

## Summary - 2026 Football By Law and Schedule Changes

NFNL Board Approved December 2025

Rule Area	Rule Status	Rule	Category	Summary of Change	Notes
<b>Two Teams – Senior Football</b>	Clarified	4.4	Under 19.5 and Senior Women	New section title: Under 19.5 and Senior Women with 2 Teams entered	Section title altered to reflect that the rule applies to both Under 19.5 and senior women's teams
<b>Junior Representative Football</b>	Revised	5.5	Juniors	<p>5.5.1 Any junior player actively participating in the Junior Development program, will be ineligible to transfer to another NFNL club. Final squad members (participating in the AFL Victoria Metro Junior Development series) will not be permitted to transfer for the remainder of that season.</p> <p>5.5.2 Only players that have been registered during the previous 12 months may be nominated by that club to participate in the Junior Development program. (Implemented for the 2027 season)</p>	<p>Previous rule stated “any nominated player” new interpretation specifies player actively participating. This allows players to withdraw from the program should they wish to transfer during that season.</p> <p>Forward planning of highlighting further changes to the rules for the 2027 season, players must have been at their current club for the previous season to be nominated for the rep program.</p>
<b>Under 19 Season of Service</b>	Clarified	6.1.6	Under 19.5	<p>Minor clarification of words</p> <p>replace CEO with General Manager Football operations</p> <p>removal of time constraints to allow for applications to be made during the season when players are elevated to seniors</p>	General clarification of which clubs may apply for the deduction and removal of CEO and time constraints from the process

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<b>2026 Senior Men Salary Cap amounts</b>	Revised	6.2.4	Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Division 1: \$135,000</li> <li>Division 2: \$105,000</li> <li>Division 3: \$80,000</li> </ul>	As per NFNL CEO communication to clubs on 29 August. 2025
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> Player</b>	Clarified	8.8	Senior Men	<p>Clarification of Under 19.5 eligible player and inclusion of Minimum age allowance for Senior Football</p> <p><i>Player must be 16 as of December 31 the year prior to current season</i></p>	<p>Clarification that player may be from Reserves, Juniors if they are eligible to player Under 19.5</p> <p>Inclusion of AFL age guideline for minimum age allowed to participate in Senior Football (Already adopted by the NFNL included in by-law of ease if access)</p>
<b>Playing Surface</b>	Revised	8.11.2	All	Revision of “white line” as the required colour of line marking for all NFNL ground marking to include black lines	Inclusion of black lines being allowed to reflect the instances where black lines on yellow grass are a more suitable option than white lines
<b>Playing Surface</b>	New	8.11.6	All	Inclusion of mandated 15m line	Assist umpires in officiating kick ins and in line with AFL standards
<b>Coaches boxes &amp; extended areas</b>	New	8.12.8 and 8.12.9	Senior and Junior Football	Inclusion of a designated spot no closer than 20m from the benches for water carriers be situated	
<b>Mercy Rule</b>	Revised	11.11.1	Juniors	Simplified wording – Free kick is taken from the centre in place of the centre bounce	
<b>Finals Eligibility (VFL)</b>	Revised	12.1.14	Senior Men	Finals eligibility for VFL Listed players increased from three (3) matches to four (4) matches	Addressing concern of VFL players returning to NFNL finals, protecting fairness and integrity of finals competition

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<b>Finals Eligibility (VFL)</b>	NEW	12.1.15	Senior Men	Any VFL listed player in that competition year that players more than 11 (12 or more) matches within the VFL will not be eligible to play NFNL finals	Addressing concern of VFL players returning to NFNL finals, protecting fairness and integrity of finals competition
<b>Compression Garments</b>	Revised	13.2	All	Broadening of the specific colour “beige” to be more inclusive, replace with <u>beige, black or team coloured</u> . Under garments may not extend beyond the length of the playing jumper or shorts.	Addresses exclusivity based on skin colour
<b>Order Off Rule</b>	Clarified	Schedule 21	All	Inclusion of a table to clarify what each card or combination of cards results in	Clarity of understanding of the application of the Card system
<b>Dispensations U19.5</b>	Revised	Schedule 35	Under 19.5	In 2025 the maximum dispensations amount that could be approved was <b>3 per club</b> . The league has added the allowance of an additional 2 players for clubs experiencing hardships upon application and approval by the league. Clubs May apply if <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No Players coming into the Under 19 team from affiliated junior team/club</li> <li>2. At risk of not being able to field a team for the season (may only be applied for after March 31</li> </ul> Club’s with multiple U19.5 teams may not apply for the additional exemptions	The aim of the introduction of this allowance for clubs is to assist struggling clubs maintain and Under 19 pathway into senior football. The league does maintain the right to withdraw exemptions at any stage
<b>Clash Jumpers</b>	NEW	Schedule 36	Seniors	Formalisation of league designated clashes. This will be accessible to all clubs and the responsibility of the away team to wear an appropriate alternate jumper (with the exception of additional agreements/circumstances)	Formalisation of jumper policy and removal of the requirement of league to inform clubs of clash every time it occurs
<b>Junior Overage medical exemption</b>	Revised	Schedule 34	Juniors	Change to include AFL Victoria Ground 1 – Disability, Ground 2 – Physical size consideration BMI below 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile Ground 3 – Physical size consideration height below 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile	Additional considerations for players to play down an age group

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<b>Junior Overage Club Hardship dispensation</b>	NEW	Schedule 34	Juniors	<p>The NFNL will approve &amp; permit up to 3 overage players per team to play down an age group to allow a club to field a team with minimum numbers (no more than 2 on the bench).</p> <p>Clubs that field 5 or less teams for the respective season will be eligible for the hardship dispensation. Players will be assessed on a case-by-case basis &amp; approval is at the discretion of the GM of Football.</p> <p>A players history will assist in the review. Club and/or League Best and Fairest award winners will not be granted an exemption</p> <p>If a player who has received dispensation at any time receives a red/yellow card their dispensation may be removed.</p> <p>If circumstances change, dispensation may be removed at any stage at the discretion of the league.</p>	Additional dispensation to assist struggling clubs to retain players & field teams.
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### Fines – Schedule 20 adjustments

#### Introduction of “First Offence: Warning” for selected breaches

• FINES ARISING FROM GAMES	BY-LAW(S)	AMOUNT
LATE FROM BREAKS (PER MINUTE)	8.6	\$10.00 (Double in finals)
FAILURE TO PROVIDE TEAM SHEETS BY NO LATER THAN HALF TIME	11.2	First Offence: warning Subsequent Offences: \$50.00
FAILURE TO SUBMIT ON PLAYHQ ACCURATE & COMPLETED TEAM SHEETS	11.2	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00
INCORRECT COMPRESSION GARMENT	13.3	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00
FAILURE TO SUBMIT MATCH PAPERWORK TO UMPIRES POST MATCH (2 X GOAL CARDS / 1 X TIMEKEEPER CARD)	15.1.1	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00
INCORRECT SCORE CARD USED	15.2.1	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$50.00
NO GOAL FLAGS	15.2.2	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$50.00
INCORRECT BOUNDARY OR GOAL UMPIRE OR OTHER GAME DAY OFFICIAL ATTIRE	15.2.2 & Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$100.00
FAILURE TO OBTAIN ALL CLEAR POST MATCH FROM THE UMPIRE BY TEAM MANAGER/CLUB OFFICIAL	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$50.00
FAILURE TO WEAR BIB (JUNIOR OFFICIAL) OR ARMBAND (SENIOR OFFICIAL)	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00
INCORRECT TRAINERS ATTIRE	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00

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INCORRECT RUNNERS UNIFORM	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00
INCORRECT WATER CARRIER ATTIRE	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00
MORE THAN SIX TRAINERS/WATER CARRIERS	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00
NO UMPIRE ESCORT BIB	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00
UMPIRE ESCORT FAILURE TO PERFORM FULL REQUIREMENTS	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$100.00
NO GOAL UMPIRE BIB	Schedule 8	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: Up to \$100.00

SCORES	BY-LAW(S)	AMOUNT
FAILURE TO PROVIDE BEST PLAYERS/GOAL KICKERS (ALL DIVISIONS - SENIOR MENS/RESERVES/UNDER 19.5 & SENIOR WOMENS)	11.3	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$100.00
FAILURE TO PROVIDE SCORES (JUNIORS AND SENIORS)	11.3	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$100.00
SUPPLYING INCORRECT SCORES (JUNIORS AND SENIORS)	11.3	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$100.00
FAILURE TO ACTIVATE & OR COMPLETE LIVE SCORING (ALL DIVISIONS - SENIOR MENS/RESERVES/UNDER 19.5 & SENIOR WOMENS)	11.3	First Offence: Warning Subsequent Offences: \$100.00

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SENIOR MENS TEAM WEEKLY SUBMISSIONS	BY-LAW(S)	AMOUNT
FAILURE TO SUBMIT ONLINE FINAL TEAM LIST & INS AND OUTS TO NFNL MEDIA MANAGER BY DEADLINE	14.2	First Offence: Warning Second Offences: \$100.00 Subsequent Offences: \$200.00

GENERAL	BY-LAW(S)	AMOUNT
CLUB WITHDRAWS A TEAM FROM A COMPETITION (PRIOR TO SEASON COMMENCING)	11.9	To be applied by the Board
CLUB WITHDRAWS A TEAM FROM A COMPETITION (DURING SEASON)	11.9	To be applied by the Board
LATE SUBMISSION OF COACHES PLAYER OF THE YEAR VOTES	23.2	First Offence: Warning Second Offences: \$50.00 Subsequent Offences: \$100.00
CLUB RECEIVES 4 WARNINGS WITHIN A SEASON	Schedule 20	\$100

### Melee Fines

The league will trial a matrix regarding Melee's to reflect the nuances of melees and club involvement

Melee's will be assessed by the Umpires and/or NFNL Match Review Panel for the following;

1. In Game vs Out of Game
2. Instigating Team, Non-Instigating Team or not identified
3. Melee Size (Small, Medium or Large)

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MELEES	BY-LAW(S)	AMOUNT
IN GAME MELEE (SEVERITY AS DETERMINED BY UMPIRE/MRP)	17	Up to \$1000
OUT OF GAME MELEE (SEVERITY AS DETERMINED BY UMPIRE/MRP)	17	Up to \$1000 or Board Determination