

# Summary - 2025 Football By Law and Schedule Changes

NFNL Board Approved November 2024

Rule Area	Rule Status	Rule	Category	Summary of Change	Notes
<b>Dispensations U19.5/U18 Girls</b>	Revised	Schedule 35	Under 19.5/Under 18 Girls	In 2024 the maximum dispensations amount that could be approved was 5 per team. For 2025 season, a change to a maximum of <b>3 per club</b> .	The integrity of the Under 19.5 competition as an age-based competition must be upheld. Reducing the number of overage dispensation players per club helps maintain this integrity and ensures the competition stays true to its intended purpose. Each club can still apply for exemptions, but these should not be used simply to allow friends to play together or to boost team numbers.
<b>VFL Players in Reserves Finals</b>	New	12.1.7	Senior Men	Any VFL listed player in that competition year is <b>not</b> permitted to play in NFNL Reserves Finals, even if the club fields multiple teams on the same finals weekend.	This addresses concerns about VFL-listed players in Reserves finals, ensuring fairness and protecting the integrity of the Reserves finals series.
<b>Senior Women &amp; Girls Football Team Sizes</b>	Revised	8.1	Senior Women/ Junior Girls	<b>All Senior Women and Junior Girls Teams:</b> 16 players on ground and maximum 6 players allowed on bench.(22 players)	Aligning with the VFLW, AFLW, community leagues, and the NFNL junior girls' structure, moving to 16 players on the field across all divisions ensures consistency and cohesion. In junior girls, setting a maximum of six players on the bench also matches the boys' competition, promoting consistency and equal opportunities for all players.



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<b>Junior Girls Finals maximum number of players permitted</b>	Revised	12.3.9	Junior Girls	Teams are permitted to play to a maximum of 26 eligible players in junior boys finals <b>and to a maximum of 24 eligible players in junior girls finals. (8 bench players maximum allowable in finals only)</b>	This adjustment ensures a consistent maximum of eight bench players for all junior finals, whether boys' or girls' matches.
<b>Senior Womens/Girls White Shorts requirement</b>	Revised	13.1.7	Senior Women/ Junior Girls	Junior Girls and Senior Women teams are not required to wear white shorts for away games, unless they wish and prefer to.	Clubs are no longer required to submit an application letter prior to each season to gain approval to not wear white shorts.
<b>Junior Mercy Rule Application</b>	Revised	11.11.1	Juniors	When a team is 60 points or more in front of the opposing team, the mercy rule will come into play. <b>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 margin is 60 points or more).</b> If the margin drops to under 60 points at any stage, the mercy rule will no longer apply and the umpire shall throw the ball up for a ruck contest as per normal protocol.	A now new simplified way of applying on game day for umpires, coaches and players, to reduce game disruptions and ensure smoother implementation during matches.
<b>Player Administration Fee (NFNL Player Levy Fee)</b>	Revised	4.8.1	Seniors & Juniors	All players shall pay an administration levy of \$30 when registering in any senior or junior competition. (NFNL Levy)	As per NFNL CEO communication to clubs on 23 October, 2024
<b>Permit Player Fees</b>	Revised	4.8.2	Seniors	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.	This process ensures all permit players are also captured in paying the standardised NFNL Player Levy Fee to play in the NFNL.

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<b>Junior Evening Up Rule</b>	Revised	11.10.1	Juniors	<p><b>11.10 Juniors Evening Up Rule</b></p> <p><b>11.10.1 Competitive matches – U11-U18 Girls</b> - Where one team has between 14 and 18 players (mixed/boys competitions) or between 12 and 16 (girls competitions), as per Schedule 32 – Junior Rules Matrices, 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.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><b>11.10.2 Non Competitive matches - Under 9, Under 10 and Under 10 Girls</b> - 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.</p>	<p>In competitive age group matches Under 11-Under 18, clubs are now <b>not</b> required to offer loan players to the opposition team but simply even up and adjust their player numbers on ground accordingly. This will provide for easier application on game day for all parties and also not then force players to play with opposition teams.</p>
<b>Genuine Shortage in Junior Finals</b>	Clarified	12.3.11	Juniors	<p>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 to have 2 bench players in a final.</p>	<p>Further extension of criteria provided for clubs for any application to be considered by the league.</p>
<b>Junior Representative Try Outs</b>	Removed	14.1	Juniors	<p>By Law has been removed after changes to the program and fee structure for 2025 try outs phase 1.</p>	<p>Removal of tiered cap nomination system that was in place per division.</p>
<b>2025 Senior Men Salary Cap amounts</b>	Revised	6.1.2	Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division 1: \$125,000</li> <li>• Division 2: \$100,000</li> <li>• Division 3: \$75,000</li> </ul>	<p>As per NFNL GM Football Operations communication to clubs on 27 September, 2024</p>

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<b>Coates League Players - Finals qualification in Under 19.5</b>	Updated	12.1.8	Under 19.5	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 then ineligible to be selected in an Under 19.5 finals match even if the club has multiple teams playing finals that weekend. <b>They may return to play with the League in a finals match of the Senior or Reserve grades only.</b>	Protects integrity of Under 19.5 finals series where clubs may have multiple teams playing in same finals weekend.
<b>Under 19.5 Season of Service deductions application process</b>	New, Revised	6.1.6	Seniors	<b><u>Under 19.5 Season of Service Deductions Applications</u></b> Any NFNL Senior Club that meets the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not have its own juniors or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a Junior Club, and/or</li> <li>• Has a Junior Club that fielded a minimal number of teams in the previous junior season</li> </ul> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.)</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> 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.	Following approval from the AFL CCSP Panel in September 2024, eligible NFNL Senior Clubs may submit an application to the CEO by no later than March 1 each competition year for a 1-point season of service deduction for Under 19.5 players from the previous season.

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VFL/VFLW & Coates League Players	Updated	12.1.1, 12.3.15	Seniors & Juniors	No player that has played VFL/VFLW or Coates League that weekend is permitted to be listed and/or play in a NFNL match that same weekend. Fine sanctions will apply.	Ensures clubs do not "list" or "play" VFL and Coates Leagues players in NFNL matches. The VFL/VFLW/Coates League have stated to the NFNL they are not permitted to play at community level in a weekend when they are playing at a higher level that weekend.
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### Fines – Schedule 20 adjustments

- (a) **ASSUALTING AN UMPIRE** – Current Fine was not exceeding \$1000. **Changed to be applied by the Board.**

**Reasoning:** Requires the highest of sanctions as most serious offence in football

- (b) **NO TIMEKEEPER** – Increased from \$100 to \$250

**Reasoning:** It is totally unsatisfactory for any team to not provide, so a greater deterrent penalty is recommended

- (c) **LATE FROM BREAKS** – For Finals the fine amount per minute is doubled in both juniors and seniors (Currently \$25 a minute).

**Reasoning:** Finals games must run on time, and it is important that there is a greater penalty in place for coaches that choose to ignore the maximum time allowed in breaks.

- (d) **FAILURE TO MARK GROUND** – Changed from \$100 to up to \$500.

**Reasoning:** Line markings of grounds are non-negotiable for the actual playing of a match and application of rules. The change provides greater scope to fine appropriately for any failures.

- (e) **REQUESTS FOR AN INVESTIGATION (Bond)** – Changed from \$300 to \$500.

**Reasoning:** To many clubs are continually rolling the dice and submitting for investigations on matters that are frivolous. Increasing the bond amount will change such behaviors it is hoped.

- (f) **APPEALS OF LEAGUE OPERATIONS DECISIONS (Bond)** – Changed from \$300 to \$500

**Reasoning:** Greater bond amount is needed to deter clubs from just lodging appeals on every determination made by the league.



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(g) **APPEALS OF CARDS ISSUED (Bond)** – Changed from \$300 to \$500.

**Reasoning:** Greater bond amount is needed to deter clubs from just lodging appeals frivolously on cards given.

(h) **NO UMPIRE ESCORT SUPPLIED**– Changed from \$100 to \$250

**Reasoning:** Is simply a non-negotiable and clubs should be sanctioned more heavily if not provided.

(i) **GRIEVANCES TO NFNL BOARD** – Changed from \$300 bond to \$500 bond.

**Reasoning:** This has been increased to assist in deterring people just raising frivolous matters and complaints direct to the NFNL Board.