

NCFL BY LAWS AND COMPETITION RULES

Preamble

These Rules are to be read in conjunction with the:

- NCFL Constitution
- Laws of Australian Football
- Victorian Country Football League (AFL VICTORIA) Rules and Regulations as published in the AFL Victoria Country Handbook each year or as amended by notification from AFL VICTORIA after the printing of the AFL Victoria Country Handbook

Definitions and Interpretation

In these By-Laws unless the contrary intention appears:

- "NCFL" means North Central Football League Incorporated. In these rules referred to as "NCFL" or the "North Central Football League".
- "Commission" means the Commission of AFL Central Victoria Inc. (Central Victoria Australian Football Commission)
- "Laws of Australian Football" means the laws of the game of Australian Football adopted by the Australian Football League as modified for the League
- "League" means the North Central Football League

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

Affiliation Rules

1. Any sporting body may apply to the League for affiliation to participate
2. Any application shall be in writing and state:
 - a) The name of the body
 - b) The number of teams to be fielded
 - c) Whether such body is corporate or un-incorporate
 - d) The names of the current directors/office bearers
 - e) The current financial membership of such body
 - f) The current financial status of such body and shall have appended to it audited copies of the last financial report and a copy of its constitution and rules
3. The League may at its discretion accept or refuse any application for an affiliation, or may impose any conditions on the affiliation that it thinks fit.
4. Any affiliation granted shall continue for the period specified or may be terminated earlier by agreement between the parties.
5. The League may require an affiliate to pay such annual fees, levies or other payments to the League as it determines. In the event that the affiliate fails to make any such payment the League may at its discretion decide that the affiliation is ended, or suspended for such period and on such terms as it prescribes, or may impose such other penalty as seems appropriate.

BY LAWS

1. CLUB AFFILIATION

1.1 Annual Affiliation Fee

Each Affiliated Club shall pay an annual affiliation fee of the sum prescribed by the NCFL from time to time and payable in accordance with NCFL invoicing provisions.

1.2 Payment of accounts

Each Club must pay all outstanding tax invoices to NCFL as determined by the NCFL. All monies due to be paid to the League by Affiliated Clubs shall be payable in full no later than Thirty (30) days after the date of the invoice issued by the League unless contrary arrangements are specifically authorised by the NCFL.

1.3 Clubs in default of payments

All clubs participating in Final series matches must be financial with the NCFL before the conclusion of the home and away matches. In the event that a participating club is not financial, the NCFL may, at its discretion, remove all or any of its teams from their position in the Final Series matches and promote the next entitled financial teams in their place to participate in the Final Series.

1.4 Disputed Invoices.

Any dispute must be finalised within payment date period through negotiation with the NCFL. In such instances payment of original or negotiated amount must still be made within period indicated on original invoice.

2. RULES

2.1 Alteration to By-Laws and Competition Rules

The Competition Rules and By-Laws may be amended by the NCFL from time to time pursuant to the Rules and advised to affiliated Clubs.

2.2 Fines for breach of By-Laws and Competition Rules

Fines may be imposed by the NCFL for non-compliance with or violation of these by-laws.

- (a) At the rates specified in the By Laws and or Competition Rules; or
- (b) If no rate is specified in the By Laws and or Competition Rules, at the rate determined by the NCFL.

3. INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL

3.1 Appointment

The NCFL shall work with the Independent Tribunal panel appointed by AFL Central Victoria in accordance with AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Rule 7. Such persons will not be directly associated with any Club in the Leagues but will be thoroughly conversant with the rules of the game and the Leagues and, in the opinion of the AFL Central Victoria, will be thoroughly capable of handling any cases or disputes which may be put before them.

This Independent Tribunal will deal with players and officials reported in accordance with the Laws of the Game, Rules of the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY and NCFL.

They may also sit in judgment on any football issue or matters for NCFL at the direction of the NCFL within its jurisdiction. NCFL will come under the jurisdiction of the AFL Central Victoria Independent Tribunal.

AFL Central Victoria will appoint 3 members one of whom 1 shall act as Chairman.

3.2 Club Advocates

Advocates are not permitted to be a member of the Legal profession.

3.3 Attendance at Tribunal hearings

3.3.1. Players or officials charged with an offence must attend the Independent Tribunal Meeting. If necessary, the Meeting will be adjourned and the player or official penalised until attendance is confirmed.

Club Secretaries (unless an alternate club official is notified to NCFL at the commencement of the season) will be contacted with dates and times of Tribunal hearings.

3.3.2. Players or officials as witnesses, who are personally unable to attend the tribunal hearing are allowed to submit a Statement to the tribunal, outlining reasons for non-attendance, their impressions of the circumstances or events relating to the report. It is the Clubs responsibility to ensure relevant witness(es) attend the tribunal hearing. The statement must include a telephone contact number that the witness will be available on and contactable at the scheduled time of the tribunal hearing. Submission of such statement must be approved by NCFL offices no later than 12 noon on the day of the tribunal hearing.

3.4 Hearings – Reported Players

In normal circumstances the AFL Central Victoria Independent Tribunal will meet, when required, on Wednesday nights.

In the event that more than one case is scheduled, they will be heard in the order determined by the Tribunal Secretary, allowing approximately 45 minutes for each case. Should there be more than 3 cases to be heard on the one night a second Tribunal will be convened at a time, date and venue organised by AFL Central Victoria.

3.5 Reporting of Players

3.5.1. A current years AFL VICTORIA player report pad is to be placed in the umpire's room at the beginning of the day and left there for the duration of the day's games.

3.5.2. If a report is made, a copy of the report must be scanned and emailed through by the home club to the NCFL, no later than 12.00pm on the day after the match. If a scanner is not available, the home club must email the following details to NCFL within the same time frame. Reported player, Offended player (if applicable), Reporting umpire, alleged offence, if a tribunal is required. The original copy of the Notice of Report must be included in the match day paperwork envelope regardless of whether a set sanction has been accepted or not. Penalty \$100

3.6 Set Sanctions

Note the following variation to AFL Victoria Country Rule 12.2

If after the game the reporting umpire doesn't indicate on the player report sheet that the offence warrants a tribunal hearing, the offending player can choose to accept the prescribed penalty by signing the player report sheet in the space provided. He can also delay this decision until noon the following morning at the latest. The reporting umpire, the offending player and the offended player's club secretary all have until noon the day following the incident to inform the league that they wish the matter to be heard by a tribunal. If one party initially chooses the set sanction, they can change their decision within the time frame.

Once one of the above parties indicates the matter should be heard at tribunal, the set sanction will not be an option. That decision cannot be changed. If there is no official indication within the designated timeframe that the player wishes to accept the set sanction, the matter will be heard at tribunal.

Players and/or team managers from both teams must sign the Player Report to acknowledge receipt of the form from the umpires. Notifications regarding this section of the rule must be made to the Tribunal Secretary or nominated representative.

3.7 Any persons under the age of 16 attending the Independent Tribunal MUST be accompanied by a parent or Guardian.

The assistance of the AFL Central Victoria Independent Tribunal may be enlisted if required.

The Tribunal shall have the power to:

- (a) Decide any matter that is referred to it for determination.
- (b) Impose any costs on the parties, or withhold all or part of any deposit lodged.
- (c) Make any decision or impose any penalty that it considers appropriate in each case, or
- (d) Charge any person with the offence of giving untruthful evidence.

4. MATCH REVIEW PANEL PROCESS

The North Central Football League along with AFL Central Victoria has appointed a Match Review Panel (MRP) of independent members who will assess video incidents referred by NCFL Clubs or the NCFL Board of Management and make a joint decision if cases are to be referred to the Independent Tribunal for assessment.

(a) **Who will sit on the Match Review Panel?**

The match review panel shall be made up of independent members who have no direct association with any North Central Club. MRP members shall remain anonymous. There will be no need for MRP members to ever attend a tribunal case. The MRP will simply review incidents picked up by official League footage and decide if the incident should be referred to the independent tribunal based on AFL Victoria Country rules as outlined on a report sheet.

The North Central Football Leagues Board of Management, North Central Rules & Events Manager or AFL Central Victoria staff have no involvement in adjudicating on, or, assessing MRP Cases.

(b) **How will the process work?**

Any officially nominated representative of a North Central Football League club (e.g., President, Secretary, Senior Coach, Football Manager, or any other person so delegated with the authority by the Club), can request that the MRP look into a specific incident/s that did not result in an official report by the officiating Umpire/s.

Requests to look at specific incidents need to pinpoint exactly when and where the incident may have occurred and at what stage of the match the incident took place. The NCFL Rules & Events Manager, or designated representative, will then review the match footage to see if any footage of the alleged incident is available.

If there is footage of the incident, a "grab" shall be made and edited to slow the incident down and replay it in several different speeds. This footage will be given to the AFL Central Victoria Football Operations Manager who will then forward to the MRP. The MRP will have a set amount of time to review the footage and determine whether or not the player/official involved may have a case to answer at the Tribunal.

AFL Victoria Country rules shall be used when referring the incident to the Tribunal and a specific charge shall be nominated when the club is informed of the report. It is important to note that the MRP shall take no part in deciding the outcome of the case. This decision shall be left to the Independent Tribunal. The MRP simply determine if a player/official may have a case to answer.

(c) **What if members on the Match Review Panel cannot agree on a decision to refer a case to the Tribunal?**

The MRP shall consist of an odd number of people to ensure there is always a majority result.

(d) **What are the benefits of the match review panel system?**

The North Central Football Leagues Board of Management consider that the officiating Umpires do a fantastic job, but understandably they do not have a 360-degree view of every incident, and as such, they may not always see every indiscretion on the ground. Sometimes their view is impeded by players and sometimes they may be caught on the "blind side". Where footage is made available, any alleged acts that may have been missed by the Umpires/s and have been captured by video, such incidents shall be referred to the MRP for review.

The North Central Football League will use this technology if it means that players who transgress outside the spirit of the AFL Victoria Country rules are made accountable for their actions. Providing a process where incidents caught on camera are referred to the Tribunal by a panel of independent members reduces the need for clubs to request

Investigations which take significant time to complete and often end up costing clubs both financially and physically. With the MRP having the ability to refer cases directly to the Tribunal, cases can be dealt with in a timely manner at a minimal cost to everyone involved.

(e) **How will clubs be informed a charge has been laid by the Match Review Panel?**

The AFL Central Victoria Football Operations Manager will inform clubs if a request to review footage has been received as soon as possible. This early indication will inform clubs that footage is being reviewed and a referral to the Tribunal may eventuate. Clubs shall be informed of any MRP decision to refer a Player/Official to the Independent Tribunal by phone and then follow by an official email. If there is no charge to be answered to, Clubs will be notified via email.

(f) **Can set penalties still apply for charges laid by the Match Review Panel?**

Yes, set penalties may still apply for charges laid by the MRP provided all normal criteria is met and both clubs and the League are satisfied a set penalty may be offered. It is important to note, the AFL Central Victoria Football Operations Manager shall determine if a player is eligible to accept a set penalty or not. If a set penalty is available, the Club shall be informed with the email notification that the charge has been laid.

(g) **Will the footage be made available for review by Clubs prior to the Tribunal case?**

Yes, all parties will be forwarded a copy of the footage with the email informing clubs of the MRP's decision to refer the incident to the Tribunal. Footage shall not be distributed if the MRP decides there is no case to answer.

North Central Football League feels the implementation of a MRP will continue to assist in making sure a safe environment for players within our competition is provided and will also assist with making sure the workload of club volunteers is minimal by reducing the need for investigations.

(h) **Deadline for Match Review Panel requests**

Clubs have until 5pm Monday following the match concerned to request an incident be assessed by the MRP.

(i) **Fees for Match Review Panel requests**

A fee of \$1,000 (GST inclusive) must accompany any MRP request. This fee may be refunded in part or whole at the discretion of the NCFL Board of Management.

(j) **Appeals**

There is no avenue of appeal against a decision made by the MRP.

If a case moves through the Tribunal process and an outcome has been determined, a Club may appeal the outcome of the Tribunal hearing.

5. INVESTIGATION OFFICER

An Investigation Officer will be appointed by the AFL Victoria Country from its panel of Investigation Officers to investigate any matter referred to him/her pursuant to AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Rule 5.2 (Unbecoming conduct).

6. UNBECOMING CONDUCT

NCFL members, Club members, Players or Umpires who allege that a player or an official of a Club has been guilty of conduct which is unbecoming to a Player or an Official of a Club or which is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute may lodge with the League a notice in writing setting out the particulars of the allegation within 5 days. A Deposit of \$500 from a club requesting an investigation 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.

Over and above the deposit, the Club or offending player from the Club found guilty at the end of the investigation will be required to cover the full cost of the independent investigation. If the Investigation Officer finds that he does not believe there is enough evidence to bring the case before the leagues independent tribunal, the club requesting the investigation into the incident will then will lose their deposit which will go towards the cost of the investigation and the club will also be responsible for any other costs over and above their deposit amount incurred in the conducting of the Investigation.

If the case is brought before the leagues Independent Tribunal and the case is proven then the total costs incurred in the conduct of the investigation will fall with the club who has the case proven against their club or persons involved with their club being a player, official, volunteer or club member.

7. FOOTBALL "RECORDER"

7.1 Club Editorial material

7.1.1 All Club scribes for the 'NCFL Recorder' must have their name, email address and contact number registered with the NCFL.

7.1.2 Each Club will be allocated one page in the weekly 'Recorder' for notes. These notes, as well as any alterations to player names/numbers must be sent via e-mail to the publishers by Tuesday 8.00am. Penalty \$100

7.2 "Recorder" Team Lists

7.2.1 All senior Affiliated Clubs shall forward to the publisher at least 10 days prior to the commencement of the first competition match in each season the following lists accurately stating all the club registered players' first name, surname and jumper numbers for inclusion in the recorder for the first game. Penalty: Post Round 4 in each competition - \$30 per name.

- One list for Senior and Reserve grades and one list for both the Under 16 and Under 13 grade football

7.2.2 All senior Affiliated Clubs shall forward to the Publisher, no later than 8.00am each Tuesday prior to the next round of the fixture, any changes of player names and numbers for Senior and Reserve grades, Under 16 or Under 13 grades football team lists published in the "Recorder".

7.2.3 Team Lists for finals fixtures must be separated to reflect 'Seniors' 'Reserves' 'Under 16' 'Under 13' football (with a recommended maximum number of 30 players on each list) submitted to the Publisher no later than 8.00am Tuesday prior to each game

7.2.4 Teams competing In the Grand Final must submit photos and required information to the Publisher no later than 8.00am Tuesday prior to the Grand Final

7.3 Production details

7.3.1 Minimum number of recorders per round will be 150, a Club desiring additional recorders can arrange extra copies by contacting the League.

7.3.2 Clubs ordering more that 150, will be Invoiced for the additional Recorders regardless of sales

7.3.2 All recorders shall be collected by home club as arranged office on the Friday prior to each match.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence to the Board must be in writing on Official Club letterhead and signed by a Club Executive Member.

The NCFL must be advised of any intended correspondence with AFL Victoria or other Leagues/Associations. The correspondence must be on official Club letterhead and signed by the Club president.

9. MEDIA

No club shall permit any of its officers or members to make any statement to the media (including radio, television and all newspapers) in connection with any policies or acts of the NCFL without the prior approval of the NCFL. To do so shall render the club concerned liable to:

- (a) A fine for any breach at the discretion of the NCFL;

- (b) Suspension from the League;
- (c) Expulsion from the League in accordance with the Rules of the Association

10. GAME PASSES

- 10.1 Passes for home and away games shall be Issued to the League President and Board Members, Life Members, League sponsors, media and Netball and Hockey executive.
- 10.2 The league shall allocate all passes for finals.

11. COMPETITION AND FIXTURES

- 11.1 All home and away games to be played on a Saturday afternoon unless mutually agreed to by respective competing clubs.
- 11.2 Fixture

The NCFL shall be responsible for the organisation of matches in all competitions by preparing fixtures for each team in each Division for each season. The NCFL may amend a fixture as required.
- 11.3 Home and Away Rounds

The league shall conduct a series of 16 (or such number as the NCFL shall from time to time determine) home and away matches for Senior, Reserve, Under 16 and Under 13 Grades of Football.
- 11.4 Finals

The finals series will be developed at the discretion of the NCFL.

12. LADDERS

- 12.1 Point Allocation and match ratio calculations
 - (a) In the home and away matches, four points will be allotted for a win, four points for a team in whose favour a forfeit is ruled, two points for a draw and zero points for a loss.
 - (b) The League shall prepare a weekly ladder for each Division and in addition to awarding points for each win, forfeit, walkover, draw or loss it shall also prepare a percentage table comparing the total points scored by each team against the total points scored against each team and in the event that selection for the finals series is between teams with the same number of points, the team with the highest percentage points will be entitled to participate in the finals series ahead of a team with lower percentage points.

All decisions of the League in respect of the calculation of the points and percentages shall be final and binding.
- 12.2 Scores Used to Calculate

The scores used by the League to calculate the points and percentages for each football Divisional ladder shall be based upon the scores contained in the goal umpires' cards. Should these scores disagree; the timekeeping cards may be used as the basis for calculating points and percentages in accordance with Rule 12.7 of "Laws of the Game of Football" as published in the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Handbook each year.
- 12.3 Forfeit Calculations

Football - Refer to AFL Victoria Country Rule 21.
- 12.4 Non-Completion of Matches
 - (a) Failure by any club to play an arranged match as set out in the fixture of the League from time to time shall render the club liable to a Fine for breach to be fixed by the NCFL unless a satisfactory reason is received by 5.00 p.m. on the Monday following the failure to play the arranged match.
 - (b) If any match which has been started and cannot be completed for reasons beyond the control of the affiliated Senior or affiliated Junior Club or Clubs, or where a match has been cancelled at the direction of the officiating umpire, the following procedures shall apply:
 - (i) Subject to clause (iii) below, if a game is concluded prior to half time and the match cannot proceed within the scheduled time, the teams shall depart the arena and the match will be declared a draw. Each team will be awarded two premiership points and the scores of the teams at the time the match was interrupted would be used to calculate the percentages.
 - (ii) Subject to clause (iii) below, if a game has progressed beyond half time and is unable to proceed with the scheduled time for the match, the teams will depart the arena and the scores of the clubs at the time the match was interrupted shall be deemed to be final scores of the match and shall be used to calculate percentages.

The team with the highest score will be declared the winner and awarded four premiership points.
 - (iii) If a match has been started and cannot be completed within the time scheduled for reasons within the control of any club, such club will be dealt with by the NCFL.

13. FINALS

- 13.1 Finals Arrangements

On completion of the home and away matches, the Affiliated Clubs gaining positions one to four on the premiership lists of each of the grades shall form the Final Four, except where altered by the NCFL, and shall compete to determine the premiership under the Page system. Third and fourth teams to play First Semi-final, first and second teams to play Second Semi-final. The winner of the First Semi-final to play the loser of the Second Semi-final in the Final. The Grand Final is played between the winner of the Final and the winner of the Second Semi-final.
- 13.2 Fixtures and venues

12.2.1 The NCFL shall exercise full control in relation to the arrangement of the dates, times and places of the playing of all finals matches.

12.2.2 No club to be granted more than one game of the final series in any one year.

13.3 Entrance Fees

13.3.1 Nett proceeds of semi-finals, final and grand final, or of any of the final series, shall go to the league. Admittance charges shall be determined by the league.

13.3.2 Clubs hosting finals will pay the NCFL the following:

- Final - \$500
- Grand Final - \$3,000

13.4 Recorder

Clubs will retain 10% of Recorder sales, all remaining amounts will be paid to the NCFL.

13.5 Catering/Bar/Raffles

Clubs retain all profits taken from catering, bar and raffles in all finals

13.6 Finals Uniforms

(a) The team finishing higher on the ladder at the completion of the home and away games shall wear preferred uniform. Uniform selected must be provided to the NCFL on Tuesday prior to the game. The opposition team will be advised if the NCFL believe a clash requires a change to their preferred uniform.

(b) The NCFL will allocate rooms and coaches boxes in conjunction with the host club.

14. INTERLEAGUE MATCHES

14.1 The league colours are red and white.

14.2 The NCFL may select any players registered with the League from time to time to participate in inter-league matches to represent the NCFL.

14.3 Any player selected to participate in inter-league matches must play for the NCFL and any failure to do so shall be dealt with by the NCFL.

14.4 In all cases under 13.3 of this Rule it shall be sufficient to answer:

(a) That the NCFL received from the player not less than two clear days before the date of the match a written explanation of his inability to play satisfactory to the NCFL.

(b) That the NCFL received within two days after the date of the match a medical certificate that the player was unfit owing to illness or injury to play.

14.5 No person shall be qualified to play in any interleague team unless he/she is qualified to play for a League Affiliated Club in matches played under the auspices of the League.

15. BEST AND FAIREST AWARDS

15.1 In the senior competition the J.J. Feeny Memorial Medal will be awarded to the player judged best and fairest on the central umpires votes for the season.

15.2 In the reserves and under 16 competitions a trophy will be awarded to the player judged best and fairest on the central umpires votes for the season.

15.3 Any player suspended during the current season shall not be eligible to receive either the 'best and fairest' or runner up trophies/medal.

16. COACH REQUIREMENTS

Refer AFL Victoria Country Rule 16

All coaches of AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY clubs are required to obtain or update Foundation/Level 1 Accreditation prior to the commencement of the season. The penalty to be imposed by leagues if coaches continue to coach having not obtained the necessary accreditation must be i) a \$200 fine (Senior) or \$100 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 (\$200 or \$100) and are not applicable to every match.

In the instance where coaches are not accredited and commit to completing the next available (or otherwise agreed upon) AFL Victoria Coach Accreditation Course, the following bonds for clubs are to apply \$200 (Senior) and \$100 (Junior). Where a coach fails to complete the agreed upon AFL Victoria Coach Accreditation Course the bond paid by the club is forfeited

17. LIFE MEMBERS

NCFL may at its discretion annually elect as NCFL Life Members any person/s who has/have rendered outstanding service to the NCFL.

Life Member Entitlements

- Life membership Badge
- Receive a complimentary NCFL Season Pass for entry into all games

18. MEETINGS OF CLUB REPRESENTATIVES

18.1 The NCFL may convene compulsory meeting(s) for Club Presidents and/or officials as stipulated by the NCFL from time to time. These meetings shall include, but are not limited to: Presidents, Club Administrators, Team Managers, Senior and Coaches Forums.

- 18.2 The designated person may, with the prior approval of the NCFL, appoint another person to attend Annual and Special Meetings or other compulsory meetings in their place.
- 18.3 All Clubs must be represented when requested at all official League meetings (e.g. presidents, secretaries, managers, coaches etc.) and functions. Penalty: \$100.

19. CODES OF CONDUCT AND OTHER POLICIES

- 19.1 All players, officials and Club members at all League matches shall be subject to the Policies and Codes of Conduct as issued by the NCFL from time to time.
- 19.2 The NCFL is required to adopt complementary rules and regulations in football competitions under their control and jurisdiction as those of the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY.

20. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Notwithstanding anything elsewhere contained in these Rules, the Board shall be empowered to take such disciplinary action as it considers necessary against any Club, Club Official, Player, Umpire or other person, where in the Board's opinion such Club, Club Official, Player, Umpire or other person has been guilty of any act, practice, conduct, matter or thing that is

- a) Unbecoming or prejudicial to the interest of the League or
 - b) Calculated to bring or in fact bringing discredit on the League or any of its Constituent Clubs or a person connected therewith, or to impair or affect the enjoyment by any Club or person of the privileges associated with membership of or association with the League.
- 20.1 Without limiting the generality of the foregoing the Board may, in taking disciplinary action, determine that:
- a) The membership of a Club in the League be ended or suspended for such period and on such terms as the Board thinks fit,
 - b) A player be deregistered or refuse to register a player, and/or
 - c) May impose such monetary penalty upon any Club, Club Official, Player, Umpire or other person as it thinks proper, including but not limited to suspended monetary penalty fines, or
 - d) Impose such further or other penalty, suspended or otherwise, as appears to it to be appropriate.
- 20.2. The Board shall before determining any disciplinary action give the Club, Club Official, Player, Umpire or other person against whom the Board may propose to take such action, details of the default alleged, and give such Club, Club Official, Player, Umpire or other person the opportunity of being heard.

21. SMOKE FREE POLICY

All NCFL and associated meetings shall be conducted in a smoke free environment.

COMPETITION RULES

1. LAWS OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

All games shall be played in strict accordance with the "Laws of Australian Football" as determined by the AFL, or modified by the AFL Victoria Country or the League.

2. COMPETITION RULES

The competition shall be conducted under the National Australian Football Council Laws of the Game and the AFL Victoria Country Rules.

3. PLAYER UNIFORMS

- 3.1 All Club uniforms shall comply with AFL Victoria Country rules. The NCFL, before adoption, must approve club colours.
- 3.2 Every player must be fully uniformed in his Club colours with the number allotted to them, in the official team list on the day of the match, prominent and securely fixed on his back.
- 3.3 Clubs to allocate jumpers numbered 70-75 for emergency use such as late changes to teams, blood rule requirements. Jumpers being used for these reasons will not incur fines.
- 3.4 All playing jumpers and shorts must carry logos as specified by the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY and NCFL. Clubs must formally request the NCFL approval to display sponsorship logos on Club jumpers.
This request must include details such as size and positioning.
- 3.5 White shorts shall be worn by sides playing away and one other nominated colour when playing at home unless approval otherwise is granted by the NCFL.
- 3.6 Bike shorts worn under playing shorts must be neutral or beige colour.

Advertising on Uniforms

- i) Back of Jumper

A sponsor's logo/name is allowable on the back of a football jumper provided it goes under the number, and is of such design and length so as not to cause any interference with the ability to distinguish clearly the number on such jumper.

They should be no bigger than 100mm in width and no longer than 300mm

ii) Front of Jumper

Sponsor's logos/names are allowable on the front of a football jumper in the positions outlined below:

- In the chest area of the jumper as per existing AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY logos. Official AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY and NCFL sponsor logos are to take precedence, however, club logos can be placed underneath. The size of the sponsor's logo/name should be no bigger than 100 mm x 100mm
- One further logo can be placed on the abdomen area, the size of the logo should be no bigger than 100mm in width and no longer than 300mm

iii) Football Knicks

The size of such logos shall be no bigger than 100mm x 100mm, and are to be placed on the leg area of knicks.

4. LEAGUE STRUCTURE

The League will be structure in the following manner for competition purposes:

Each Club shall field four (4) football teams:

- NCFL Seniors
- NCFL Reserves
- NCFL Under 16
- NCFL Under 13

The qualification age for the underage teams shall be, that players must be under the specified age by the 1st January of the playing season. The Board shall determine the participants, number, dates, venues and duration of each match.

Where a team of any Club fails to keep any match commitment, the Board shall first give such Club the opportunity of giving any explanation it has to offer, or to present any facts or matters relevant to the question of penalty, and may impose such monetary or other penalty upon the Club as it thinks fit.

5. REGISTRATIONS

5.1 Every player must be a registered member of their Club and approved by their Club Committee.

5.2 A player must be registered with the NCFL and the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY prior to the commencement of the first game he plays for the Club each year. The registration must be entered and confirmed on the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY database.

6. PLAYER TRANSFERS AND APPEALS

6.1 Player transfers

Player transfers are conducted under the current AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Rules.

All player transfers will be conducted using the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY approved electronic data base system.

6.2 Appeals against refused Transfer

All appeals against refused player transfers are handled under AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY rules by the AFL Central Vic Development Managers.

7. GROUND FACILITIES

7.1 Each Club is to provide a ground that in the opinion of the NCFL is suitable for match play.

7.2 Goal posts must be correctly padded in accordance with AFL Victoria Country Rules. Penalty: \$100

7.3 Goal posts must have flag-holders. Penalty: \$100

7.4 The ground must be marked in accordance with the Laws of the Game unless impractical to do so.

Variations are to be approved by the NCFL. Penalty: \$100

7.5 In terms of the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Acceptable Ground Conditions and Layout the actual boundary line of the playing area shall be no less than three (3) metres from the fence line.

7.6 A stretcher must be provided by the home Club and located in or near the coaches' box. Penalty: \$100

7.7 A separate dressing room must be available for umpires. Clubs should also provide dressing room facilities for female umpires when applicable.

7.8 Clubs must provide suitable weatherproof coaches boxes of design approved by local council building regulations and the NCFL. Elevated coaches boxes must be approved by the NCFL. Coaches are NOT permitted to use coaches boxes in a manner that does not comply with local council building regulations or Occupational Health & Safety requirements.

7.9 A box 12 metres in length, one metre from the boundary line, with its sides returning to the fence shall be marked parallel to the boundary line in front of each of the coaches' boxes. Penalty: \$100

7.10 Home Club must provide two (2) trainers tables in the visitor's rooms Penalty: \$100

8. GROUND INSPECTIONS

8.1 All clubs who have home games are expected to complete the standard Ground Inspection.

8.2 For home and away and finals matches, the NCFL retains the right to take whatever action is deems necessary to address any issue arising from

the ground inspection report, including but not limited to; moving the game to another venue, cancelling the game or re-scheduling the game to another day or time.

- 8.3 On the day of any official senior, reserve, Under 16 and Under 13 match arranged by the NCFL a designated representative from each participating team must make a full inspection of the ground on which the match will be played prior to the match commencing. The home team representative shall complete the Match Day Checklist App. If the app is not available, then the official Match Day Checklist (as provided each year by the AFL Victoria Country and AFL Victoria Country Insurer) should be completed and the representative from each club shall sign the checklist. The duplicate AFL Victoria Country Worksafe Risk Management Checklist must be submitted to the NCFL in the Match Day paperwork which will be retained by the NCFL for seven years. Each home Club must retain their copy for the same period.
- 8.4 If the same Clubs are competing in all games on the same day at the same venue only one inspection is required.

9. INTERCHANGE/ORDER OFF

- 9.1 Interchange and order off rules are to operate for Seniors and Reserves as per AFL Victoria Country Rule 11.0 & AFL Laws of Australian Football Rule 7.
- 9.2 Under 16 and Under 13 - umpires may order a player from the field for a period of ten minutes of playing time for abusive or bad language or other unseemly conduct detrimental to the game. Such player must report to the Interchange steward/Timekeeper on leaving the field and before returning and may **not** be replaced by an Interchange player. It shall be left to the discretion of the umpire whether the player sent off is reported. For a second offence during the game, the player must be sent off for the remainder of the match and reported and may not be replaced by an Interchange player.
- 9.3 Interchange bench numbers in the NCFL are Seniors three (3), Reserves three (3) and Under 16 four (4).
- 9.4 Under 13 may have an unlimited number of reserves, interchangeable at any time, shall be permitted for home and away games only. All finals shall be specifically excluded from this arrangement. Interchange bench numbers in the Under 13 finals are four (4).
- 9.5 It is the responsibility of the timekeepers to ensure that players ordered from the ground under a yellow card, remain off for fifteen minutes of actual playing time. Any player ordered off under a red card is not permitted to take any further part in the game, however, this player can be replaced by another eligible player after 20 minutes of actual playing time.

The timekeepers must therefore:

- (a) Identify the umpire's signal (a yellow or red card), which indicates a player has been ordered off;
- (b) Acknowledge the umpire's decision;
- (c) record the relevant amount of actual playing time from the moment the player crosses the interchange area in the space provided on the time cards (failure to record the implementation of this rule on the timecards will result in a \$30 penalty) and
- (d) Signal the conclusion of the fifteen or twenty minute penalty

The interchange steward will continue to record the change as has been the case. The onus remains with the clubs to ensure that this procedure operates effectively.

NB: In the event of more than one player being off at any given time, the onus is on the Club to confer with the interchange steward/timekeepers to determine which player is eligible to come on.

- 9.6 Clubs in breach of procedure: In the event a Club believes an opposition player has been replaced early, that Club must call a team count to verify the number of players on the ground and the score at that particular time. The Umpire will record the result of the count on the Umpire's Match Report. Where a Team has more than the permitted number of players on the Playing Surface, the following shall apply:
- (a) A field umpire shall award a Free Kick to the captain or acting captain of the opposing team, which shall be taken at the Centre Circle or where play was stopped, whichever is the greater penalty against the offending team.
 - (b) A Fifty (50) Metre Penalty shall then be imposed from the position where the Free Kick was awarded; and
 - (c) The Goal Umpires shall write the current scores as at the time of the Head Count on their Score Card
 - (d) the matter will be referred to the League to investigate and ultimately determine the outcome as they see fit - note that the offending team does not lose all points scored in the Match up to the time of the count on matchday

10. INTERCHANGE STEWARD

- 10.1 Each club must provide an interchange steward.
- 10.2 The responsibilities of the interchange steward are outlined in AFL Laws of the Game.
- 10.2.1 For home and away the Interchange Steward will record the jumper numbers of players who commence on the interchange bench at the commencement of the game and prior to the commencement of the next term. Record the first entry of the interchange players entering the playing arena and number who he replaced. In conjunction with the time keeper record the time a player has been sent from the ground for Yellow or Red Card and Blood Rule. Also, the time any player leaves the ground on a stretcher and what time his replacement goes on the ground. If there is a head count record time that play stopped.
- 10.2.2 For finals the Interchange Steward will record the jumper numbers of players who commence on the interchange bench at the commencement of each quarter. It is the responsibility of team managers from both competing Clubs to notify the appointed Interchange Steward of the jumper numbers of players on the interchange bench at the commencement of the game and then at the end of each quarter break Penalty \$100 (offending Club)

11. COACHES

- 11.1 The non-playing coach of any team is not allowed on the playing arena during the progress of the match except at the quarter intervals. During the progress of the match the non-playing coach, interchange players (other than in warming up) and other officials must be in the restricted area as marked by the 12 metre line.
- 11.2 Only the team captain of the day shall be permitted to speak to the Field Umpire at the intervals during the progress of the match (other than if requesting the umpire for a count of players on the playing surface). Any breach of this rule shall be reported by the Umpire and be referred to the League Independent Tribunal.

12. RUNNERS

Only one (1) runner is permitted for all grades.

- 12.1 No person who is a registered player or an official of any club, other than his home club whether affiliated or not, nor who is under disqualification or suspension by his home club or League, shall act as an official runner in any competition match, or any other match in which a AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY affiliated Club or League is participating.
- 12.2 No coach or assistant coach of an AFL Victoria Country open age team shall act as a runner in a match in which a team of his club is participating.
- 12.3 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 he coaches is participating.

13. DUTIES OF RUNNERS

- 13.1 Team runner shall not have affixed to his or her person communication device, which includes but is not limited to headsets, microphones or earpieces or water bottles.
- 13.2 Runners shall enter and exit the playing arena from any point of the ground.
- 13.3 The sole duty of the runner shall be to confer with the player or players of his/her club and to immediately leave the playing arena.

14. RUNNERS UNIFORMS

All runners are to wear uniforms as approved by NCFL at the commencement of each season.

15. BREACHES OF RULE 13

Any club that breaches Rule 13.1, 13.2 or 13.3 shall appear before the League's Independent Tribunal to determine the penalty, which may be a substantial fine, and/or a loss of points: and/or such other penalties as determined appropriate.

16. TRAINERS AND MEDICAL STAFF

- 16.1 Club trainers may enter the arena at any time during the match or intervals, but only to attend to an injured player or to replace a damaged uniform and for no other purpose whatsoever. Trainers may also carry water as part of their duties.
- 16.2 Club trainers will wear uniform dress consisting of a white top and white, navy blue or black pants or shorts. The top must bear the Club name, the word 'trainer' and a number.
- 16.3 Medical staff are to wear a clear and identifying armband. Medical staff means a qualified medical practitioner, physiotherapist or similar qualified person. Penalty \$100

17. WATER-CARRIERS

- 17.1 Eligibility to act as water carrier
 - 17.1.1 A maximum of three (3) water-carriers is permitted in any game
 - 17.1.2 Water carriers must be aged over fourteen years.
 - 17.1.3 No coach or assistant coach of an AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY open age team shall act as a water carrier.
- 17.2 Water carrier uniforms
 - 17.2.1 Water-carriers are to wear a yellow shirt bearing the Club name and the word 'water carrier' and be correctly numbered with yellow, black or blue shorts or tracksuit pants. Penalty \$50
 - 17.2.2 Water-carriers must be numbered and names and number must appear on the official team sheet. Penalty \$50
- 17.3 Water carrier duties
 - 17.3.1 Water-carriers may enter the arena at any time during the match or intervals but only to provide water to players and for no other purpose whatsoever and to immediately leave the playing arena once the drink has been delivered (Refer AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Rule 17.2.)
 - 17.3.2 Water carriers are not permitted to operate constantly from the Coaches box area but must be around the boundary area against the fence while not delivering water.

18. TIMEKEEPERS

- 18.1 One responsible Timekeeper is to be provided by each competing Club. Each Clubs must provide a suitable clock that is to be synchronized with the other Club's timekeeper at the commencement of each match. Where only one clock is available that shall be the official time.
Failure to supply a timekeeper – Penalty \$50
- 18.2 In finals matches the NCFL will appoint time keepers for the seniors and competing Clubs are to supply their own timekeepers for reserves, Under

16 and Under 13.

- 18.3 Matches shall start at the times decided by the NCFL.
- 18.4 Matches shall be played in accordance with the time intervals set out by the NCFL.
- 18.5 A bell, gong, or siren, capable of being heard across the ground at its farthest point must be provided. Penalty: \$50
- 18.6 Timekeepers shall keep accurate records of scores on cards supplied by NCFL to each Home Club. Times of starts and finishes of quarters (late starts to be recorded and initialled by both timekeepers); appearance times of teams; elapsed playing time of players ordered from the ground. The timekeeper must sign the cards and return them to the Central Umpire for counter signature. Penalty \$30

19. TEAM MANAGERS

19.1 Home Team Manager or Match Day Secretary

The Home Team Manager or Match Day Secretary is responsible for the following match day duties

- Provide time keepers cards as issued by the League
- Provide Umpires with Score Cards as issued by the League, Best & Fairest Vote Cards and envelopes as issued by the League and a current year's notice of report form pad.
- Provide Interchange steward with Interchange Sheets as issued by the League
- Provide footballs as per Rules
- Provide any sponsors Special Award vote sheets for all grades
- Enter Match Details on AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY web based database as provided by both clubs at the end of each game in accordance with these rules for both teams
- Email ALL player reports to NCFL at the end of each game

19.2 Away Team Manager or Match Day Secretary

The Away Team Manager or Match Day Secretary is responsible for the following match day duties

- Provide opposition team manager with details of Goalkickers and best players as soon as possible after the conclusion of the game.

19.3 Both Home and Away Team Managers or Match Day Secretaries

Both Team managers or Match Day Secretaries are responsible for the following match day duties

- Provide Team Sheet to the umpires, showing all players with correct jumper numbers and all officials with correct numbers where applicable generated from AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Data Base and signed by the Team Manager
- Complete the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Match Day Ground Safety checklist
- Ensure Time keeper is available
- Ensure Field, Goal and Boundary Umpires are available where no BUA appointment is made
- Ensure Umpire Escort is appointed, is aware of and fulfils their duties
- Obtain advice of any reported players from the central umpires after each game, sign and collect a copy of any player reports from that game
- Complete sponsored Votes for opposition team

20. FORFEITS

- 20.1 For all NCFL competitions, Clubs shall be required to field a minimum of 12 players to commence the game. Failure to do so will result in their side forfeiting the match.
- 20.2 Except in extenuating circumstances, which in the opinion of the directors of the Board are outside the control of the club, any team failing to fulfil any match during the season will be subject to a penalty fine of \$100.
- 20.3 In the event of a Club failing to field a team or part thereof within half an hour of the arranged starting time of a match, the opposing Club may claim the match. The Board shall investigate the circumstances and may apply provisions or By-Law 13.3 - Forfeit Calculations

21. PLAYING TIMES

21.1 Duration of Games

Any team not on the ground ready to start at time set down for play to commence by NCFL be fined \$25 to be doubled for every 5 minutes later thereafter with a maximum fine of \$100.

HOME AND AWAY

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Under 13 | 9.40 a.m. and finished not later than 11.00am
4 x 15-minute quarters - If sufficient time is not available quarters shall be even In the second half
¼ time - 3 minutes, ½ time - 5 minutes, ¾ time - 3 minutes |
| Under 16 | 11.10 a.m. and finished not later than 12.35pm.
4 x 18-minute quarters - If sufficient time is not available quarters shall be even In the second half
¼ time - 3 minutes, ½ time - 5 minutes, ¾ time - 3 minutes |

Reserves	12.45 p.m. and finished not later than 2.20pm. 4 x 20-minute quarters - If sufficient time is not available quarters shall be even in the second half ¼ time - 3 minutes, ½ time - 5 minutes, ¾ time - 3 minutes
Seniors	2.30 p.m. 4 x 20minute quarters + plus time on in each quarter ¼ time - 5 minutes, ½ time - 15 minutes, ¾ time - 5 minutes

FINALS

Any team not on the ground ready to start at time set down for play to commence by NCFL be fined \$100 to be doubled for every 5 minutes later thereafter with a maximum fine of \$500.

Under 13

Starting and finishing times of finals games shall be determined at the end of the home and away games.
4 x 15-minute quarters - If sufficient time is not available quarters shall be even in the second half
¼ time - 3 minutes, ½ time - 5 minutes, ¾ time - 3 minutes

Under 16

Starting and finishing times of finals games shall be determined at the end of the home and away games.
4 x 18-minute quarters - If sufficient time is not available quarters shall be even in the second half
¼ time - 3 minutes, ½ time - 5 minutes, ¾ time - 3 minutes

Reserves

Starting and finishing times of finals games shall be determined at the end of the home and away games.
4 x 20-minute quarters - If sufficient time is not available quarters shall be even in the second half
¼ time - 3 minutes, ½ time - 5 minutes, ¾ time - 3 minutes

Seniors

2.30 p.m.
4 x 20minute quarters + plus time on in each quarter
¼ time - 5 minutes, ½ time - 15 minutes, ¾ time - 5 minutes

DRAWN GAMES IN FINALS

In the event of scores being level at the elapsed/full time the timekeepers are to sound the siren.

The field umpires shall then:

- Direct the goal umpires to consult with each other as to the correct score
- On receiving confirmation that the scores are level, instruct both captains that the match shall recommence with the teams kicking to the same end as in the final quarter and that two five (2 x 5) minute periods (time on for senior grade only) shall be played with teams exchanging ends after the first five-minute period immediately the siren sounds
- Consult both captains as to their readiness to recommence the match
- Hold the ball aloft to indicate to the timekeepers that the match is about to recommence
- The timekeepers shall then sound the siren and the match shall recommence
- In the event scores are level after the two five (2 x 5) minute periods, a further two five (2 x 5) minute periods (time on for senior grade only) shall be played with clubs exchanging ends after the first five-minute period
- This process shall continue until there is a result
- Coaches are not permitted to address players at any stage after the three-quarter time interval.

22. FOOTBALLS

- All footballs used for matches will be determined by the NCFL including any sponsor brand requirements
- Football for all senior, reserves and Under 16 games will be Size 5 and Under 13 games will be a synthetic size 4
- Two new footballs must be provided by the home Club for each senior match.
- A suitable branded football in good order and condition are to be provided by the home Club for each Reserve, Under 16 and Under 13 matches. The football should be approved by the opposition coach.
- In finals, branded footballs will be provided by NCFL.

23. TEAM SHEETS

23.1 Team sheets must include:

- Registered AFL Victoria Country Player entered
- Registered AFL Victoria Country Official entered
- Be signed by a Club Official or Captain
- Coach, Captain and Vice-captain should be identified on the team sheet

- Numbers opposite names in the Record must be the same as is on the team sheet
- Players to start on the Interchange bench should be Identified on the team sheet

23.2 Players

Team sheets generated from the AFL Victoria Country Data Base and web site with full name and numbers signed by Captain or Club Official responsible are to be handed to central umpire prior to commencement of each game. Only players registered with the AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY are eligible to compete.

Club/Match Day Secretaries are responsible for correct names as well as seeing that the names of trainers, runners and medical staff are shown in the space provided. Coach, captain, and vice-captain and any other official entering the arena should be identified on the team sheet.

Player number must match the number recorded in the football Recorder. A notation of a variation of jumper number must be made on the team sheet to indicate exceptional circumstances.

Penalty for not signing – \$50

Penalty for failure to include all players in team list – \$100

Penalty for failure to include other information – \$30

Penalty for player number not matching football Recorder – \$30.

Penalty for including names of players not participating in match - \$100

23.3 Officials

The maximum allowable number of officials are:

- Runners shall be one (1) for each grade
- Trainers and water carriers shall be no more than six (6) In total.
- Medical staff means a qualified medical practitioner, physiotherapist or similar qualified person

“Officials” positions that are allowable on the NCFL team sheet and inside the fence are:

- Coaching staff (not to exceed 3 (three))
- Team Manager
- Runner
- Trainer/water carrier Number 1
- Trainer/water carrier Number 2
- Trainer/water carrier Number 3
- Trainer/water carrier Number 4
- Trainer/water carrier Number 5
- Trainer/water carrier Number 6
- Doctor (qualified)
- Physiotherapist (qualified)

All authorised persons, apart from Runners, Trainers and Water Carriers, are to remain in the Coaches Box at all times during play, or within the confines of the perimeter lines surrounding the Coach’s Box. Other match day staff must be stationed outside the perimeter fence or fence line.

24. MATCH RESULTS

24.1 The Secretary of the home Club must complete the match results, on line using the AFL Victoria Country Data Base, for the matches played that day. Scores must be entered no later than 30 (thirty) minutes from the conclusion of each game. The final scores for the Senior Game (1st eighteen) must be entered no later than 5.15pm.

24.3 If a report is made, clubs must follow the process provided by the league.

25. MATCH DAY PAPERWORK

The Home Club secretary shall assume responsibility for the contents of the Match Envelopes and should ensure that they are delivered NCFL Headquarters within four days. Penalty \$50.

26. MATCH DAY PENALTIES

26.1 Team manager failing to receive the all clear regarding player reports from officiating umpires in Home and Away games and the NCFL at all finals. Penalty \$50.

26.2 Failing to include the signed Interchange/order off form in the Match Day envelope. – Penalty \$50

26.3 Failing to submit Umpires’ Notice of Report Form or required details to NCFL by 12.00 pm on the day after the match. Penalty: \$100

26.4 Approved paperwork must not be altered under any circumstances.

26.5 Match Details submitted via AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY online web site to NCFL must be entered by the required time and contain correct scores as per Goal Umpires Cards, accurate best players, and goal kickers for both competing teams. Penalty: \$50 for first occurrence, \$100 for subsequent occurrences.

27. UNDER 13 AND UNDER 16 COMPETITIONS

- 27.1 In the Under 16 and Under 13 competitions both teams must have equal playing numbers on the ground prior to the commencement of the game.
- 27.2 The League operates an overage policy for the Under 16 grade. All clubs must be aware of the conditions of the use of such player contained in this policy.

Refer to permit form for all conditions relating to the approval and retention of permit

- 27.3 Under 13 players must not play more than one game in a day unless required to meet minimum numbers for the Under 16 competition.

28. ELIGIBILITY FOR FINALS

28.1 Definitions

- 28.1.1 Eligible game: For a player to be deemed as having participated in a game, AFL Victoria Country rules state that any player listed on the team sheet must be at the ground, dressed in football playing attire and ready to take the field if called upon.

28.2 Senior

To be eligible to play in the senior finals series a player must have played at least four (4) games on four separate weekends for his club in any grade during the home and away season.

28.3 Reserves

- 28.3.1 Reserve players must play 4 reserves games over four separate weeks prior to the finals commencing to be eligible to play in reserve grade finals.

Any player who plays more than half of the games in the NCFL Home and Away Season for his club in the senior competition is ineligible to play in the reserves final series unless both the senior and reserve teams are playing finals on the same weekend.

- 28.3.2 Under 16 players must play 4 reserves games over four separate weeks prior to the finals commencing to be eligible to play in reserve grade finals.

28.4 Under 16s

- 28.4.1 To be eligible to play in the under 16 finals series a player must have played at least four (4) games for his club in the under 16 and/or under 13 grade during the home and away season.

- 28.4.2 During finals, an under 13 player may play in both the under 13 and under 16 games on the same day if permission is granted by the NCFL. This permission must be applied for no later than the Wednesday prior to the games.

28.5 Under 13s

- 28.5.1 To be eligible to play in the under 13 finals series a player must have played at least four (4) games for his/her club in the under 13 grade during the home and away season.

28.6 Two home and away games for the same round

- 28.5.1 If, during the home and away series, a player is listed on the senior team sheet and the reserves sheet for the same round, then the senior game only shall be counted towards finals eligibility.

- 28.5.2 If, during the home and away series, a player is listed on the seniors and/or reserves team sheet and the under 16 team sheets for the same round, the senior/reserves and Under 16 game shall be counted towards finals eligibility.

28.7 Permits

No player shall be eligible to play on permit in seniors or reserves finals.

28.8 Long Term Injury

If a player is seriously injured while training or playing for his AFL Victoria Country affiliated club (practice matches included), then the club may apply for special consideration to allow that player to complete in a Finals Series without obtaining the minimum eligibility criteria. This application must be made on the Long-Term Injury - Finals Eligibility Exemption Request Form and include details of players rehabilitation history for this injury including a medical certificate confirming the injury (further documentation may be required by the League to substantiate the request). The player must have been registered with the club in the previous season to be eligible for exemption. This exemption will be granted strictly on long term injury and nothing else, including retirement or travel. This application must be received by the league by 5pm on the last business day four rounds prior to the first final of that season. Any player not granted an exemption will be required to fulfil all eligibility criteria. The decision of the league on all exemptions shall be final. A long-term injury is defined as a single injury that prevents the player competing in four games of that home and away season or any other football/sporting competition for that season.

28.9 Number of games per weekend

A player may only play one (1) finals game per weekend in any grade except an underage player may play in a senior/reserve game subject to qualification.

Under 13's players see Rule 28.4.2

29. UMPIRES

- 29.1 The Board may appoint anybody or a group of people to be Umpires of the League matches and may pay the umpires as instructed as per AFL Victoria fees for their services.

- 29.2 Umpires provided by clubs must not wear club colours while officiating.

29.3 Central Umpires must make available to the home Club Secretary immediately after the match, the following:

- (a) Team sheets of opposing teams.
- (b) General report of match, starting time, uniforms, officials on NCFL form.
- (c) Selection of three best and fairest players in order of preference marking the names 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice using players' names shown in team lists and numbers of such players.

This vote is to be placed in the separate sealed envelope.

- (d) Charges against Clubs or players (with numbers) for breaches of rules and any matter they consider should be brought up.

29.4 Central Umpires must see that Club Goal and Boundary Umpires are properly uniformed and timekeepers are in position prior to commencement of the game.

29.5 Goal Umpires must be appropriately attired and equipped in white coats. Each home club must provide two sets of plain white flags.

29.6 The Field Umpire shall have full control of the play and shall award penalties in accordance with the laws of the game.

No appeal shall be entertained against any of his decisions.

29.7 In the event of an Official Umpire not being available, a substitute umpire shall be appointed by agreement of both Captains. Such Central Umpires shall have the power to:

- (a) Issue yellow cards;
- (b) Issue red cards; and
- (c) Report players.

A player can be reported by a non-BUA appointed Umpire. Normal reporting procedures are to be followed. The BUA are to provide their advocate to support the non-BUA appointed Umpire.

29.8 Where a substitute Central Umpire has been appointed, he shall fill in the Best and Fairest votes.

29.9 Each club must provide a goal umpire for Under 16 games.

29.10 Under 13

32.7.1 For home and away games the home club to provide two (2) central umpire and each club to provide a goal umpire.

32.7.2 NCFL will provide central umpires for finals. The host club will provide two goal umpires and two boundary umpires for finals unless the host club is playing in the finals, the NCFL will then arrange the umpires.

29.11 Where Goal Umpires are not provided by the BUA, they must be supplied by the competing Clubs. Any Club Goal Umpire officiating in a NCFL match must be at least 16 years of age.

They must be conversant with the rules, wear white coats and be provided with white flags at least 45 cm square by Clubs and must use the League scorecard which must be signed by both Goal Umpires, Timekeepers and Central Umpires at the match conclusion, failing which it may not be recognised as official.

They must keep their goal area clear of spectators. Club-appointed goal umpires must wear a white coat. Penalty \$50.

29.12 Where Boundary Umpires are not provided by the BUA, they should be supplied by the competing Clubs.

Where a club does NOT supply a boundary umpire players from that Club must take responsibility for throwing the ball back into play for the entire boundary on one side of the ground.

If both Clubs do not supply a boundary umpire players from the forward line of respective teams will take responsibility for throwing the ball back into play for the boundary in their forward half of the ground.

30. UMPIRE ESCORTS

At all Senior, Reserve and underage matches the home club shall supply an escort for umpires who shall (in accordance with the AFL Victoria Country Policy):

- (ii) Move quickly to the umpires at the end of each quarter
- (iii) Escort the umpires from the ground at half time and at the completion of the game to the door of the umpires room;
- (iv) Where the club is the home club, offer umpires cool drinks between each quarter;
- (v) Remain in the centre of the ground with the umpires during quarter time and three quarter time breaks;
- (vi) Show courtesy at all times and NOT question or give comment on the umpire's performance;
- (vii) Be over the age of 18 years; and
- (viii) Wear approved League Escort Bib at all times whilst officiating as an umpires escort. Penalty \$100

31. GROUND ENCROACHMENT

31.1 With the exception only of the quarter time, half time and three-quarter time interval, no persons other than officials provided for in these Rules may encroach upon or enter the playing arena, or stand sufficiently close to the boundary line to impede or hamper the progress or movement of the Boundary Umpires in the execution of their duties.

31.2 The officiating umpires are empowered to send off any of these officials if they are not correctly attired or are deemed to be exceeding their duties.

31.3 Team "huddles" at both quarter and three quarter times (and extra time in finals) must be located outside the centre square. Penalty: \$100

32. DISPUTES

To be read in conjunction with AFL Victoria Country Rules

32.1 The NCFL has the power to deal with and settle all disputes arising out of or in connection with this competition with the exception of appeals as defined in AFL Victoria Country rules.

The NCFL may have such disputes heard and decided by the Independent Tribunal.

Should the party or parties concerned refuse or neglect to abide by such decision they shall be suspended from the competition for such time as the NCFL or Tribunal may determine and shall be liable to a fine in default of payment of such fine the party or parties concerned may be excluded from playing in the competition.

32.2 Any party referring any dispute to the NCFL shall forward a statement of such dispute in writing to the NCFL not later than 5pm on the Monday following the match and 5pm on the Tuesday if Monday is a public holiday.

This notice must be accompanied with a deposit for \$500.

33. BARRACKERS AND SUPPORTERS

Any supporters or barrackers who are known to be members of any Club, within the League who, in the opinion of the Central, Boundary or Goal Umpire, Emergency Umpire, Commissioner or NCFL Officer, behave in an offensive manner by spoken remarks, or openly incite players on the field to play in a manner not conducive to the best interests of the game, or are the cause of any disturbance between onlookers, will render the Club to which they belong liable to appear before the NCFL or Tribunal who will have the power after dealing with the case to impose a special fine, suspend or expel such Club from the League.

34. PRACTICE MATCHES

34.1 In all practice matches played by an affiliated Club whether within the League or against a Club from another League the Club Secretary shall ensure that a team sheet is completed and handed to the Central Umpire.

34.2 As the host club, the Secretary shall forward copies of all such team sheets and other relevant paperwork to the NCFL in the event of a player being reported. A copy of the report or required details, must be emailed to NCFL by 12.00pm on the day **following** the match.

34.3 Any player who plays in a practice match and is not a registered player of the participating Club must have his registered Club identified on the team sheet.

34.4 All practice matches will be conducted under AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY rules and under normal match conditions.

Umpires will have the right to report and order off. Umpires have been instructed that the Order Off Rule will not be used in lieu of reporting a player when a reportable offence has been committed.

34.5 All reports will be heard by the Independent Tribunal of the league of the host Club and any investigations referred from a practice match, will be conducted by the Host Club's League Investigation Officer.

34.6 Clubs shall deal directly with the BUA for appointment of umpires for a practice match and shall forward umpires' fees direct to the BUA.