

## 2024 WORKSAFE AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY RULES

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## OBJECTIVES AND DEFINITIONS

### Objectives

AFL Victoria Country and Leagues wish to ensure that teams fielded in competitions conducted by a League are as strong and well matched as possible. The continuing support of such competitions and the opportunity for players to develop and employ their skills depend upon a League continuing to conduct vigorous competitions between evenly matched and financially viable clubs.

To achieve these objectives, AFL Victoria Country has adopted these Rules and Regulations to supplement the provisions of player declarations of service between players and their clubs to provide a system that will:

- (a) Ensure sufficient stability in the membership of Club teams to enable team spirit and public support to be maintained.
- (b) Provide opportunities for players to enter competitions conducted by Leagues and for an orderly system for:
  - i) players to move between Clubs; and
  - ii) Clubs to move between Leagues.
- (c) Provide Clubs with an incentive to expend time, effort and resources in the development of Australian Football.
- (d) Provide Junior Leagues and Clubs with the opportunity to expand participation within all levels of underage football.

These Rules apply to Regions affiliated to AFL Victoria Country and leagues, clubs and players linked through affiliation to these Regions.

Under these Rules, a player or a Club is restrained in its freedom to transfer if it can be demonstrated that the restraint is necessary to achieve the objectives referred to above. These Rules also establish relevant bodies and a mechanism by which reportable offences and alleged conduct of persons can be referred to, heard and determined by the relevant body.

Australian Football competes with numerous other sports, not only with respect to public attendances, but also participation at a junior and senior level. At a time where athletes have numerous choices between competing sports, AFL Victoria Country and Leagues recognise that it is important to encourage such athletes to play Australian Football. This can be achieved, in part, if Australian Football is seen not only as a physical and skilfully demanding sport, but also a sport played within the Rules of game and in the spirit of true sportsmanship.

AFL Victoria Country and Leagues consider that Australian Football played within the competitions conducted by the Leagues should aspire to the game being played both competitively and fairly. It is against this background that relevant disciplinary bodies have been established and are given power to impose sanctions (such as suspension or a monetary sanction) in circumstances where the conduct of a person is in breach of rules applicable to that person or the Laws of Australian Football. AFL Victoria Country considers that the imposition of such penalties is reasonably necessary to ensure fair and responsible conduct and thereby encourage participation in Australian Football in the competitions conducted by Leagues affiliated to AFL Victoria Country.

## Definitions

Unless the context requires otherwise, definitions and interpretations relevant to these Rules are listed in Section 1 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook (NCFPH).

In addition, the following words shall have the following meanings:

**AFL Victoria Country** – the part of AFL Victoria which administers, manages and develops Australian Football in country and regional Victoria.

**AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel** – the body established by AFL Victoria Country to hear appeals from a decision of a League Independent Tribunal or Region Appeal Committee.

**AFL Laws of Australian Football** – the Laws of the Game as published by the Australian Football League. **Aggrieved Person** – any person or organisation subject to the decision of a League Independent Tribunal or Region Appeal Committee, excluding umpires and witnesses.

**Area** – has the same meaning as “Region”

**Bye** – That a bye shall be defined as a break in a draw.

(a) That is caused by an uneven number of teams in a competition in any round.

(b) That is caused by a split round or suspension of a complete round of matches.

**Club** – a body which participates in Australian Rules competitions conducted by affiliated bodies.

**Days** – means each day of the week including Saturday or Sunday and includes public holidays.

**Destination Affiliate** - the league to which a player, team or club seeks to transfer to.

**Investigations Officer** – a person appointed by a relevant League to investigate a matter referred for investigation, who is Accredited by AFL Victoria

**Junior League or Club** – An affiliated body which provides football competition at under 16 and a half (or upper age as determined by local Region) and younger age levels only.

**League** - a league associated with a State Body or Region via an affiliation agreement.

**League Independent Tribunal** – the tribunal appointed by the relevant League in accordance with regulation 7.

**Region** –an organisation that

(a) Has governance responsibilities for football in a designated location.

(b) is affiliated with AFL Victoria and

(c) which the League is a member of and/or affiliated with.

**Region Appeal Committee** – the body established under regulation 8.1.

**Region Manager** – the person appointed to manage designated AFL Victoria Country Regions.

**Source Affiliate** - the league from which a player, team or club seeks to transfer from.

## **1. REGISTRATIONS AND TRANSFERS – PLAYERS**

All Player Registrations and Transfers shall be administered consistent with Section 3 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

### **1.1 Penalty for playing ineligible and/or unregistered players.**

If the League Manager or Board substantiates that any player, playing with any club affiliated or unaffiliated with AFL Victoria Country, without having first been granted the necessary registration, transfer and/or permit to play, required under these Rules, and is therefore deemed ineligible and unregistered, shall be deemed to be ineligible. The AFL Victoria Country Club with which the player concerned played shall be required to provide a written submission outlining reasons behind the misdemeanour and forward such submission to the League Manager or Board who in turn will address the matter with the Region Manager and determine that the club be subject to:

- a) If the Senior Club wins the game:
  - (i) fine not less than \$500;
  - (ii) reversal of match points;
  - (iii) loss of all points for pertaining to that game; and
  - (iv) may be subject to further penalty as determined by the League.
  
- b) If the Senior Club loses the game:
  - (i) fine not less than \$500;
  - (ii) loss of all points for pertaining to that game; and
  - (iii) may be subject to such penalty as determined by the League.
  
- c) If the Junior Club wins the game:
  - (i) fine not greater than \$250;
  - (ii) reversal of match points;
  - (iii) loss of all points for pertaining to the game; and
  - (iv) may be subject to further penalty as determined by the League.
  
- d) If the Junior Club loses the game:
  - (i) fine not greater than \$250;
  - (ii) loss of all points for pertaining to that game; and
  - (iii) may be subject to such further penalty as determined by the League.

If a club wishes to appeal any penalty applied under Clause 1.1 this appeal will be to the Region according to its own relevant appeal processes.

### **1.2 Transfer appeals body**

A Player who is refused a transfer from their current Club may lodge an appeal in accordance with Clause 8.1.3 of these AFL Victoria Country Rules.

### **1.3 Players Transferred in Employment**

Notwithstanding anything elsewhere appearing in these Rules, in the event of a player who has been in the service of their employer for three consecutive months immediately preceding their transfer, being transferred by their employer after the 1<sup>st</sup> July to another branch of the same employers business within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated area, they shall be entitled to make application for a transfer and permit to play with a League in the

Region to which they have been transferred at any time after the 1<sup>st</sup> July, provided that such transfer is completed in time to permit the player playing at least one competition match with a club in the League to which they are being transferred, prior to the first final match of that League. Provided further that where such League prescribes its own domestic residential or a minimum number of qualifying matches in excess of one for a player to participate in Finals matches, such domestic rules shall take precedence.

The child of a person who is transferred in employment under the above condition is eligible to make application for a transfer and/or permit after the 1<sup>st</sup> July to play in the Region to which their parent(s) is transferred.

The Region Manager shall determine the validity of the players exceptional circumstances to be eligible for this clause – consistent with Section 3.3 (b)(ii)(A) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

#### **1.4 Players in Armed Forces**

Notwithstanding anything elsewhere appearing in these rules, a player engaged in the Armed Forces, including a National Service Trainee, transferred in the course of their duties, shall be entitled to receive a transfer and permit to play with a league in the Region to which they are transferred, any time after the 1<sup>st</sup> July provided that such transfer is made and completed in time to permit their playing of at least one competition match with a club in the League to which they are being transferred, prior to the first finals match of that body.

The child of a person who is transferred in employment under the above condition is eligible to make application for a transfer and/or permit after the 1<sup>st</sup> July to play in the Region to which their parent(s) is transferred.

The Region Manager shall determine the validity of the players exceptional circumstances to be eligible for this clause, consistent with Section 3.3 (b)(ii)(A) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

#### **1.5 Underage player – Compassionate Transfer**

In the event of a player eligible to play in an under age junior affiliated competition being required to move residence for compassionate reasons from one Region to another Region after 1<sup>st</sup> July, they shall be eligible to make application to their club for a transfer and, subject to the satisfaction of the Region Manager concerning the compassionate reasons, receive a Transfer to play from the respective Region Manager to which they transfer, providing that in the season of receiving a transfer under this rule, the player shall only be permitted to play in under age grades or competitions.

#### **1.6 Transfer Fees – AFL Victoria Country Clubs**

Consistent with Section 3.6 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, no club shall offer, pay, demand or receive a transfer fee for a transferring player.

The Region Appeals Committee of an AFL Vic Country Region, operating under Clause 8.1 of these AFL Victoria Country Rules shall determine any penalty which may include the following:

- 1) a substantial fine; and
- 2) such penalty as is determined by the Region Appeals Committee.

## **2. PERMITS**

### **2.1 Endorsement**

A game permit granted pursuant to this Regulation to provide for even teams shall not require any endorsement or approval by the League of the club granting the permit.

### **2.2 One Match per Day - VFL Coates Talent Approval**

Players of a VFL team or the Coates Talent League Competition may only play with their AFL Victoria Country Club on the same weekend when the player has played less than twenty-five (25) minutes of actual playing time and has been granted approval from the VFL or Coates Talent League Club.

### **2.3 Permits for Players of Opposing Teams**

Affiliated Leagues may approve the granting of a game permit to reserve grade and under-age players to play with the players opposing Reserve grade team or under-age competition team where the opposing team does not have the required number of players for that match. (These permits are to be entered as game permits within the Competition Management platform).

Where a Senior grade team does not have the required number of players for a match and requires extra players from an opposition team, the Affiliated League may apply to the relevant Region Manager, for approval to grant requested game permits prior to the season commencing.

Affiliated Leagues approving the granting of such permits must obtain from their Region Manager, approval for the system under which the League will grant day permits for players to play with the opposing clubs.

### **2.4 Area Agreements**

Notwithstanding anything contained in these Rules requiring the production of a transfer by a player, Leagues of a Region and Leagues in adjacent Regions may enter into written agreements to allow an interchange of players.

The written agreements must be submitted to and approved by the respective Region Manager concerned before the agreements become operative.

The respective Region Managers shall be empowered to approve agreements to operate between Affiliated AFL Victoria Country Leagues including underage competitions for the interchange of players between the competitions.

Area Agreements shall operate under the following:

An Agreement between the ..... Football League and the .....  
Football League for the ..... Season.

This agreement is signed pursuant to AFL Victoria Country rules pertaining to permits and in particular Clause 2.4– Area Agreements, whereby an interchange of players between clubs of the abovementioned Leagues may take place without a transfer and is subject to any provisions contained within this agreement.

Area Agreements / Interchange Agreements are ongoing from year to year unless revoked by one of the football bodies party to the agreement by advising AFL Victoria.

**PROVIDED HOWEVER:**

- (i) That this permit is in force for the current season only.
- (ii) Prior to each match the player shall obtain permission electronically from their parent club using a Season permit.
- (iv) Players of any club having a bye will not be allowed to play with another club on that day unless they have previously played with that club in the current season under this agreement. The club playing the player from the other League shall show their registered club on the match team sheet. Players of third 18 teams of Senior Grade competitions are not to be classified as players of Junior age competitions.
- (v) A local interchange agreement can override clause (iv) to restrict junior players playing on permit when their club has a bye.
- (vi) That this agreement cannot be altered unless agreed to by the Region Manager.
- (vii) That in order for a player playing under such Area Permit to participate in a finals series in that season the player must have played a minimum of five (5) matches in the team of the grade in which they have been selected to play in the finals and has met any additional league eligibility requirements.

**Local Conditions**

Area Agreements shall detail any Local conditions relevant to the interchange of players between the two leagues party to the interchange agreement.

**2.5 Under Age Compassionate Permit**

- a) Where a player eligible to play in an under age junior affiliated competition is in a situation where the parents have separated and have special custody arrangements, such players may be eligible to apply for a permit to play at a second or alternate club which is more than 100km away from their original club or upon approval of the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department.

A player eligible under this permit may only participate in one game per weekend and may be eligible for finals providing they have qualified under the local provisions however they may only play in one finals series per weekend. Permits will not be granted where a local Area Agreement can be applied.

The ultimate verification and approval of a permit under this Clause will rest with the respective Region Manager after lodgement of the Compassionate Permit Form, available on AFL Victoria's website, and proof of separation and residence of both parents, as requested.

Compassionate Permits under this Clause must be applied for and approved prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> in each year and is only applicable for that year.



## 2.6 Permits – Students Living Away from Home

- a) A player residing away from their usual place of abode while attending a secondary/TAFE college, institution or university on a full time and continuous basis and playing in any competition may, **during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations approved by the Region Manager, receive a permit to play with the club with which the player was last registered before being transferred to their current club** from the respective Region Manager where such former club is located. If required by the respective Region Manager, the player shall supply documentary evidence of their attendance at the said college, institute or university.
- b) In order for a student playing under such permit to participate in a finals series in that season a student must have played a minimum of five (5) matches in the team of the grade in which they are selected to play in the finals and met any other local finals requirements and only **during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations** approved by the Region Manager.

## 2.7 Permits –Agreements with the VAFA and NFNL and AFL Victoria Country Clubs

### a) VAFA Student Permit

This agreement is only open to players who are full-time students. A player residing away from their usual place of abode while attending a secondary/TAFE college, institution or university on a full time and continuous basis and playing in any competition may, during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations approved by the VAFA Operations Department or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, receive a permit to play with the club with which the player was last registered before being transferred to their current club. If required by the VAFA Operations Department or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, the player shall supply documentary evidence of their attendance at the said college, institute, or university. Permits for any player using this agreement must be in place prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>.

### b) NFNL Student Permit and NFNL Family Permit

- i) **Students:** This agreement is only open to players who are full-time students. A player residing away from their usual place of abode while attending a secondary/TAFE college, institution or university on a full time and continuous basis and playing in any competition may, during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations approved by the NFNL Operations Department or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, receive a permit to play with the club with which the player was last registered before being transferred to their current club. If required by the NFNL Operations Department or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, the player shall supply documentary evidence of their attendance at the said college, institute, or university. Permits for any player using this agreement must be in place prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>
- ii) **Family Permit:** Where a player eligible to play in an under age junior affiliated competition is in a situation where the parents have separated and have special custody arrangements, such players may be eligible to apply for a permit to play

at a second or alternate club which is more than 100km away from their original club or upon approval of the NFNL Operations Department or AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department .

A player eligible under this permit may only participate in one game per weekend and may be eligible for finals providing they have qualified under the local provisions however they may only play in one finals series per weekend.

The verification and approval of a permit under this Clause will rest with the NFNL Football Operations Department and the AFL Victoria Football Operations Department after lodgement of the Compassionate Permit Form, available on AFL Victoria's website, and proof of separation and residence of both parents as requested.

Compassionate Permits under this Clause must be applied for and approved prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> in each year and is only applicable for that year.

### **2.8 Permits for Players of Clubs in recess**

Leagues who have clubs who go into recess, as determined by AFL Victoria, shall be required to adopt a provision permitting any player to play with a club without a transfer for not more than one season provided that before or during the season they shall obtain approval from their parent club/league.

All such permits shall be filed as a Season Permit by the respective club. Permits cannot be issued for players to represent multiple clubs. Any player having played under the provisions of this rule and desiring to continue to play with the League club, shall only be permitted to do so upon applying for and receiving a transfer from their club and League in the usual manner or where such is refused upon an appeal being lodged and upheld. This clearance must be applied for prior to 1 July.

Once the players registered club comes out of recess all existing permits cease to exist in each case.

### **2.9 Players suspended while on permit**

Players who are playing on permits in other Leagues and are reported for a field offence shall have the charge heard by the League tribunal in which the alleged offence occurs which in the event of finding the player guilty shall determine the penalty which shall then apply to matches of the club in the grade of competition where the offence occurred. Players are unable to play for any team if suspended.

## **3. TRANSFER OF CLUBS AND TEAMS / ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CLUBS AND TEAMS / AMEND OR INTRODUCE AGE GROUP TO A COMPETITION**

- a) These rules associated with Club and Team Transfer, the establishment of a new club or a new team and changes to competition Age Groups are to be read in conjunction with Section 4 and 5 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Rules.

- b) Where a club or team transfer within the same AFL Victoria Country Region, that Region will manage the transfer process consistent with the requirements of Section 4 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulation unless otherwise advised to the AFL Country Region by AFL Victoria.
- c) Where a new club or new team is established, the approval process will be managed by the AFL Victoria Country Region consistent with Section 4 of AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations, unless otherwise advised to the AFL Country Region by AFL Victoria.
- d) Where a club or team transfer is across AFL Victoria Country Regions, that club or team transfer will be managed by AFL Victoria consistent with Section 4 of AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- e) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, Country Regions will manage the process for any amendment to age groups or introduction of new age groups in competitions, with any such process administered consistent with Section 5 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- f) For the avoidance of doubt, any process as detailed at clause 3 (a) – (e) of these AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulation may also arise where a review has been conducted by a Region or AFL Victoria consistent with clause 4.3.

#### **4. APPEALS UNDER CLAUSE 3 - TRANSFER OF CLUBS AND TEAMS / ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CLUBS AND TEAMS / AMEND OR INTRODUCE AGE GROUP TO A COMPETITION**

##### **4.1 Appeal Panel**

For the purposes of this regulation the Appeal Panel where indicated as AFL Victoria Country shall be the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel as it sees fit. Where indicated as a Region, it shall be the Appeal Panel appointed by that Region to which the club is affiliated as it sees fit.

##### **4.2 Appeal Process**

Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, any Appeal process shall be as detailed in Section 4 and 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.

##### **4.2.1 Club or team transfer within a Region**

- a) A Source League may appeal to the Region in respect of a decision of a Destination League to accept a club or team Transfer to another league within the same AFL Victoria Country Region, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- b) A Source League may appeal to AFL Victoria in respect of a decision of a Destination League to accept a club or team Transfer to another league in another AFL Victoria Country Region, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.

#### **4.2.2 Establishment of a new club or new team**

- a) A League may appeal to the Region in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League to establish a new club or team within the Region it is affiliated with, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- b) A League or Region may appeal to AFL Victoria in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League in another Region to establish a new club or team, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations

#### **4.2.3 Amend or introduce age group to a competition**

- a) A League may appeal to the Region in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League to change age groups within the Region it is affiliated with, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- b) A League or Region may appeal to AFL Victoria in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League in another Region to change age groups, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.

#### **4.3 AFL Victoria Country Reviews - Implementation and Appeals**

All Reviews conducted by AFL Victoria, or a Region must be approved by the AFL Victoria Community Football Manager prior to commencement.

Where approval has been granted and AFL Victoria Country or the Region has conducted a review of an Affiliated League(s) or Region, the recommendations are required to be accepted, provided that the following requirements have been met:

- Review – framework identifying and distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – consultation meetings offered to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – draft review recommendations distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – submissions on draft review recommendations from all affected stakeholders named in the framework considered by the Review Panel as identified in the review framework
- Review – submissions on draft review recommendations for stakeholders not originally included in the initial review framework considered by the Review Panel
- Review – final review recommendations distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – appeal against the implementation of the review recommendations by an affected stakeholder(s)

Any appeal against the implementation of the final review recommendations would be heard by AFL Victoria following the procedures of 4.3.1.

#### 4.3.1 Appeals of Stakeholders

- a) For the purposes of this regulation, if the review was conducted by AFL Victoria and impacts across two or more Regions, the Appeal Panel shall be the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel.
- b) For the purposes of this regulation, if the review was conducted by a Region and impacts across a single Region or multiple Regions, the Appeal Panel shall be the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel established as it sees fit and consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.
- c) An affected stakeholder to a review may appeal to the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel in respect of review recommendations, provided the appeal is lodged in writing (“the Notice of Appeal”) with the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

### 5. UNBECOMING CONDUCT

#### 5.1 Appointment of Accredited Investigation Officer

Each league shall only appoint an AFL Victoria Country Accredited Investigation Officer to investigate any matter referred, pursuant to Rule 5.2 (unbecoming conduct).

#### 5.2 Unbecoming Conduct

- a) League, League Executive members, Club, Player, Region or a AFL Victoria Country appointed official, who alleges that a player or an official of a club, umpire, official of an umpires’ Association, AFL Victoria Country Official, League official, Club, player advocate, or League appointed official has been guilty of conduct which is unbecoming to a player, umpire, such official, or club, or which has or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute, may lodge with the League a Notice in writing setting out particulars of the allegation. Unless the notice is lodged by the Region Manager, a deposit of \$500 shall accompany the notice which shall be forfeited in whole or part in the event that the Investigation Officer or Independent Tribunal considers it frivolous.

A Notice under this paragraph must be **lodged with the League within five days** after the date of the act or omission to which it relates unless the League agrees to extend this period to a maximum of thirty (30) days.

An extension agreed to by the League may be subject to such conditions as the League thinks fit and such request for an extension is to be provided to the League in writing outlining the reasons for the extension request. When a League grants an extension, it shall do so in writing and advise all parties to the matter.

Only AFL Victoria Accredited Investigation Officers can be used to investigate under this regulation. A list of Accredited Investigation Officers shall be maintained by the AFL Victoria Football Operations Department.

**Within two (2) days of the request** for an investigation the League is required to provide all parties notification of the investigation outlining details of the requested incident or matter for investigation.

- b) Notice of any allegation received under paragraph (a) shall be referred to the Accredited Investigation Officer for investigation. The Accredited Investigation Officer may investigate the allegation as they see fit. **Such investigation shall be completed within 10 days** of the matter being referred to the Accredited Investigation Officer unless, at the completion of the 10 days, one (1) extension of time being not more than ten (10) days is then granted by the League at the request of the Accredited Investigation Officer.  
Request for extension of time must be received in writing by the League or Region.
- c) If the Accredited Investigation Officer, after investigation of the allegation, is of the opinion that the Player, Official or Club in question may have been guilty of conduct unbecoming to a Player, an Official or Club or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute and that the allegation ought to be dealt with by the League Independent Tribunal as hereinafter provided, they may lodge with the League a Notice in writing setting out details of the allegation.
- d) If a Notice is lodged with the League under paragraph (c), the League administrator who appointed the investigator may provide the alleged offender/s the discretion to plead guilty and take the early guilty plea for the alleged offence as described Appendix 1 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook. If the offender is a player, and that player wishes to enter accept the early guilty plea offered by the League, the players club secretary must contact the League administrator no later than 5.00pm on the day following the release of the Accredited Investigation Officer's findings.

Such request shall be made in writing and delivered by email to the League Secretary/General Manager/ CEO. If the alleged offence falls outside the offences listed within the early guilty plea as detailed at Appendix 1 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook or either the Accredited Investigation Officer, player/s being investigated, the player/s allegedly offended against, the League or the President / Secretary of either club request that the matter proceeds to tribunal, by no later than 5.00pm on the day following the release of the Accredited Investigation Officer's findings, then no early guilty plea will be offered and the matter will be dealt with according to clause (e) of Rule 5.

Any charges resulting from an Investigation conducted by an AFL Victoria Accredited Investigations Officer must reference to Law 22.2.2 AFL Laws of Australian Football, or the relevant policy breach under Section 23 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook and the relevant specific charge alleged to have been committed by the person, subject of the investigation.

For the avoidance of doubt, where the matter is referred to a Tribunal, an early guilty plea cannot be offered under this Clause.

- e) If a Notice is lodged with the League under paragraph (c), and the League determines that it should be heard at Tribunal, the League Secretary shall fix a date, time and place for the hearing of the allegation before the League Independent Tribunal, **being a date not later than 9 days after lodgement of the Notice** and shall advise the Player, official or club in question, of those particulars and forward to the Player,

Official, or club, care of the Club Secretary in question a copy, with a copy also to be forwarded to the Club Secretary of the Notice lodged under paragraph (c).

Such notices shall be forwarded only to the charged player or official or club prior to the Hearing with such notice to be forwarded to the player and Club at least 48 Hours prior to the Hearing and the charged player or official or club shall be informed at the time as to whom it is proposed to call as witnesses.

Notices should include any other relevant information pertaining to the matter at hand.

- f) In any proceeding brought before a tribunal or Appeals Board under this rule the Accredited Investigation Officer may personally appear before it and lay the necessary charge or charges and act as the prosecuting officer for the League.
- g) If the League Independent Tribunal is of the opinion that the Player, Official or Club in question has engaged in unbecoming conduct or conduct which has or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute, it may make such orders and give such directions in the matter as it thinks fit.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the League Independent Tribunal:–

- i) may impose a fine of such amount as it thinks fit on the Player, Official or club in question; or
  - ii) must suspend the Player, Official or Club in question for such matches as it thinks fit, if the Player, Official or Club is found guilty.
- h) In any hearing before an AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel the Accredited Investigations Officer will be the informant and witness for the league or Association but will usually not be the prosecuting advocate in the hearing.

## **6. AFFILIATED BODIES**

An affiliate means any Club, League, Association or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of Matches which is affiliated with a Region or AFL Victoria.

### **6.1 Affiliation Fee**

An affiliated Club, League, Association or body may be required to pay an affiliation fee including Insurance annually to AFL Victoria.

### **6.2 Clubs in Recess**

Clubs in recess may be required to pay fees including Insurance to AFL Victoria.

After a period of two years in recess the Club in recess will be deemed to have disbanded unless, after an application from the Club, AFL Victoria Country extends the term.

## **7. TRIBUNALS**

Each League shall, in accordance with its Statement of Rules/Constitution, Section 25 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook and this regulation, appoint from time to time persons to a disciplinary tribunal to be known as the League's Independent Tribunal.

All AFL Victoria Country affiliated Leagues and Regions shall adopt the Tribunal Provisions detailed at Section 25 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

### **7.1 Independent Tribunal Appointment**

A League Independent Tribunal must, when hearing a matter, consist of 3 members, one of whom shall act as chairman.

### **7.2 Representation**

No person shall be represented by an advocate who is a barrister or solicitor or qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor. For the purposes of an AFL Vic Country tribunal hearing an offended against player is a witness.

## **8. APPEALS**

Regions may from time to time appoint persons to a panel to be known as the Region Appeal Committee in accordance with the following clauses and Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

### **8.1 Region Appeal Committee**

#### **8.1.1 Appointment and Members of Region Appeal Committee**

Subject to the remaining provisions of Regulation 8.1, a Region Appeal Committee shall consist of the relevant Region Manager, AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager and another member as AFL Victoria sees fit. For the purposes of hearing and determining a matter, a Region Appeal Committee shall comprise 3 persons one of whom shall act as chairman.

#### **8.1.2 Jurisdiction of Region Appeals Committee**

The relevant Region Appeal Committee shall, in accordance with these Rules, hear and determine:

- a) any appeal by a player against a decision of either their current Club to refuse their application for a transfer in line with Section 3.5 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook;
- b) or any other matter referred by AFL Victoria Community Football Manager, that has been applied under AFL Victoria Country Rules.

#### **8.1.3 Appeals Against Refused Transfers**

Any appeal of a refusal of a player transfer will be conducted consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

##### **8.1.3.1 Player May Appeal**

- a) A player may appeal to their relevant Region Appeal Committee if:
  - i) they are not granted a transfer from their current Club to another Club within the same League;
  - ii) they are not granted a transfer from their current Club to another Club which plays in a League located within the same Region; or



- b) A player may appeal to the Region Appeal Committee of the Source Club if they are not granted a transfer from their current club to another club located in another AFL Victoria Country Region.
- c) Where a player lodges more than one transfer in which they seek a transfer to the same or a different Club, they may only appeal with respect to one decision to refuse their application for a transfer in each year.

#### **8.1.3.2 Form of Appeal and Appeal Fee**

An appeal by a Player under Regulation 8.1.3 must be brought by lodging with the Region Manager or their appointed deputy of the relevant Region, a duly completed Notice of Appeal in or substantially in the form prescribed found on the AFL Victoria website. The Notice of Appeal must be accompanied by fees as outlined in the Notice of Appeal form.

#### **8.1.3.3 Timing of Appeal**

Consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, a Notice of Appeal must be lodged with the Region Manager or their appointed deputy no later than 5.00pm on the day following the refusal of the transfer.

An appeal shall be considered by the Region Appeal Committee within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice of appeal by the relevant Region Manager, or such other period as the Region Appeal Committee may determine.

#### **8.1.3.4 Convening Appeal and Timing for Hearing of Appeal**

Upon receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the following shall apply:

- a) within 48 Hours of receiving the Notice of Appeal, the Region Manager or their appointed deputy shall provide a copy of that Notice to the player's current Club which has refused the player's application for a transfer or the League who has made the decision which is being appealed
- b) within 48 Hours of receiving the Notice of Appeal from the Region Manager or their appointed deputy, the current Club must advise the Region Manager or their appointed deputy in writing whether it intends to oppose the player's appeal
- c) if the current Club does intend to oppose the player's appeal, it must, at the same time as lodging the opposing notice, pay to AFL Victoria Country a sum as determined on the Notice of Appeal Form, which shall be dealt with as follows:
  - i) where the Region Appeal Committee dismisses an appeal made by a player/ club, the sum paid by the Club shall be refunded; or
  - ii) where the Region Appeal Committee upholds the player's appeal and determines that the Club's reason(s) for refusing the transfer did not have sufficient merit, it may determine in its absolute discretion, that all, or part of the sum not be refunded;
- d) If the current Club does not, within the prescribed time, lodge an opposing notice or pay the required amounts, the player's transfer must be granted by the relevant Region Manager without the Region Appeal Committee hearing the appeal.

- e) In that event, the current Club may be fined \$500 payable to the relevant Region within 10 days of the date of Notice of Appeal with all monies to be refunded to the appellant.
- f) if the current Club does, within the prescribed time, lodge an opposing notice and pay the required amounts, Regulation 8.1.3.5 shall apply.
- g) Prior to determining the appeal, the parties to the appeal (club requesting the transfer and the club opposing the transfer) shall, within the time specified by the Region Appeal Committee, lodge with the relevant Region Manager, or their appointed deputy of the relevant Region, written submissions which contain:–
  - i) any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the Transfer Application and the appeal; and
  - ii) any other matters which they desire to be taken into account by the Region Appeal Committee in determining the appeal.
- h) The relevant Region Manager shall as soon as practicable distribute the written submissions to each party and seek final submissions from each party which, in turn, will be distributed to the Region Appeals Committee.

#### **8.1.3.5 Time and Notification for Appeal**

- a) Upon receiving a notice of appeal and payment of the required amounts within the prescribed time, the Region Manager or their appointed deputy shall arrange to provide a decision on the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of receiving the notice of appeal, or as soon as practicable after that time.
- b) The Region Appeal Committee may vary the timing of submissions initially specified for the appeal and upon doing so, shall immediately provide all parties interested in the appeal written notice of any such variation.

#### **8.1.4 Procedure and Evidence before a Region Appeal Committee**

##### **8.1.4.1 Application of this Regulation**

Unless otherwise stated, the provisions contained in this Regulation 8.1.4 shall apply in respect of all hearings of a Region Appeal Committee.

##### **8.1.4.2 Regulate Own Procedure**

Subject to the further matters set out in this Regulation 8.1.4, a Region Appeal Committee may regulate any proceedings brought before it in such manner as it thinks fit.

##### **8.1.4.3 Conduct of Region Appeal Committee**

Region Appeal Committee hearings are determined by written submission – no attendance at such hearings is required.

In the event that an adjournment is sought by a charged person player, because of legal action, such person will be automatically ineligible to play or participate in any official match until such charges have been heard.

#### **8.1.4.4 Specific Procedure for Player Transfer – Player declaration in Dispute**

Where a player has lodged an appeal for a transfer and an issue before the Region Appeal Committee is the validity of a player declaration between the player and their current Club, the following procedure shall apply:

- a) The Region Appeal Committee shall adjourn the hearing of the matter for a period of 14 days, or such other period as determined by the Chairman of the Region Appeal Committee.
- b) Within 7 days of the adjournment, the player and the Club the player is seeking a transfer to shall provide written submissions to the Chairman regarding the player declaration in dispute.
- c) The Region Appeal Committee shall determine the validity of the player declaration based upon the written submissions provided by the parties. In undertaking that task, the Region Appeal Committee may obtain its own legal advice concerning the issues requiring determination.
- d) Where the Region Appeal Committee determines that the player declaration is valid and enforceable, it shall advise the parties in writing and the appeal shall stand dismissed.
- e) Where the Region Appeal Committee determines that the player declaration is invalid and unenforceable, the Region Appeal Committee shall advise the parties accordingly in writing, re-convene the further hearing of the appeal, and proceed to determine the appeal based on any other relevant matters put before it.
- f) The Region Appeal Committee:
  - i) shall consider and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner;
  - ii) is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit; and
  - iii) may grant or deny the transfer and make such orders and give such directions in such manner as it thinks fit.

#### **8.1.4.5 No Reasons**

A Region Appeal Committee is not obliged to give reasons for any decision made by it.

#### **8.1.4.6 Representation**

No person shall be represented by an advocate who is a barrister or solicitor or qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor.

### **8.2 AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel - Tribunal Decision or NCFPH Policy Breach**

AFL Victoria Country Football Manager may from time to time appoint persons to a panel to be known as the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel in accordance with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook (NCFPH) and Regulation 8.2 of this handbook.

#### **8.2.1 Members of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel**

In line with Section 26.2 (b) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall consist of: –

- a) a chair and a deputy chair, and
- b) a panel of not more than 5 who in the opinion of AFL Victoria Country Football Manager, possesses a knowledge of Australian Football and is suitable for appointment.

### **8.2.2 Notice of Appeal**

An appeal under Regulation 8.2 shall be brought by lodging with AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department a duly completed “AFL Victoria Country Notice of Appeal” in or substantially in the form prescribed, accompanied by: –

- a) any documents initially provided to the relevant body whose decision is the subject of the appeal;
- b) payment or evidence of payment to AFL Victoria Country of the sum of \$5500 for Senior clubs/ organisations and for Junior clubs/organisations a sum of \$2750 for costs of the appeal, which sum shall be dealt with in accordance with section 26.4(d)&(e) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

### **8.2.3 Lodgement of Notice of Appeal**

An AFL Victoria Country Notice of Appeal shall be lodged with the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department, which must be received by no later than 5.00pm on the day following the decision of the relevant body was made.

Only the charged person or organisation, subject to the decision of a League Independent Tribunal, may appeal to AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel in respect of a decision made by a League Independent Tribunal on one or more of the following grounds:

- i) the decision involved an error of law that had a material impact on the Tribunal’s decision;
- ii) the decision was so unreasonable that no Tribunal acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it;
- iii) the classification of the Reportable Offence or Policy Breach or other conduct (as applicable) was manifestly excessive or inadequate; or
- iv) that the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive or inadequate.

### **8.2.4 Video Evidence**

Where the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel is conducting a hearing into a reportable offence or other alleged conduct of a person and it considers that video evidence is capable of determining the reportable offence or the alleged conduct, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel may make a finding solely on the basis of that unaltered video evidence.

### **8.2.5 Representation**

At any hearing before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel, a person or organisation, excluding umpires or witnesses may appear in person or appear with and be represented by an advocate.

No person shall be represented by an advocate who is a barrister or solicitor or qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor, excepting Accredited Investigation Officers who are barristers or solicitors or qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor.

#### **8.2.6 Questions of Law and Fact**

In the hearing and determination of an appeal, AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel shall decide all questions of law and fact and without limitation, shall determine the meaning of any words.

#### **8.2.7 Costs**

Parties to an AFL Victoria Country Appeal can apply for reasonable costs by contacting AFL Victoria Football Operations Department.

#### **8.2.8 Abandon Appeal**

- a) An appellant may abandon an appeal no later than 5.00pm three days prior to the time set down for the hearing by giving written notice to AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department, in which case the payments made by the appellant under Rule 8.2.2 (b) shall be refunded.
- b) Where an appellant abandons the appeal after 5.00pm three days prior to the hearing or during the conduct of the appeal and AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board considers that the appeal did not have sufficient merit, AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may determine in its absolute discretion that all or part of the payment made under Regulation 8.2.2(b) not be refunded.

#### **8.2.9 Co-operation with AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel**

- a) A person shall appear before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel if requested, unless AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel is satisfied that the person has a legitimate reason for not attending.
- b) Any person who appears before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel shall:
  - (i) fully co-operate with AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel;
  - (ii) truthfully answer any questions asked;
  - (iii) upon request, provide any document in that person's possession or control which is relevant to the matter to be determined; and
  - (iv) not make any statement or act in a manner which is false or misleading or calculated to or which is likely to mislead.
- c) Where AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel considers that a person has contravened this Regulation 8.2.9(a) or (b), it may deal with the matter and impose sanctions upon the person as it in its absolute discretion deems fit.

#### **8.2.10 Exhaust Internal Appeal**

A person shall exercise their right of appeal under this Regulation 8.2 and have any appeal heard and determined by AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel before commencing any proceedings or becoming a party to any proceedings in a court of law.

### **8.3 AFL National Age Dispensation Policy Appeals**

The relevant Appeals Body for Country Leagues in relation to the AFL National Age

Dispensation Policy shall be to the Region Appeals Committee and administered consistent with Regulation 8.1 of this handbook.

## **9. VILIFICATION AND DISCRIMINATION**

All Vilification and Discrimination matter shall be administered consistent with Section 10 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

## **10. ORDER OFF RULE**

In accordance with Law 23 AFL Laws of Australian Football, to AFL Victoria Country require all affiliated Leagues to adhere to the following guidelines for the Order Off rule:

- a) A player who commits the following Laws of the Australian Football offences shall be reported and ordered off the ground for the remainder of the game and is able to be replaced after fifteen (15) minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game: –

22.2.2 (Laws of Australian Football):

- (a) intentionally or carelessly
  - (ii) kicking another person
  - (iii) kneeing another person
  - (vii) head butting or making contact to another person using the head
- (b) eye-gouging another person
- (c) stomping on another person
- (d) intentionally making contact with or striking an umpire
- (e) attempting strike an umpire
- (f) spitting on or at an umpire
  - (j) carelessly making contact with an umpire
- (cc) engaging in any other act of misconduct or serious misconduct

- b) A player who commits the following AFL Laws of Australian Football offences shall be reported and ordered from the ground for fifteen (15) minutes of actual match playing time: –

22.2.2 (AFL Laws of Australian Football):

- (a) intentionally or carelessly
  - (i) striking another person
  - (iv) charging an opponent
  - (v) engaging in rough conduct against an opponent.
  - (vi) bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front on when that player has their head down over the football
  - (ix) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of another person.
  - (x) scratching another person
  - (xi) tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
- (g) behaving in an abuse, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an umpire
- (h) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an umpire
- (k) disputing a decision of an umpire
- (l) spitting on or at another person
- (m) attempting to strike another person

- (n) attempting to kick another person
  - (w) use of an obscene gesture
- c) A player who commits the following AFL Laws of Australian Football offences, depending upon the severity of such offence, may be ordered from the ground for fifteen (15) minutes of actual match playing time. The player may also be reported.

22.2.2 (AFL Laws of Australian Rules Football):

- (o) attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
  - (p) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an injured player
  - (q) engaging in a melee
  - (r) instigating a melee
  - (s) wrestling another person
  - (t) pinching another person
  - (u) engaging in an act of staging
  - (v) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language
  - (x) engaging in time wasting
  - (y) interfering with a player kicking for goal
  - (z) intentionally shaking, climbing or otherwise interfering with a goal or behind post
  - (aa) failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by a field umpire
  - (bb) wearing boots, jewellery and equipment prohibited under Law 9 of the AFL Laws of Australian Football
- d) Any player reported for a second offence listed in (b) and (c) shall be sent from the field for the remainder of the match and is able to be replaced after fifteen (15) minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game.
- e) For underage matches, field umpires may order a player off the ground for fifteen (15) minutes without reporting them.

Note: This would only apply when a player has not committed a reportable offence but has breached the law and given away a free kick in a deliberate or undisciplined manner or behaves in a manner detrimental to the image of the game.

### **Implementation**

Only field umpires and emergency field umpires have the power to send players from the ground.

When ordering a player off, an umpire shall signal their intention by pointing to the interchange area with an outstretched arm and holding a coloured card above their head with the other.

A Red Card indicates the player is ordered off for the remainder of the match and can be replaced after fifteen (15) minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game.

A Yellow Card indicates the player is ordered off for fifteen (15) minutes of actual match playing time and cannot be replaced within that time.

A player ordered from the ground must leave the ground through the interchange area, report to the Interchange Steward or appropriate official on leaving the field and before returning.

In the event of a player failing or refusing to leave the field when ordered off, they shall be reported for misconduct. The player's captain or deputy shall be advised by the umpire that their team shall forfeit the match unless the player leaves the field immediately. If the player still refuses to leave the field, their team shall forfeit the match.

Boundary and goal umpires have the power to report however they do not have the power to order players from the ground, they will use their best endeavours to advise one of the field umpires, of their report at the next appropriate break in play and the field umpire will use their best endeavours, with the umpire making the report, to advise the player they have been reported and that player will be ordered from the ground.

For a player to be sent from the ground for the remainder of the match due to being reported twice (on two separate occasions) under Clauses (b) and (c) of the Order Off Rule that player must have been reported on both occasions by a field umpire or league appointed boundary or goal umpire.

## **11. REPORTABLE OFFENCES & TRIBUNAL**

All AFL Victoria Country affiliated Leagues and Regions shall adopt the Reportable Offences and Tribunal Provisions detailed at Sections 23 and 25 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

## **12. FINALS ELIGIBILITY – COATES TALENT LEAGUE, VFL and VFLW PLAYERS**

### **12.1 Coates Talent League Male and VFL**

- a) Individual Leagues shall be required to establish player eligibility for finals; however,
  - i) For the purpose of finals qualification and player eligibility, the Coates Talent League Under 18 competition Home and Away matches shall be considered the equal of AFL Victoria Country senior competition matches and Coates Talent League Under 18 competition Home and Away games matches shall be considered matches of the players senior AFL Victoria Country team for the purpose of eligibility to play in AFL Victoria Country finals.
  - ii) For purposes of finals eligibility within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated league, a player who has played more than twelve (12) home and away matches for a club affiliated with the VFL competition in that season will not be eligible to play finals within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated competition.

### **12.2 Coates Talent League Female and VFLW**

- (a) Individual Leagues shall be required to establish player eligibility for finals and
- (b) unless otherwise determined by the individual league prior to the season commencing, for the purpose of finals qualification and player eligibility, the Coates Talent League Home and Away matches shall not be considered the equal of AFL



Victoria Country open women competition matches and Coates Talent League matches shall not be considered matches of the players open women AFL Victoria Country team for the purpose of eligibility to play in AFL Victoria Country finals, however

- (c) for purposes of finals eligibility within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated league, a player who has played more than two thirds of home and away matches for a club affiliated with a VFLW competition in that season will not be eligible to play finals within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated competition.

### **13. COACHING ACCREDITATION**

As specified in Section 5 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, all coaches and assistant coaches of AFL Victoria Country Clubs are required to obtain Foundation Level Accreditation, prior to their first match as coach or assistant coach in the relevant season.

If a coach is appointed without having obtained the necessary accreditation, Leagues shall:

- i) impose a \$1,000 fine (Senior) or \$500 fine (Junior) and
- ii) the loss of match points for the matches won by the team whilst the unaccredited coach continues to coach.

In the event of no match points being received the league must apply the above fines. Fines are applied once only (\$1,000 or \$500) and are not applicable to every match. In the instance where coaches are not accredited and commit to obtaining Coach Accreditation by an agreed date with the League, a bond for clubs shall apply of \$1,000 (Senior) and \$500 (Junior). Where a coach fails to obtain Coach Accreditation by the agreed date the bond paid by the club is forfeited and the relevant fines shall also apply.

### **14. OFFICIAL CLUB RUNNERS/ TRAINERS/WATER CARRIERS/ PLAYERS**

#### **14.1 Player Eligibility**

No person who is a registered player or an official of any club of an open or junior age team, who is under disqualification or suspension by their home club or League, shall act as an official runner or water carrier in any competition match, or any other match in which an AFL Victoria Country affiliated club or League is participating.

#### **14.2 Player**

Any player listed on the teamsheet must be at the ground, dressed in football playing attire and ready to take the field if called upon.

#### **14.3 Coaches**

No coach or assistant coach of an AFL Victoria Country team shall act as a runner, trainer or water carrier in a match in which the team that they coach is participating.

#### **14.4 Listing of Officials**

All official runners, trainers and water carriers shall be listed on the official team sheet and for the purposes of interpretation of this regulation shall be deemed to be officials of the club for the match. All officials should be registered on the Competition Management platform.

#### **14.5 Number of Trainers/Water Carriers**

No team shall be permitted to have more than the combined total of six (6) trainers and water carriers.

#### **14.6 Doctors**

Registered doctors are not required to be registered as an official on the day or included on the official teamsheet.

#### **14.7 Infringements**

Any club that infringes this rule shall appear before the League's Independent Tribunal to determine the penalty. The penalty applicable for determination by the Independent Tribunal shall include the following:

- a) Substantial fine, and/or
- b) Loss of points for the match, and/or
- c) Such other penalties as determined appropriate by the Tribunal.

#### **14.8 Duties**

All official runners, trainers and water carriers are to be dressed in a uniform determined by the league.

The sole duty of the runner shall be to confer with the player or players of their club and to immediately leave the playing arena in accordance with bylaws of the local league.

The sole duty of a water carrier shall be to convey water to players and to immediately leave the playing arena in accordance with by-laws of local league.

The duty of a trainer shall be to render medical assistance and convey water as required.

The officiating field umpire may, upon infringement of this rule, order the runner, trainer or water carrier of the offending club from the arena for a period of fifteen (15) minutes.

Any infringement of this rule or other infringement reported by an officiating umpire including a field umpire, boundary umpire, goal umpire and emergency umpire, shall be referred to the League's Independent Tribunal.

### **15. SERVICE AWARDS**

#### **15.1 Recognition of Service Medallion**

Former Victorian Country Football League (VCFL) and current AFL Victoria Country affiliated regions, leagues, clubs and umpire groups may nominate suitable persons to be recipients of the Recognition of Service Medallion, where it is desired to acknowledge outstanding service. Conditions of the award are as follows.

The award is to be made to persons who have rendered outstanding service to former VCFL and current AFL Victoria Country leagues, clubs or umpire associations/groups.

The award is to recognise an administrator or volunteer's outstanding contribution to Australian Football with a former VCFL or current AFL Victoria Country affiliate, over an extended period of time. A playing or umpiring career is not necessarily considered when assessing a nominee's qualifying status.

Nominations of people to be the recipients of the award are to be furnished through the affiliated League to the Region Manager for presentation to AFL Victoria for approval. All nominations must be lodged with the AFL Victoria Country Football Manager by 31 August annually.

A record of the service rendered by the nominated person is to be forwarded with each application for issue of the medallion.

## **16. PERCENTAGE WHEN CLUB FORFEITS**

Percentage calculation for forfeited matches –

- a) Where a team forfeits during the progress of a match; or
- b) Where a team fails to appear.  
Competitions are to refer to AFL Laws of Australian Football Law 11.2.2 to manage the allocation of points and percentage from any forfeited matches.
- c) Where a match result is altered by protest or dispute.  
The team winning the protest or dispute to be awarded full premiership list points and their points scored FOR in such match to be recorded as usual in the calculation of percentage. The offending team shall lose their points scored FOR in such match and as such the calculation of their percentage adjusted accordingly. Scores for the match are to be adjusted following that round of matches.

## **17. LEAGUES**

### **17.1 Major Leagues**

For the purposes of AFL Victoria Country permit regulations the following are classed as major leagues; Ballarat Football Netball League, Bendigo Football Netball League, Goulburn Valley League, Hampden Football Netball League, Mornington Peninsula Nepean Football League, North Central Football League, Ovens and Murray Football Netball League, Gippsland League, Sunraysia Football and Netball League, Wimmera Football Netball League, Murray Football League, Bellarine Football Netball League, Geelong Football Netball League, and the Central Murray Football Netball League.

### **17.2 District Leagues**

All other affiliated Football bodies shall be known as the District Leagues.

### **17.3 Junior Leagues**

All affiliated football bodies that provide for football competitions at under 16 and a half or lower age groups or as determined by the local Region only shall be known as the Junior Leagues.

## **18. UMPIRES**

### **18.1 Registration**

Field Umpires officiating at matches under the control of affiliated Leagues supplied by an affiliated League, Country Region or official umpiring association shall be registered with, and may be required to pay an annual registration fee to the Region. Those not supplied

from an official umpiring association body shall register with respective League under such conditions as are from time to time determined by the League. It shall be permissible for umpires so registered with the League to be appointed and officiate in an area other than that for which the Region Manager acts in AFL Victoria Country. The fees and expenses of AFL Victoria Country umpires are to be submitted annually to the AFL Victoria Football Operations Department for approval and adoption.

### **18.2 Approaches to Umpires**

Only the team captain shall be permitted to speak to the Field Umpire during the progress of a match at intervals. Any player or official in breach of this rule may be reported by the Umpire and the matter referred to the League Independent Tribunal and if found guilty their Club shall incur the following maximum penalty:

1st offence	\$200.00
2nd offence	\$400.00
3rd or any further offences	\$800.00

## **19. DOMESTIC MATTERS**

Subject to the provision herein applied, each League and Region shall have power to draw up rules not inconsistent with these Rules and provide for the management of its own domestic affairs. In the event of conflict between AFL Victoria Country Rules , and all amendments to its rules, AFL Victoria Country Rules take precedence and Region regulations will take precedence where conflicted with League rules.

## **20. INTERPRETATIONS OR RULINGS**

### **20.1 Questions not Provided for**

In the event of any question arising not provided for in these Rules, AFL Victoria shall have power to decide such question.

### **20.2 Decisions of AFL Victoria**

All decisions arrived at by AFL Victoria shall be final. Where the question of interpretation or ruling is involved in connection with appeals, disputes, etc., it is desired that the League or the competent authority concerned obtain such interpretation or ruling on AFL Victoria Country Rules and/ or Regulations from, or through, the appropriate Region Manager or AFL Victoria.

### **20.3 Authority –Region Manager or Region**

The Region Manager or Region may make decisions in that area providing that they are not in contradiction to the Rules, Regulations and Resolutions of AFL Victoria Country.

## **21. LICENSING**

### **21.1 Team Uniforms**

Each player in each team of each Club shall wear a uniform (including without limitation guernseys and shorts) that:

- a) complies with the minimum standards of quality and appearance and layout for uniforms as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time), in a manner and on a location on each item of the uniform as specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

### **21.2 Umpire Uniforms**

Each Umpire of each Match shall wear a uniform (including without limitation guernseys and shorts) that:

- a) complies with the minimum standards of quality and appearance and layout for uniforms as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time), in a manner and on a location on each item of the uniform as specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

### **21.3 Footballs**

Each Club and League shall ensure that the football used in any match:

- a) complies with the minimum standards of quality for footballs as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time) in a manner and on a location on the match football as is specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

### **21.4 Player Compliance**

Each Club shall ensure that its players comply with this regulation.

### **21.5 Club Compliance**

Each League shall ensure that any affiliated Clubs comply with this regulation.

### **21.6 Sanction**

A sanction of up to \$50 for a player wearing an incorrect uniform in each senior grade match, up to a maximum of \$500 per team per match. A sanction of up to \$50 for any Umpire wearing an incorrect uniform in any Match. A sanction of up to \$50 where an incorrect football is used in a senior grade match. A sanction for non-compliance with this regulation by any other teams (including junior teams), Clubs or Leagues as determined by AFL Victoria Country on a case-by-case basis, upon the recommendation by AFL Victoria Country Football Manager or Region Manager. Any sanction shall be payable to AFL Victoria Country.

## **22. ANTI - DOPING POLICY**

The Anti Doping Policy of the Australian Football League as detailed at Section 14 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, shall apply to and be binding upon all Leagues, Associations and Regions affiliated with the AFL Victoria.

## 23. RISK MANAGEMENT

All Affiliated Leagues and Clubs are required to complete the Match Day checklist as detailed in the Marsh National Risk Protection Programme and available at <https://au.marsh.com/sport/afl/clubs.html>.

## 24. AFL NATIONAL FEMALE COMMUNITY FOOTBALL GUIDELINES

- a) AFL Victoria Country has adopted the AFL National Female Community Football Guidelines for junior and youth girls football competitions. Any junior and youth girls competitions affiliated to AFL Victoria Country leagues wishing to adopt bylaws not consistent with the AFL Female Football Match Guide must obtain approval from their local Region Manager.

## 25. CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

AFL Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who participate in AFL/W activities, programs, services and/or use AFL/W facilities by fostering a culture where children and young people feel safe and welcome. Affiliated leagues and clubs must comply with the legislated Standards for Safeguarding Children and Young People as detailed in Section 11 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

## 26. VARIATION OF TIME

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules, where any time limit is imposed for the doing of any act or thing or for any other purpose, the AFL Victoria Community Football Manager may in their absolute discretion extend or bring forward the time within which a person may do any act or thing under these Rules.

## 27. VARIATIONS TO LAWS OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

As provided under section 2.2 of the Laws of Australian Football, competitions affiliated with AFL Victoria country competition **shall not** apply the following Law in any matches.

- **Laws of Australian Football 13.1 (6/6/6 at Centre Bounce)**

### STARTING POSITIONS

The following starting positions must be met within a reasonable time as set by the Controlling Body, before the field Umpire commences their approach to the Centre Circle to bounce or throw up the football to start a quarter or recommence play after a Goal has been scored:

- (a) six Players from each Team are permitted in each area defined by the Boundary Line and the Fifty Metre Arcs;
- (b) of these six Players for each area referenced in Law 13.1(a), at least one Player from each Team is positioned within the Goal Square.