals only)

No requests for additional players above the cap will be considered.

- 12.3.10** Where a team has a genuine shortage of eligible players for finals games, the club may seek approval from the League for the utilisation of players from other lower division or lower age group teams for each finals match played.
- 12.3.11** For the purpose of By-Law 12.3.10, a team can be described as having a "genuine shortage" for finals games when they will have less than **2 players on the bench. (Less than 20 players in boys and less than 18 players in girls).**



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- 12.3.12** If a junior team has consistently played with fewer than two bench players during the home-and-away season, they will not be eligible to apply for a finals exemption under the genuine shortage rule.
- 12.3.13** An application under By-Law 12.3.10 & 12.3.11 must include at least six (6) players. League approval will only be given for players from a team in a lower division. If the club does not have a team in a lower division, it may nominate players from a lower age group. In exceptional circumstances, variations to this rule may apply upon application to the League.
- 12.3.14** Players approved under By-Law 12.3.11 are eligible to play finals with the team who sought approval. Finals teams utilising players approved under By-Law 12.3.11 may play a finals game with eligible and approved players on the Team Sheet to a maximum on the Team Sheet of 20 players in the boys and 18 players in the girls.
- 12.3.15** Any junior club team found to have deliberately excluded eligible and available players in any junior finals match, to then enable them to apply under 12.2.10 for potentially stronger lower aged or lower division players will be referred directly to the NFNL Board for sanctions, and the coach may face de-registration.
- 12.3.16** When a player has played ten (10) or more matches in that season of Coates State League Under 18/Under 19 competitions, they are then not eligible to play in a NFNL Junior finals match (Under 17.5 boys & Under 18 girls or any younger age group).
- 12.3.17** No player that has played Coates League that weekend is permitted to be listed and/or play in a NFNL junior match that same weekend. Fine sanctions will apply.
- 12.3.18** Where a player is listed at a VFL/VFLW club they are not permitted to play in any NFNL junior competition.

12.4 Team Participation

- 12.4.1** Clubs shall be advised in writing by the NFNL of those teams that have qualified to play finals football on the completion of the home and away matches.
- 12.4.2** All Senior football finals matches shall be played on enclosed grounds to be determined by the Board and where a charge for admittance can be made.
- 12.4.3** Participating Affiliated Clubs shall be supplied with 38 free tickets (one team), 72 tickets (two teams), and 102 tickets (three teams) for entry to finals match day venue of their competing teams. It is the duty of the Affiliated Club to distribute its own tickets. No refunds will be made on un-presented tickets.

12.5 Finals Uniforms/Change Rooms - Football

- 12.5.1** For the first week of finals the team placed highest on the ladder prior to the commencement of the final's series shall wear their registered guernsey and home coloured shorts unless this is varied by the Board or its appointee.
- 12.5.2** For the first week of finals the team placed highest on the ladder prior to the commencement of the final's series shall use the home team rooms unless this is varied by the GM Football Operations.



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12.5.3 After the first week of finals the first team to enter the subsequent finals shall wear the home coloured shorts and use the home team rooms unless this is varied by the GM Football Operations.

12.6 Finals Timekeepers

12.6.1 Seniors – Both Clubs are to supply a timekeeper for all finals except Grand Finals. The NFNL will supply independent timekeepers for all senior Grand Finals.

12.6.2 Juniors - Both clubs are to supply a timekeeper for all finals including Grand Finals.

12.6.3 Finals Time On – Football Competitions.

Refer to By Law 8.13 for time on specifications.

TIME ON IN FINALS SPECIFICATIONS	
Senior Men	All Quarters + Time On
Reserves Men	3rd & 4th Qtr. + Time On only
Under-19.5	3rd & 4th Qtr. + Time On only
Senior Women	3rd & 4th Qtr. + Time On only
Juniors	3rd & 4th Qtr. + Time On only

12.7 Drawn Matches in Football Finals

12.7.1 In the event of a drawn game in any senior or junior final – the following conditions will apply:

- a) Goal umpires confirm scores.
- b) Field umpires will re-commence the game (teams will not change ends) for a duration of three (3) minutes, plus time on. The siren will sound, and the teams will change ends and a further three (3) minutes shall be played, plus time on.
- c) If the game is still drawn after the second 3-minute period plus time on, the siren will sound, the goal umpires will confirm scores and both teams must remain in the positions they were in.
- d) The match will recommence from a ball up in the centre of the ground. The time keepers will allow play to continue until the next score when they will sound the siren. The team that scores first is the winner.
- e) At no stage during extra time are coaches permitted to address their players.
- f) Player interchange may occur at any time during the extra time periods.



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12.8 The Board

The Board shall exercise full control in relation to the arrangement of the times and places for the playing of all finals series matches.

12.9 Entrance Fees

The Board shall be responsible for the fixing and collection of all entrance fees at all finals series matches. The Board may delegate its authority for the collection of entrance fees from time to time.

13. UNIFORMS

13.1 Football Uniforms

13.1.1 The colours of the League shall be a combination of blue, yellow, white, and silver. Each club must register its colours and uniforms (guernsey, shorts and socks) at the beginning of the season, and they shall not be changed without the approval of the Board.

13.1.2 All club uniforms (guernseys, shorts and socks) worn in NFNL matches must be supplied by NFNL licensed suppliers and ordered through the NFNL.

13.1.3 The teams of each club shall wear their registered club guernseys as approved by the Board.

13.1.4 If two clubs compete in the same division and those clubs' colors are the same or similar and are drawn to compete against one another, the away club must change its jumper, upon instruction from the league.

13.1.5 In finals in the event of teams colours are the same or similar, the club finishing higher on the ladder at the completion of the season will retain its jumper.

13.1.6 All teams shall wear their registered club-coloured shorts at all home games. All teams visiting as the away team are required to wear white shorts (with exception to under-9 and under-10 competitions) unless permission to use another colour for away shorts is given by the NFNL. All shorts shall be supplied by manufacturers as approved by the Board from time to time.

13.1.7 Junior Girls and Senior Women teams [are not required to wear white shorts for away games, unless they wish and prefer to.](#)

13.1.8 Approval of jumper designs will not be given over the phone; sample artwork of the jumper design from the NFNL supplier must be provided before approval is given.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

13.2 Compression Garments

13.2.1 For competitive age groups (Under 11 to open age), compression garments worn by players beneath the uniform on the upper and/or lower body must not extend beyond a player's football jumper and/or shorts.



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- 13.2.2 For uncompetitive age groups (under-9 and under-10), compression garments worn by players beneath the uniform on the upper and/or lower body may be full length and extend beyond a player's jumper and/or shorts.
- 13.2.3 For all age groups, compression garments worn by players beneath the uniform on the upper and/or lower body must be completely beige in colour.
- 13.2.4 All other garment types are not permitted to be worn in addition to a player's uniform unless prior approval is granted by the League.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

13.3 Player Boots, Jewellery, Religious Garments and Protective Equipment

13.3.1 Interpretation: For the purpose of By-Law 13.4, protective equipment includes but is not limited to:

- a) Hard shell helmets.
- a) Knee braces.
- b) Shoulder pads.
- c) Back supports.
- d) Arm guards; and
- e) Any other item designated as such by the NFNL.

13.3.2 A Player shall **not wear** during a match:

- a) Any form of jewellery; the taping of piercings is prohibited unless prior approval is given by the league.
- b) Protective equipment (other than protective equipment approved by the NFNL) unless the field umpire is satisfied that the item does not constitute a danger or increase the risk of injury to other players competing in the match.
- c) Protective equipment which has been approved by the NFNL, if the field umpire is satisfied that such equipment has, during the match, become dangerous or increased the risk of injury to other players.
- d) Metal stops (inc. tips)/studs/plates/cleats.
- e) Gloves: players are not permitted to wear gloves unless they have first been granted permission to wear the gloves by the league (medical reasons) and the league has also inspected the gloves. The umpire will sight written approval from the league and also inspect the gloves prior to the commencement of the game. All players in Under-9 and Under-10 are permitted to wear NFNL branded gloves (subject to an approved license provider producing them).
- f) At any time before or during a match, a field umpire may inspect a players boots or hands or any protective equipment that a player intends to wear or use during a match.



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- g) Braids: If a player (male or female) has their hair braided, and it swings free from their head when the head is moved, it may cause harm to another player if struck by the braid. As such, players are not permitted on the field with free braids in their hair. Braids must be secure and not swing free. Players with plaited ponytails must either roll the plait into a bun or remove the plait and play with a loose ponytail.
- h) GPS tracker unless prior approval is given by the league.
- i) Hearing aids and Diabetes sensors are permitted to be worn during matches but the club must seek a letter of approval from the league.

13.3.3 The NFNL recognises that where religious or cultural beliefs conflict with your standard dress code, modifications may be required. This may include, but is not restricted to the following:

- a) The wearing of traditional Muslim head scarf. Headscarves can be tied but not fastened with any pins or sharp objects.
- b) The wearing of compression garments (long) to cover the legs.
- c) The wearing of long sleeve top to cover arms.

13.4 Logos

- 13.4.1 The teams of each club shall wear their registered club coloured guernseys, bearing the League logo, at all games.
- 13.4.2 Clubs may apply to the CEO for approval to incorporate sponsors' logos on their uniforms as per Schedule 22.
- 13.4.3 No logos will be approved for addition to the back of playing shorts.
- 13.4.4 The teams of each club shall wear their registered club coloured shorts, bearing the League logo, at all games.
- 13.4.5 Application may be made by clubs for logos, outside of the above listed dimensions, which may be approved at the absolute discretion of the CEO.
- 13.4.6 The teams of each football club shall wear their registered club coloured socks, bearing the League logo, at all games.
- 13.4.7 No player will be permitted to compete in any official League football match without a number on the back of the playing guernsey. No two players in one team shall have the same number. Each number shall be a whole number between one (1) and ninety-nine (99).
- 13.4.8 Except with the prior permission of the League, clubs fielding senior and reserves teams are to have one set of guernseys for both teams numbered in whole numbers greater than zero (0) with a maximum of two digits.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.



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14 TEAM LISTS

- 14.1** (a) Senior men clubs must submit their team online and weekly team and ins and outs to the NFNL Media Manager by no later than Friday 9am each week.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

- (b) All Senior clubs must submit their team list including player name and numbers to the NFNL Media Manager prior to Round 1 of each season.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

- 14.2** For all football competitions a Team Sheet shall:

- a) List the full names and jumper numbers of the Players in the team.
- b) Identify the captain.
- c) List the names of the coach, runner and any other official participating in the match.
- d) Team sheet provided to umpires must replicate the online team sheet.
- e) Team sheet should be handed to the umpire prior to the match but by no later than half time of any match.
- f) The team sheet must fully align with what is online. Each club has full responsibility that what appears online is true and correct.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

15. UMPIRES

15.1 General

- 15.1.1** At the completion of the match, the team managers will lodge with the field umpire(s) the goal umpires' score cards (where club appointed goal umpires have officiated), the timekeeper's card and any Player Send off Sheet.
- 15.1.2** The League shall appoint the Field Umpire(s) for each home and away and finals match.
- 15.1.3** The League may appoint Goal and/or Boundary Umpires for a home and away match. Where no Goal and/or Boundary Umpires are appointed, each club shall supply such umpires. Where only one Goal and/or Boundary Umpire is appointed, the home club shall supply such additional umpire(s) as required. The League shall appoint the Goal and Boundary Umpires for finals matches.
- 15.1.4** Field, Goal and Boundary umpire fees shall be set annually based on the Northern Football Netball League's recommendation.



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- 15.1.5** In the event of a match not taking place, other than where the Adverse Weather Committee has cancelled a match or round or in the case of a forfeit, umpires shall receive half of their usual fees.
- 15.1.6** In the event of a match not taking place because of a forfeit, the Affiliated Club giving the forfeit must pay all of the umpire fees, unless the umpires receive notice that the match will not take place at least twenty-four (24) hours before the scheduled commencement time for the match.
- 15.1.7** Where a person is involved in an incident which may constitute a Reportable Offence, an umpire appointed by the League shall report that person and the matter will be referred to the Tribunal for hearing and determination. The reporting umpire is to be prepared to attend the subsequent Tribunal hearing.
- 15.1.8** Umpires shall wear the uniforms prescribed by the League. Umpires shall be on the playing field five (5) minutes before the scheduled starting time of each match. The Secretary of an Affiliated Club shall notify the GM Football Operations of any infringement of this By-Law.
- 15.1.9** The field umpire shall report to the NFNL any incident involving players, officials, or spectators outside of the playing time that they consider requires further investigation by the NFNL.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

15.2 Goal and Boundary Umpires

- 15.2.1** The goal umpires shall record the scores on the cards provided by the League and check the scores on the cards between quarters and at the conclusion of the match. Any discrepancy between the scores shall be rectified as soon as possible in consultation with the field umpire. The cards shall be properly completed and signed by the goal umpires. If the goal umpires disagree on the score, but the timekeeper's score is the same as one of the goal umpires' scores, this score shall be recognized as the official score of the match. Failing which, any disputes shall be referred for hearing and determination by the Board.
- 15.2.2** Club goal umpires shall be attired in a white NFNL goal umpire bib and have a minimum of 2 goal flags. Club boundary umpires shall as a minimum be attired in a white NFNL Boundary Umpire shirt. Other uniform requirements can be found in Schedule 8
- 15.2.3** In all matches the home club shall be responsible for a scoreboard, which shall be in operation throughout the whole game. The scoreboard must be clearly visible to the goal umpires, who shall check its accuracy at the conclusion of each quarter. Umpires shall report to the league, via the Umpires' Report, any occasion on which an Affiliated Club fails to operate a scoreboard.
- 15.2.4** The League appointed field umpire(s) have the power to veto a decision made by a club goal or boundary umpire and make an alternative decision if the field umpire(s) is of the opinion the club umpire has made an incorrect decision. The League appointed field umpire's decision shall be final.



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- 15.2.5** Club boundary umpires are not permitted to pay a free kick for a breach of Australian Rules Football Law 11.3.4 (b): “No player (other than the 4 initial players) or team official shall enter the centre square from the time the field umpire commences his or her approach to the centre circle to bounce the football until the football touches the ground, in the act of bouncing, or leaves the field umpire’s hand in the act of being thrown up”.
- 15.2.6** Where a player and/or official is involved in an incident which may constitute a reportable offence, only the umpires appointed by the League shall report that person and the matter will be referred to the Tribunal for hearing and determination.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

15.3 Official Powers

- 15.3.1** All football umpires appointed by the Umpires Board shall have the power to report players, clubs and officials in accordance with the AFL “Laws of Australian Football” adopted by the League from time to time, and for any breach of these By-Laws.
- 15.3.2** All football umpires have the power to over-rule a clear incorrect decision made by a club goal or boundary umpire in any junior or senior game.
- 15.3.3** In all senior competition matches, where a League appointed senior umpire is verbally abused by officials, interchange players or supporters in the proximity of the coaches’ box, the following shall apply:
- a) In the first such instance of abuse one of the field umpires shall warn the officials located within the coaches’ box area.
 - b) If the abuse occurs again, the field umpire(s) shall stop the match and award a free kick to the opposing team.

For Junior competition matches refer to By Law 16.7 – White Card – Junior Coaches Box Area Penalties.

15.4 Penalty for Assault

- 15.4.1** In the event of a player or club official of any Affiliated Club being found guilty on a charge of assaulting any umpire appointed to officiate by the Umpires Board, or NFNL/Club official, the club to which he/they belong, or offending party, may be dealt with by the Board by way of:
- a) A Fine for breach not exceeding \$1000; and/or
 - b) Disqualification from the competition; and/or
 - c) Loss of all premiership points obtained in matches in which the player played and the awarding of those points to the appropriate opposing teams.
- 15.4.2** In the event of a player or official’s family member being found guilty on a charge of assaulting any umpire appointed to officiate by the Umpires Board, or NFNL/Club official, the club to which they are affiliated with may be dealt with by the Board by way of:



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- a) Fine for breach not exceeding \$1000; and/or
 - b) Disqualification of Club from the competition; and/or
 - c) Loss of all premiership points obtained in matches in which the player played and the awarding of those points to the appropriate opposing teams; and/or
 - d) De-registration of participating family member from all competition.
-

16. REPORTABLE OFFENCES

16.1 Order-off Laws – Football Seniors and Juniors

16.1.1 The NFNL adopts the AFL Laws of Australian Football in relation to the order off rules. Schedule 21 details the circumstances and application of the Order off Laws.

16.1.2 Players may be replaced if sent off the field.

16.1.3 If a player receives a red card whilst playing in a lower grade, they are then ineligible to play in a higher grade on the same day or same weekend.

16.1.4 If a junior player is playing a senior, reserves or under-19 match on a Saturday and receives a red card, this makes him ineligible to play in his/her age group on Sunday.

16.2 Report Procedure

16.2.1 At the time of making any such report of any player or club official, the League appointed field umpire (including emergency umpire) and/or goal and boundary umpires shall take down the numbers of the player(s) reported and the victim (if any) of the incident.

16.2.2 The reporting umpire shall ensure all details of the incident are contained in the authorised report sheet. It is the responsibility of the reporting umpire to forward the report sheet to the league.

16.2.3 Both team managers shall attend the umpire's rooms, five (5) minutes after the conclusion of the game to obtain the "all clear". At this time the umpire(s) will advise the team managers of any report(s) that have been laid during the match. The field umpire(s) will then provide both team managers a copy of the report(s). Failure by a club official to obtain all clear will result in a Fine for breach in accordance with Schedule 20.

16.2.4 If the player/official has been reported for one of the following offences under the Australian Football League's "Laws of Australian Football", the case will automatically be heard by the Independent Tribunal:

- a) Intentionally making contact with, or striking, an umpire.
- b) Attempting to make contact with, or strike, an umpire.
- c) Intentionally or carelessly kicking another person.
- d) Intentionally or carelessly kneeing another person.



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- e) Intentionally or carelessly stomping on another person.
- f) Attempting to kick another person.
- g) Spitting at or on an umpire.
- h) Spitting at or on another person.

- 16.2.5** For all other offences, if offered by the officiating umpire, the player has the choice of accepting the prescribed set-penalties specified on the Player/Official Report Sheet. Reported Officials are not able to accept a set penalty and must attend a tribunal hearing.
- 16.2.6** Where the player has the option of choosing to accept the prescribed penalty, the club delegates, after receiving a copy of the report, will then have fifteen (15) minutes to consult with the reported member in which to decide whether the player/club will accept the prescribed penalty or wish the report to be heard by the Tribunal. At the end of the fifteen (15) minutes, both delegates will again attend the umpire's room. If the player/club accepts the prescribed penalty and the reporting umpire concurs, the delegates representing the reported player and the reporting umpire(s) will then sign the report form where indicated. If the player/club can't decide within the 15 minutes allocated after the match, the club then has until 10:00am on the Monday following the game to advise the NFNL office of their decision. It is the responsibility of the club to notify the league by 10:00am Monday. Failure to do so and the set penalty shall apply.
- 16.2.7** Should any party not apply for the prescribed penalty, the umpire will note the dissenting party on the report sheet.
- 16.2.8** The league may refer any report to the Independent Tribunal.
- 16.2.9** Where a player does not accept a prescribed penalty, the report will be referred to the Independent Tribunal. The Tribunal has the unfettered discretion to impose a penalty in excess of the prescribed penalty.
- 16.2.10** Where a player/club is offered and accepts a prescribed penalty the suspension will commence immediately and will apply from the next official League match of that grade in which the club plays, unless notification is received by the club that the prescribed penalty has not been accepted and the report will be referred to the Independent Tribunal.
- 16.2.11** Where a player/official is reported and subsequently suspended by the Independent Tribunal, the suspension will commence immediately and will apply from the next official League match of that grade in which the player was reported and the club competes.
- 16.2.12** An individual suspended in any competition under the jurisdiction of the NFNL will be ineligible to participate in all competitions of any code under the jurisdiction of the NFNL for the duration of the suspension. This includes both netball and football competitions.
- 16.2.13** Clubs which play clubs from other competitions who supply umpires must, in the event of their player or official being reported by those umpires, appear before that reporting umpire's League Independent Investigation Tribunal for investigation.



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Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

16.3 Tribunal Hearings

- 16.3.1** All Tribunal hearings shall proceed in accordance with the Independent Tribunal Procedure (Schedule 2) to these By-Laws.
- 16.3.2** In the event of a breach of protocol in Tribunal proceedings, any stakeholder may lodge an appeal with the GM Football Operations in writing detailing the protocol failure. If such protocol is proven to have been breached the Board may review the findings of the Tribunal and make determination on whether or not the original findings are upheld or dismissed and/or a re-hearing is to occur.
- 16.3.3** A person found guilty at tribunal will receive a minimum of a one match suspension. Suspended sentences or reprimands will not be given.
- 16.3.4** Appeals may only be lodged for suspensions of four (4) or more matches for a specific charge, where the club or player contends that the suspension sentence penalty imposed for that specific individual charge is excessive as determined by the Independent Tribunal.
- 16.3.5** Suspension sentences of three (3) matches or fewer, as determined by the Independent Tribunal, for any individual charge are final and cannot be appealed.
- 16.3.6** Any person reported in a representative program match within AFL Victoria match series will have their report heard under the AFL Victoria Tribunal system.

16.4 Suspended Coaches

- 16.4.1** Where a coach is under suspension from the NFNL they:
- a) May attend as a spectator only.
 - b) Cannot enter the playing field (including the coaches box) at any time (including the $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ time breaks).
 - c) Cannot enter the team rooms at any point prior, during or after the game.
 - d) Cannot actively be involved in coaching the team in any way while the game is being played. e.g., From beside the coaches' box behind the fence, using a radio device to communicate with the bench from another part of the ground, addressing the players from outside the playing field or through a third person.
- 16.4.2** Where a playing coach is suspended for a reportable offence that has occurred as a player, the club may seek an exemption from the League for the playing coach to officiate whilst under suspension. The League may rule at its discretion that they may continue to coach in a normal capacity whilst under suspension.

16.5 Suspended Players & Team Officials

- 16.5.1** Suspended Players & Team Officials may attend as a spectator only. They are not allowed to enter the playing field including the $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ time breaks and/or be in the vicinity of the coaches box area for either team at any time. Additionally, they may not be assigned to any team official roles.



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16.5.2 As per AFL Victoria guidelines, the player is ineligible to play in any other state or community league competition until they have completed their suspension within the NFNL with the community club division TEAM they have been reported and suspended with.

16.6 Suspended Spectators

16.6.1 Suspended spectators are not permitted to attend any NFNL sanctioned games during the suspension period. The NFNL may impose any such sanctions on a club or any individual that they specify for any breach of this regulation.

16.7 White Cards – Junior Coaches Box Area Policy

16.7.1 WHITE CARD - Coaching Box Area Card Policy (Juniors)

Note:

- Direct Red Cards can be given.
- Nothing in this policy prevents an Umpire from lodging a direct report at any time for an act that is deemed by the umpire at the level of a reportable offence.
- White/Red Cards can be issued by the umpire at the breaks between quarters for any prior incident and the card phase level consequence will commence the next quarter.

The GM Football Operations at their discretion may issue a White Card and issuing of a fine to a team post-match if information becomes available suggesting the junior umpire should have issued a white card.

1st White Card Phase – Free kick

- If, on a first occasion during a Match, a Field Umpire hears or observes any unacceptable behaviour arising from the Coaching Box Area, regardless of whether an individual offending person can be identified, the Field Umpire is to:
 - (i) blow the whistle to immediately stop play;
 - (ii) move within 20m of the offending Coaching Box Area; and
 - (iii) hold up a white card.
- A Field Umpire after the issuing of the card shall take control of the football at the spot on the field where play was stopped and will resume play by awarding a free kick against the offending team.
- It is incumbent on the Coach to immediately address any unacceptable behaviour identified within the Coaching Box Area.
- If any abuse or dissent is forthcoming from the Coaching Box Area during the card issuing process, a 25m penalty shall be additionally paid.

2nd White Card Phase – Free kick and 25 metre penalty

- If, on a second occasion during a Match, a Field Umpire hears or observes any Unacceptable Behaviour arising from the same Coaching Box Area, regardless of whether an individual offending person can be identified, the Field umpire is to:



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- (i) blow the whistle to immediately stop play;
- (ii) move within 20m of the offending Coaching Box Area; and
- (iii) hold up a white card.

- A Field Umpire after issuing the card shall take control of the football at the spot on the field where play was stopped and then once the card has been issued, will resume play by awarding a free kick and a 25m penalty against the offending team.
- It is incumbent on the Coach to again immediately address any unacceptable behaviour identified within the Coaching Box Area.
- If any abuse or dissent is forthcoming from the Coaching Box Area during the card issuing process, the existing 25m penalty shall be upgraded to a 50m penalty.

3rd Card (Red) – Free kick and 25 metre penalty. Coach reported and ejected and must leave coaches box and go to change rooms or leave venue

- If, on a third occasion during a Match, a Field Umpire hears or observes any Unacceptable Behaviour arising from the same Coaching Box Area the coach will be ejected, regardless of whether an individual offending person can be identified, the Field umpire is to:
 - (i) blow the whistle to immediately stop play;
 - (ii) move within 20m of the offending Coaching Box Area; and
 - (iii) *hold up a red card to the Coach to signal they are ejected
- A Field Umpire after issuing the red card and once the ejected coach has left the coaches box area shall take control of the football at the spot on the field where play was stopped, will resume play by awarding a free kick and a 25 m penalty against the offending team.
- If any abuse or dissent is forthcoming from the Coaching Box Area during the card issuing process, the existing 25m penalty shall be upgraded to a 50m penalty.

Ejected Coaches

- The coach must immediately leave the coaches box area and go to the change rooms until both teams and umpires have left the playing field; or Leave the venue and not return until the Match is completed and both teams and umpires have left the playing field.
- The match will be cancelled and the offending coaches team will forfeit the match in the event a coach refuses to leave the coaches box and refuses to go to the change rooms or leave the venue.
- The Coach cannot nominate someone else to leave the Coaching Box Area in their place, regardless of whether someone else's behaviour led to the red card.
- Any Coach who receives a red card shall be reported and issued a set penalty of 2 matches or can be sent direct to the Tribunal by the umpire.



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Reasons for Card

- The Field Umpire shall not engage in any conversation when undertaking any phase of the process and shall not answer any questions that come from the Coaching Box Area.
- If a Club wants clarity as to why a white or red card was issued, the offending Team Captain (Seniors) or Team Manger (Juniors) can respectfully approach the Field Umpires in-between quarters to obtain an explanation.

Guidance Note: This is not an avenue for the Captain or Team Manager to debate the decision. It's simply an opportunity to gain an understanding as to why a card was issued.

Coach Accumulation of cards penalties

1 white card in a season to coaches box:

- Fine of \$50

2 white cards in a season to coaches box:

- Fine of \$100

3 white cards in a season to coaches box:

- Fine of \$200

4 white cards in a season to coaches box:

- Head coach set penalty suspension of 1 match

5+ cards in a season to coaches box:

- Head coach set penalty suspension of 2 matches for each card received

Straight Red Card issued in a match to coaches box:

- Head Coach Reported & sent Direct to Tribunal

Spectators

In the event a Teams coaches box areas receives a card and they determine such behaviors have come from a person/s outside of the Coaching Box Area:

- it is incumbent on the Club to immediately seek to address the behaviour of that person/s; and it does not negate the issuing of the card.

16.7.2 For any misconduct by any team officials **on-field** they may be dealt with alternatively by a free kick, yellow card or red card or by any means the umpire chooses and the team officials misconduct may be referred to the league by the umpire for further sanctions.

Refer: Schedule 20 Fines.

Example: On-field umpire abuse by a water carrier, club boundary or goal umpire.



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17. MELEE RULE

- 17.1 Definition** - An incident involving six (6) or more players and/or officials who are pushing, grappling, wrestling or otherwise struggling with one another and which, in the opinion of the umpire(s) is likely to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute or prejudice the interests or reputation of the NFNL or the competitions conducted by the NFNL.
- 17.2 Volunteer Involvement** - Under no circumstances are volunteers (coaches, runners, trainers, water carriers, club umpires etc.) permitted to approach or become involved in a melee involving players from either competing team. This includes attempting to separate or restrain players who are involved in the melee
- 17.3 Incident and Penalty Procedure**
- 17.3.1** In the event of a melee taking place and following three (3) continued instructions from the umpire(s) to break up the melee, if the melee continues, the umpire(s) shall report the incident to the league. The field umpire(s) appointed by the NFNL shall record on the umpires match report at the conclusion of the game and incident where the melee has taken place. This will include the quarter and the position on the field where the melee took place.
- 17.3.2** Such form shall be signed by the umpire(s) and a copy of the umpire match report containing notification of the incident will be received online by each club as per normal match day procedure.
- 17.3.3** Fines shall be charged to the clubs account.
- 17.3.4** Any melees occurring during NFNL finals games may be referred directly by the CEO to the NFNL Board for consideration with regard to penalty.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

18. MATCH REVIEW PANEL – FOOTBALL

- 18.1** A nominated representative of an NFNL club (e.g., President, Secretary, Senior Coach or Football Manager, or any other person so delegated with the authority by the club) or NFNL CEO, GM Football Operations or Umpire/s can request that the NFNL Match Review Panel look into a specific incident/s that did not result in an official report by the officiating Umpire(s).
- 18.1.1** Requests to look at specific incidents need to pinpoint exactly when and where the incident occurred.
- 18.1.2** The NFNL will then approach our match footage provider (with information provided) and ask them to see if any footage of the alleged incident is available. If there is footage of the incident, a grab shall be sent to the GM Football Operations of the League via email.



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- 18.1.3** The footage will then be forwarded on to the Match Review Panel who shall have a set amount of time to review the footage and determine whether or not the player shall be referred to the Independent Tribunal to answer a charge. NFNL rules shall be used when referring the incident to the tribunal and a specific charge shall be nominated when the club is informed about the report.
- 18.1.4** The MRP may offer a set penalty, at their discretion.
- 18.1.5** It is important to note that the Match Review Panel shall take no part in deciding the outcome of the case if it is referred to the Tribunal. This decision is a determination of the Independent Tribunal.
- 18.1.6** Match Review Panel requests must be received by 10:00am on the Tuesday following the round of matches. The following deadlines will apply following the determination of the Match Review Panel:
- 18.1.7** Clubs will have 24 hours should they wish to request an investigation should the Match Review Panel determine there is no case to answer.
- 18.1.8** Match Review Panel requests referred to the Tribunal will be heard by the Tribunal in the same week, on either Tuesday or Wednesday night as prescribed in the NFNL By-Laws.
- 18.1.9** Only footage captured through the official NFNL match filming program is eligible for submission to the Match Review Panel. Incidents captured through other sources may be assessed by the Match Review Panel (at the GM's discretion) or can be tendered through the NFNL Investigation Procedure.
- 18.1.10** The MRP may implement a yellow card, at their discretion.
- 18.1.11** The NFNL Board will select and determine the people of the Match Review Panel.
- 18.1.12** The league at no time will communicate to clubs the MRP Panel persons names or the Tribunal Panel members names to protect these persons privacy. All persons appointed by the CEO and Board have extensive football background experience and knowledge of all current Laws of Australian Football.

19. INVESTIGATIONS

- 19.1** Requests for league investigation and reviewing of incident from clubs must be received by 5:00pm on the Tuesday following the incident.
- 19.2** Any issue may be referred to an Investigation Officer by the NFNL who shall investigate any matter which has been deemed relevant by the CEO to whether or not a person may have committed a reportable incident, and in which the CEO determines there is sufficient evidence available that would indicate a suspension charge will occur and be upheld at a Tribunal.
- 19.3** A request for an investigation of an incident, for which footage is available, may be referred to the MRP at the discretion of the CEO.



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- 19.4** In the event after reviewing the clubs incident the league does not believe there is sufficient evidence available that would constitute a charge and suspension of persons, the club may still request for the appointment of an Investigation officer and is required to pay the \$500 bond monies to the league by no later than 5:00pm on the Tuesday following the incident. (or alternative deadline advised by the GM Football Operations)
- a) The bond, minus a 20% administration fee, may be returned upon resolution of the investigation in accordance with the Rules and By-Laws, except in the case where it is determined that the investigation was frivolous or vexatious, in which case the CEO at their absolute discretion may retain whole or part of the bond.
 - b) If an investigation is unable to reach an outcome (i.e., Suspension of player at a Tribunal Hearing), the club lodging the investigation is liable for the costs of the investigator.
- 19.5** For the purpose of conducting an Investigation under this By-Law, upon request by the Investigation Officer, any person shall:
- a) Fully cooperate with the Investigation Officer.
 - b) Truthfully answer any questions asked by the Investigation Officer.
 - c) Provide any document in that person's possession, power or control relevant to the Investigation, whether requested to do so or not by the Investigation Officer.
- 19.6** A person who fails to observe and comply with By-Law 19.5 above or who provides any information or has acted in a manner in any respect is false or misleading or likely to mislead, shall be deemed to have been involved in conduct which is unbecoming or prejudicial to the interests of the League and shall be liable to a sanction as determined by the Board in its absolute discretion. The Investigation Officer must promptly notify the CEO of the failure of any person to observe and comply with By-Law 19.5 above.
- 19.7** The Investigation Officer shall, as soon as practicable but in any event no later than fourteen (14) working days after the Investigation commenced, compile a report of the Investigation, including transcripts of all interviews, and submit the report to the CEO. [The CEO shall then refer the report and findings recommendations to the NFNL Board for determination.](#)
- 19.8** For the purpose of conducting an Investigation under this By-Law, upon request by the Grievance Committee, any person shall:
- a) Fully cooperate with the Grievance Committee.
 - b) Truthfully answer any questions asked by the Grievance Committee.
 - c) Provide any document in that person's possession, power or control relevant to the investigation, whether requested to do so or not by the Grievance Committee.
- 19.9** A person who fails to observe and comply with By-Law 19.8 above or who provides any information or has acted in a manner in any respect is false or misleading or likely to mislead, shall be deemed to have been involved in conduct which is unbecoming or prejudicial to the interests of the League and shall be liable to a sanction as determined



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by the Board in its absolute discretion. The Grievance Committee must promptly notify the CEO of the failure of any person to observe and comply with By-Law 19.8 above.

20. GRIEVANCE AND PROTESTS

20.1 General

20.1.1 In accordance with the Rules, a registered player, Club, League registered umpire, member of the Umpires Board, a member of the NFNL Board, an employee of the NFNL, or at the direction of the Board, the CEO may raise a grievance concerning the result of a match or any act, matter or thing involving any club, registered player or official.

20.2 Lodgment of Grievance and Protests

20.2.1 The grievance must be lodged with the office of the NFNL by no later than 5:00 pm on Monday following the date when the incident or grievance is alleged to have occurred. A lodgment of Grievance should include all relevant documents and/or a detailed description of the event and circumstances within the knowledge of the person lodging the grievance that gives rise to the grievance.

20.2.2 If the grievance is against the CEO of the NFNL, the grievance may be lodged directly to the Board (or board member) of the NFNL.

20.3 Grievance Procedures

20.3.1 The CEO is to review the grievance and may deal with it immediately, if requested, or conduct a preliminary investigation and within five (5) working days determine that the grievance is to be dismissed or referred to either of:

- a) An Investigation Officer.
- b) A Tribunal of the NFNL.
- c) A Grievance Committee.
- d) A Conciliation Officer.
- e) The Board.

20.3.2 The CEO is to maintain a register detailing the nature of the grievance. This is to be tabled at all Board meetings.

20.3.3 In the event of a grievance being made against an employee of the NFNL or Board Member, the CEO is to advise the Chairman of the Board of such grievance as soon as possible.

20.3.4 In the event of a grievance being passed to the Board for resolution, the Board may appoint at a minimum a panel of three Board Members to deal with the grievance.

20.4 Bond

20.4.1 In the case of a club registered player or club official lodging a grievance, a bond of **\$500.00** is to be paid to the office of the CEO at the time of lodgment. In the case of a



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grievance being lodged by a League registered umpire or member of the Umpires Board, the lodgment of a bond is not required. The bond may be returned upon resolution of the grievance in accordance with the Rules and By-Laws except in the case where it is determined that the grievance was frivolous or vexatious in which case the CEO at his/her absolute discretion may retain whole or part of the bond.

20.4.2 An administration fee, in accordance with Schedule 20, will be withheld from the bond. In the case of a grievance being referred to the Independent Tribunal which results in a player/official being found guilty, the club to which the guilty party belongs will also be charged the administration fee.

20.4.3 If the event the NFNL receives more than one grievance on substantially the same matter, the CEO at his discretion may treat all subsequent grievances in the same manner as the initial grievance and shall inform the body to which the matters were referred of the new grievance.

20.5 Grievance Committee

20.5.1 Once a grievance has been referred by the CEO to the Grievance Committee, it shall be dealt with by the Grievance Committee in accordance with this By-Law ("Grievance").

20.5.2 The CEO shall take all reasonable steps to bring the grievance to the attention of the player, club and/or official, the subject of the grievance ("the Respondent") within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the grievance.

20.5.3 No later than ten (10) working days after referral from the CEO, the Grievance Committee shall convene a hearing into the grievance. The CEO will take all reasonable steps to notify the parties involved of the time, date and location of the meeting of the Grievance Committee.

20.5.4 The operation of the Grievance Committee shall be in accordance with the Grievance Committee Procedures (Schedule 3).

20.5.5 After the consideration of the evidence put before it, the Grievance Committee shall give a decision to resolve the grievance.

20.5.6 The Grievance Committee may:

- a) Impose a Fine for breach on the Respondent up to a maximum of \$1000 for each matter complained of.
- b) Suspend the Respondent from participating in any match or event organised by the League.
- c) Recommend to the Board that match points awarded to the Respondent in a relevant match, if a club, be deducted.
- d) Recommend to the Board that the Respondent be suspended or expelled by the Board from the League in accordance with the Statement of Rules.

20.6 Conciliation

20.6.1 The CEO may refer any Grievance made pursuant to By-Law 20.5 for conciliation to be dealt with in accordance with this By-Law.



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- 20.6.2** Where a dispute has arisen between a Club and one of its members, and the Club has resolved to refer the matter to the League for resolution, the parties may agree upon a mediator to mediate the dispute, or otherwise permit the League to appoint a mediator to assist the parties in resolving the dispute.
- 20.6.3** If the dispute is between any member club, registered player or official and another member club, registered player or official or between any member club, registered player or official and the League, the parties may nominate a preferred mediator or permit the League in its absolute and unfettered discretion to appoint a mediator.
- 20.6.4** In the event of any reportable offence taking place during the progress of any official match or on the day of the match, the field umpire(s) in all sections and all official League goal and boundary and emergency umpires shall have the power to report players or officials in respect of the offence to the Northern Football Netball League Tribunal, including:
- a) Any alleged breach of these By-Laws relating to the conduct of matches in the League; or
 - b) Any alleged breach of the Policies and Codes of Conduct published in the Schedule to the By-Laws by the Board from time to time.
- 20.6.5** The disputing parties and the appointed mediator shall read carefully the League's Conciliation Agreement (a copy is annexed to these By-Laws – Schedule 4) and sign the Conciliation Agreement. The conduct of the conciliation shall proceed in accordance with the Conciliation Agreement.
- 20.6.6** The outcome of the conciliation shall be reported by the mediator to the CEO, including as to whether the parties resolve the dispute, but not the terms of any settlement between the parties, except with the permission of the parties. Should conciliation not be successful in resolving the dispute, the parties shall observe the terms of the Conciliation Agreement, and any further direction given by the CEO in accordance with By-Law 20.5 (save as to any further conciliation of the dispute).

21. CONDUCT UNBECOMING, PREJUDICIAL OR LIKELY TO BRING THE GAME INTO DISREPUTE

- 21.1** Where the CEO is of the opinion that an Affiliated Club or any Official, player or Member thereof, or Member or any other person has contravened the Statement of Purposes, Rules or By-Laws of the League or has been involved in conduct which is unbecoming or likely to prejudice the reputation, or interests of the League, or to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute, the CEO may deal with in any such manner in their absolute discretion thinks fit and without limiting their power, they may:
- a) appoint any person to enquire into any matter.
 - b) conduct their own enquiry into any matter.
 - c) refer any matter to the Tribunal; or



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- d) refer to the NFNL Board to impose any penalty that the Board deems fit including but not limited to, imposing a monetary penalty or bond, a suspension, a disqualification or providing for the loss of or forfeiture of or Premiership points or other privileges, benefits or entitlements.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

- 21.2 Spectator and Parent misconduct is to be charged under By-Law 21.
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22. NFNL LIFE MEMBERSHIP AND RECOGNITION OF SERVICES AWARD

22.1 Life Membership

22.1.1 An individual may be nominated for NFNL Life Membership if they have:

- a) Given years continuous service to the NFNL/DVFL in a volunteer or honorarium position (generally these would most likely be positions with the NFNL media, Board, tribunal, development etc.); or
- b) Played 300 Senior Men's games within the NFNL/DVFL (player).
- c) Played 235 Senior Womens games within the NFNL/DVFL (player).
- d) Umpired 300 Senior Men's or Womens Games within the NFNL/DVFL.

22.1.2 All life members would have the right to address the forum at a General Meeting or Special General Meeting, but not have a voting right.

22.2 Meritorious Service Award

The NFNL would make a suitable presentation to any member of any stakeholder club/body, who is already a life member of their affiliated club/body, who provides fifteen (15) years of continuous service to their affiliated clubs/bodies and every five (5) years after that. This would be reliant on affiliated club/bodies to notify the NFNL of current members who would be in a position to receive such recognition.

22.3 300 Club

This is a club established to recognize all players/umpires who have played or umpired 300 open age club games in the Senior and Reserves within the NFNL. (This would also include games players/umpired within the former DVFL.)

23. PLAYER AWARDS

23.1 League Best and Fairest

23.1.1 Official League field umpires shall lodge one set of best and fairest votes (3, 2, and 1) in official League Home and Away matches in all Junior Under 11-18 divisions, Under 19.5, Reserves and Senior Men and Women competitions. Where two League field umpires



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are officiating in a match, one set of best and fairest votes will be lodged on behalf of both umpires.

- 23.1.2** Any player who has been found guilty of a reportable offence in the NFNL and suspended in a NFNL Home and Away match will be ineligible to win a best and fairest award. This includes suspensions incurred from excessive sendoff cards in a season.
- 23.1.3** The player that accumulates the most votes **in that division's games** will be declared the winner.
- 23.1.4** Umpire Votes of players will **not be transferred** to another division if their team is re-divisionalised in Juniors, Senior Womens and Under 19.5. **Votes stay within a division.**
- 23.2 Coaches MVP Player of the Year Award**
- 23.2.1** Coaches MVP Player of the Year will only be awarded in Senior Men's and Senior Women's football competitions.
- 23.2.2** Coaches are required to provide 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 MVP votes for the **overall five best players on the ground from that match.**
- FOR CLARIFICATON:** The best players **ON THE GROUND**, and not just a coaches own team players.
- Fines may be issued to coaches for submitting votes that are club biased and that breach the integrity, spirit and purpose of the award.
- The NFNL at their discretion can request votes to be re-submitted if the above is not adhered to.
- 23.2.3** MVP Votes are to be submitted by 5pm on the Monday following each game via an online form, provided by the NFNL. **Fines will be issued for late submission.**
- 23.2.4** The player that accumulates the most MVP votes **in that division's games** will be declared the winner.
- 23.2.5** MVP Votes of players **will not be transferred** to another division if their team is re-divisionalised in Juniors, Senior Womens and Under 19.5. **Votes stay within a division.**

24. PRESENTATION NIGHT TICKETS

- 24.1** Each year the NFNL shall conduct a Best and Fairest presentation for Junior and Senior competitions and Netball competitions.
- 24.2** All Senior Clubs shall be allotted ten (10) tickets for the League Senior Presentation Night.
- 24.3** All Womens teams shall be allotted four (4) tickets for the League Senior Presentation Night.
- 24.4** All Netball Clubs shall be allotted two (2) tickets for the League Senior Presentation Night.



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- 24.5 Junior clubs shall pay a levy determined by the league for junior presentation night.
 - 24.6 Tickets shall be billed at the prices prevailing from time to time.
 - 24.7 Clubs may purchase additional tickets to presentation nights directly from the NFNL.
 - 24.8 Board discretion on ticket allocation for Clubs who only have under-12s and below.
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25. ALCOHOL

- 25.1 No alcohol is to be consumed or sold at any football venue (including within licensed clubrooms) where junior matches are being staged until at least 30 minutes after the conclusion of the final match of the day.
- 25.2 No alcohol is to be brought into, consumed or sold at any NFNL junior venue at any time.
- 25.3 Clubs shall be responsible for the conduct of its members, supporters and followers.
- 25.4 Any beverage (alcohol or otherwise) that is sold in a glass receptacle cannot be consumed outside of a club's social rooms during all NFNL matches.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

26. UNAUTHORISED MEDIA STATEMENTS

- 26.1 No club shall permit any of its officers or members to make any statement to the media (including radio, television and all newspapers) in connection with any policies or acts of the Board without the prior approval of the Board.
 - 26.2 Without the prior approval of the NFNL, a club shall be liable to:
 - a) A Fine for breach at the discretion of the League; and/or
 - b) Suspension from the League; and/or
 - c) Expulsion from the League in accordance with the Rules of the League.
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27. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

- 27.1 Information Technology is rapidly advancing and as it does it provides various forums such as "Big Footy" and "Facebook" in which anyone can record comments anonymously. The NFNL recognises that it cannot prohibit people from using social media forums; however, such forums when referencing the NFNL Community or individuals within the NFNL Community, should be used as per the guidelines outlined in the NFNL Media Policy at Schedule 18. Where comments are considered to be prejudice to the values of the NFNL, action may be taken in accordance with the NFNL Social Media Policy (Schedule 23).
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28. FINE FOR BREACHES

- 28.1 The value of all penalties shall be determined by the Board from time to time and may be adjusted by the Board at any time.
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29. FINE FOR BREACHES – APPEALS

- 29.1 No appeals against a Fine shall be heard until the initial Fine has been paid and a bond paid if appealing a League Operations decision.
- 29.2 This appeal may be referred to the NFNL Board or an Appeals Hearing at the determination of the CEO.
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30. POLICIES AND CODES OF CONDUCT

- 30.1 All players and officials at all League matches shall be subject to the Policies and Codes of Conduct as issued by the Board from time to time (refer Schedules). Any amendments shall not be effective unless first ratified by the Board.
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31. CLUB ANNUAL REPORTS

- 31.1 All Affiliated Clubs (Senior and Junior) must forward to the CEO, no later than December 15 each year, one copy of their Annual Report.
- 31.2 All Affiliated Clubs shall forward to the CEO, no later than December 15, a copy of the Affiliated Club's Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, as supplied to the Incorporations Board, and a list of all club office bearers for the coming season.
- 31.3 Any change of office bearer is to be notified to the NFNL within 21 days of that change.
- 31.4 The Finance committee of the NFNL shall review all Affiliated Club Account information to determine Club viability to meet their NFNL financial obligations. Any Club that the Finance committee believes may not meet their obligations shall be requested to meet with the NFNL Board to address their situation.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

32. MEETINGS

32.1 Compulsory

The Board may convene compulsory meeting(s) for Club officials as stipulated by the Board from time to time. These meetings shall include, but are not limited to: Club Administrator Courses, Senior and Junior Coaches Forums, Junior Meetings and Finals Participants Meetings.



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Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

32.2 Representatives

32.2.1 Two representatives of clubs must attend all Annual and Special Meetings of the League. Such representatives shall be the President and/or Secretary and/or one other member of the club.

32.2.2 Any club calling a meeting of other clubs other than in accordance with the Rules of the League without the prior authority of the Board shall be liable to:

- a) A fine in accordance with Schedule 20; and/or
- b) Suspension from the League; and/or
- c) Be expelled from the League in accordance with the Rules of the League.

33. CLUB OFFICE BEARERS

33.1 Within seven (7) days of a club AGM, all senior and junior affiliated clubs must lodge with the League (on the form provided from time to time) a list of all club office bearers.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.

34. MISCELLANEOUS

34.1 Club Playing Outside League

Affiliated Clubs shall not participate in a match involving any football club that is not affiliated with the League outside the fixture arranged by the League during the Football Season. Affiliated Clubs desiring to participate in matches involving a football club that is not affiliated with the League at times outside the Football Season shall first notify the GM Football Operations of their intention and shall not participate in such a match without the prior written approval of the League.

34.2 Communication to the League

All letters and written communications to the League shall be directed to the GM. Communication is to be on Club letterhead. In the event that the communication is email, it is to be sent by an official of the Affiliated Club. Letters not received on Club letterhead or received on email from a Club official shall not be acted on.

34.3 Special Circumstances Clause

Where this by-law is silent, a decision can be made that ensures the integrity of the NFNL is always maintained.

34.4 League Administration Items

All clubs are required to complete any directed mandatory league operational administration items.

Fine for breach: In accordance with Schedule 20.



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35. MODIFIED RULE COMPETITIONS - UNDER-9 & GIRLS UNDER-10

35.1 Junior Rules Matrix - For overview of all Junior rules please see Schedule 32.

35.2 General

35.2.1 NFNL Under 9 and Girls Under 10 competitions are the only junior competitions to be played under modified rules and have requirements for players to remain in zones. Coaches are responsible for communicating and policing of their players to remain in zones.

35.2.2 **Yellow** wristbands are mandatory and are to be worn by midfield zone players to help distinguish player zones.

35.2.3 The field umpire will throw the ball up within 10 metres of the boundary line if the ball goes out of bounds. No club boundary umpires are required.

35.3 Umpires

35.3.1 The NFNL will supply umpires for this competition. If for some reason the umpire does not show up to the game, the home team is to supply the umpire. This person must be the registered umpire for the team.

35.4 Coaches – Under 9 and Girls Under 10

35.4.1 Teams are permitted to have one (1) coach on the ground to assist with the education of footballers in the Under-9 and Girls Under-10 competitions and ensure their players remain in zones (this is the coaches responsibility and not the umpires).

A coach is permitted on ground in Under 10 Boys for player education purposes only.

36. ALTERATION TO BY-LAWS

The By-Laws may be amended by the Board from time to time pursuant to the Rules.

37. FINES FOR BY-LAW NON-COMPLIANCE

Fines may be imposed by the Board or the CEO or GM Football Operations for non-compliance with or violation of these by-laws:

- a) At the rates specified in Schedule 20; or
 - b) If no rate is specified in Schedule 20, at a rate determined by the Board.
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38. PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO RECORDING OF GAMES

38.1 Photography & Video Footage at NFNL Games - Photography and filming of players for coaching purposes at NFNL matches shall be allowed so long as the photos and/or footage is taken



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of NFNL competition matches in play. **This includes amateur photography/filming.** At no stage may any person take a camera into the change rooms of either club to take any kind of photograph or video footage without the permission of the people whose image is being recorded. Further to this, photographs and video footage of NFNL games shall not be used for commercial gain without first obtaining the permission from the NFNL and the participating clubs. Failure to adhere to this By-Law shall result in punishment as deemed necessary by the NFNL Board.

Hiring of an external paid professional video company for the purposes of recording a live match (e.g Sportscast) may only be done by home teams at their venue and does not require opposition club approval. Away team clubs are not permitted to do this when playing at another clubs venue unless direct approval has been received from the Home Club President.

For junior finals (not including Grand Finals) participating teams that wish to have games filmed must contact the league for approval.

39. AMENDMENTS TABLE

Date of Issue	Amendment / Version	Remarks
April 2007	Initial Issue	
December 2010	Version 2	Complete review. Some amendments to initial issue not recorded.
December 2011	Version 3	As Presented to NFL clubs at AGM December 2011.
December 2012	Version 4	As presented to clubs at AGM December 2012.
February 2014	Version 5	As provided to clubs February 2014.
December 2014	Version 6	Complete review, approved by NFL Board December 2014.
November 2015	Version 7	Complete review, approved by NFL Board October 2015.
December 2016	Version 8	Complete review, approved by NFL Board October 2016.
November 2017	Version 9	Complete review, approved by NFL Board October 2017.
October 2018	Version 10	Complete review, approved by NFNL Board October 2018.
December 2019	Version 11	Complete review, approved by NFNL Board December 2019
October 2021	Version 12	Complete review, approved by NFNL Board September 2021
February 2022	Version 13	Complete review, approved by NFNL Board February 2022
November 2022	Version 14	Complete review, approved by NFNL Board November 2022
December 2023	Version 15	Complete review, approved by NFNL Board November 2023
November 2024	Version 16	Complete review, approved by NFNL Board November 2024