



FOOTBALL BYLAWS

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BFNL FOOTBALL BYLAWS

1. Junior-Senior Club Alignment

Each Junior Club shall have an alignment with its Senior Club within the Ballarat Football Netball League, ensuring a clear pathway for all Club members from Junior football to Senior football.

2. AFL Goldfields CCSP Bylaw: BFNL ONLY

A maximum of three (3) top age players that have been recruited from Mount Clear FNC to one (1) BFNL Club may be allocated as one (1) point players per season. These players are to be nominated by the BFNL Club to the BFNL Operations Manager at least seven (7) days prior to the start of the upcoming season. Once allocated these players cannot have their point allocation amended under this bylaw. Any top age player recruited from Mount Clear FNC outside of the 3 nominated 1-point players, will be classified consistent with the AFL Victoria Player points system policy.

In addition, BFNL Clubs that have recruited Mount Clear players under this bylaw, who play a minimum of eight (8) games in the Under 18.5 competition for a season, may receive a one (1) point season of service reduction the following season.

If any scenario falling outside of the above bylaw, AFL Goldfields will determine the point allocation for any player consistent with the AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy.

3. Interchange Agreement

Each year, all leagues affiliated with AFL Goldfields and AFL Central Victoria will enter into an Interchange Agreement to facilitate player interchange for Clubs with junior teams, supporting player numbers.

Clubs must familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of the agreement and ensure that the necessary approvals are in place before allowing any player to participate under the Interchange Agreement.

The BFNL may enter into an Interchange Agreement with other Leagues to facilitate player interchange for Clubs with junior teams, supporting player numbers.

Clubs must familiarise themselves with the terms and conditions of any Interchange Agreement and ensure that the necessary approvals are in place before allowing any player to participate under the Interchange Agreement.

4. Player Transfer

Refer to Section 1 AFL Vic Country Rules and Section 3 National Community Football Policy Handbook

5. Coach Accreditation

Refer to Section 13 AFL Vic Country Rules and Section 6 National Community Football Policy Handbook

6. Registration

6.1. Player Registration

Clubs are responsible for ensuring all players are registered for the season on an annual basis.

6.2. Penalty for Playing Ineligible and/or Unregistered Players

Refer to Section 1 AFL Vic Country Rules and Section 3 National Community Football Policy Handbook

7. Interleague

The League expects all member Clubs to support the Interleague campaign and encourage the participation of selected players and officials. Clubs may be requested to provide facilities for training and/or matches as needed.

The BFNL will appoint a head coach and selection panel for respective age groups, who shall be responsible for selecting the training squad and final team.

8. Practice Matches

The League must be notified of all practice matches, including the participating Clubs, grades, times and venue. It is the Club's responsibility to ensure all policies and procedures are followed.

If Clubs wish to engage the BFUA to umpire Football practice matches, they must complete the [BFUA Practice Match Booking Form](#) at least two (2) weeks prior to the match.

9. Underage Eligibility

Competition	Date of Birth	Age	Born Between
Under 18.5	Born between 1 July and 31 December 2007	18.5	July 1 2007 and December 31 2009
	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2008	18	
	Born between 1 January and December 2009	17	
Under 16	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2010	16	January 1 2010 and December 31 2011
	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2011	15	
Under 14	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2012	14	January 1 2012 and December 31 2013
	Born between 1 January and December 2013	13	
Under 12	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2014	12	January 1 2014 and December 31 2015
	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2015	11	
Under 10	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2016	10	January 1 2016 and December 31 2017
	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2017	9	
Under 8	Born between 1 January and 31 December 2018	8	January 1 2018 and April 30 2019
	Born between 1 January and 30 April 2019	7	

In accordance with Section 3 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook, to participate in a competition, a player must be seven years of age by 30th of April in the applicable playing year.

Player's age eligibility to participate in a competition age group is as per the following AFL Victoria table:

Age Group	Min. Age to Participate*	Age turning in the applicable playing year
Under 8	7	7 or 8
Under 10	7	8, 9 or 10
Under 12	9	10, 11 or 12
Under 14	11	12, 13 or 14
Under 16	13	14, 15 or 16
Under 18.5	15	16, 17 or 18

*Age as at 31 December in the year prior to the applicable playing year

10. Age Dispensation

Refer to BFNL Age Dispensation Policy.

11. Football Uniforms

Must be read in conjunction with Section 21 of AFL Victoria Country Rules.

11.1. Football Jumpers

All football jumpers in the Seniors and Reserves must display unique numbers, with each number recorded on the team sheet next to the corresponding player.

11.2. Replacement Jumper

If a jumper is replaced during a match, the Ground Manager and Central Umpire must be informed of the player's new number.

11.3. Bike Shorts

Bike shorts/compression shorts are permitted by players under their playing shorts but must be flesh beige coloured.

Penalty: Clubs found to have a player wearing incorrect coloured bike shorts/compression shorts will incur a \$50 fine per player, per offence.

11.4. Alternate Strips

Clubs may be required to wear an alternate strip or clash jumper in situations where the primary team uniforms of opposing Clubs are deemed too similar.

Below are the current alternate strip arrangements:

Alternate Strip	Away Games	Home Games
Darley (Juniors)	Bacchus Marsh, North Ballarat	Bacchus Marsh, North Ballarat
North Ballarat	Bacchus Marsh, Darley, Sunbury	Bacchus Marsh, Darley
Sunbury	North Ballarat, Sebastopol	Sebastopol

The BFNL Board reserves the right to require any Club to wear an alternate strip or clash jumper.

12. Wearing Gloves During Competition

Gloves are permitted to be worn in all BFNL competitions.

13. Prohibition of Items

Refer to Laws of Australian Football Clause 9.2

14. Stretchers

Clubs must ensure a sports specific stretcher is placed at the interchange area. It is recommended an additional stretcher is also placed at the interchange area.

Penalty: Clubs failing to comply with this bylaw will incur a \$200 fine.

15. Umpires

The BFNL will engage the BFUA to supply umpires for its competitions.

15.1. BFNL Seniors

The BFUA will supply field, boundary and goal umpires for all BFNL Senior matches. Club Presidents, Secretaries and Football Coordinators will be notified Friday afternoon of all umpire appointments.

15.2. BFNL Juniors

The BFUA will supply the following for Junior competitions:

Competition	Field	Boundary	Goal
U/16 Seniors	2	2	-
U/16 Reserves	2	-	-
U/14 Seniors	2	-	-
U/14 Reserves	1	-	-
U/12 Seniors	1	-	-
U/12 Reserves	1	-	-
U/10 Seniors	-	-	-
U/10 Reserves	-	-	-

Clubs must supply all other umpires not listed or engage BFUA directly.

Penalty: Clubs failing to supply umpires as per these requirements will incur a \$100 fine.

15.3. Boundary Umpires

Clubs must provide a Boundary Umpire, attired in a white shirt or jumper, when required.

Penalty: Clubs failing to provide a Boundary Umpire, when required will incur a \$100 fine.

15.4. Goal Umpires

Clubs must provide a Goal Umpire, attired in a white coat, when required. All Goal Umpires supplied by Clubs are to use white flags.

Penalty: Clubs failing to supply a Goal Umpire, when required will incur a \$100 fine.

Penalty: Clubs failing to comply with uniform requirements will incur a \$100 fine per offence.

16. Playing Times

All matches shall commence at times determined by the Board.

The following are the scheduled commencement times:

BFNL SENIORS				
Grade	Day	Start	Quarters	Breaks
Seniors	Saturday	2:15pm	4 x 20min + Time On	5 – 20 – 5
Reserves	Saturday	11:55am	4 x 24min	5 – 12 – 5
Under 18.5	Saturday	9:50am	4 x 22min	4 – 10 – 4

BFNL JUNIORS				
Under 16 Seniors	Sunday	3:00pm	4 x 20min	3 – 5 – 3
Under 16 Reserves	Sunday	1:35pm	4 x 15min	3 – 5 – 3
Under 14 Seniors	Sunday	12:15pm	4 x 15min	2 – 4 – 2
Under 14 Reserves	Sunday	11:00am	4 x 15min	2 – 4 – 2
Under 12 Seniors	Sunday	9:55am	4 x 12min	2 – 4 – 2
Under 12 Reserves	Sunday	8:55am	4 x 10min	2 – 4 – 2
Under 10 Seniors	Sunday	8:00am	4 x 10min	2 – 2 – 2
Under 10 Reserves	Sunday	8:00am	4 x 10min	2 – 2 – 2
Under 8	Friday	7:00pm	4 x 10min	3 – 3 – 3
Under 8	Friday	6:00pm	4 x 10min	3 – 3 – 3

17. Submission of selected sides:

17.1. Seniors

Each Club must submit their selected teams for Senior competitions into PlayHQ by 8:00pm on the Thursday night prior to a round. Players must be named in their correct positions, with their allocated jumper numbers entered. Changes may be made after this time, however 17.3 Late Changes must be adhered to.

For matches scheduled on Sundays, Clubs may submit an extended bench of seven (7) players (4 interchange plus 3 emergencies), but all players must still be named in position with their jumper numbers.

Penalty: Failure to submit selected side by the specified time will incur a \$200 fine.

Penalty: Failure to submit selected side with players named in their corresponding positions and/or allocated jumper numbers recorded will incur a \$100 fine.

17.2. Juniors

Each club must submit their selected teams for Junior competitions into PlayHQ by 8:00pm on the Friday night prior to a round. Players must have their allocated jumper numbers entered. Changes may be made after this time, however 17.3 Late Changes must be adhered to.

Penalty: Failure to submit selected side with players allocated jumper numbers recorded will incur a \$50 fine.

17.3. Late Changes

Late changes may be recorded by hand on the official match day team sheet however these changes must be made prior to the start of the match and submitted on PlayHQ immediately following each game in time for submission of results deadline. Any changes made must also be replicated on any other team sheet in circulation on the day.

Penalty: Failure to submit changes on PlayHQ will incur a \$50 fine.

18. Live Scores (Senior Football only)

The Home Club is responsible for conducting live scoring via PlayHQ for Senior Football matches.

Penalty: Failure to complete live scoring requirements will incur a \$50 fine.

19. Interchange Players

19.1. Senior Competition

For the Senior competition, Clubs are allowed a maximum of twenty-two (22) players to be listed on the team sheet and eligible to participate in any given match.

19.2. Reserve and Under 18.5 Competitions

For Reserves and Under 18.5 competitions, Clubs are allowed a maximum of twenty-two (22) players to be listed on the team sheet and eligible to participate in any given match, except in the case of 19.2.1.

19.2.1. Reserve and Under 18.5 Competitions - Extended Bench

If both Clubs have 25 players available for a match, teams may choose to extend their bench by up to three (3) additional players, bringing the total number of players on the team sheet to 25.

The extension of the bench must be mutually agreed upon by both Coaches. Once agreement is reached, confirmation must be emailed to the Football Manager by Friday 8.00pm, the week of the fixtured match.

It is the responsibility of the Clubs to initiate communication with one another to reach an agreement. If no agreement is reached between the Coaches, the game will proceed with no more than 22 players listed on the team sheet.

19.3. Junior Competitions – Seniors

For Under 8, Under 10, Under 12, Under 14 and Under 16 Senior competitions, Clubs are allowed up to five (5) interchange players per side.

19.4. Junior Competitions – Reserves

For Under 8, Under 10, Under 12, Under 14 and Under 16 Reserve competitions, Clubs are allowed unlimited interchange players.

Where more than 46 players are available on match day, a player must not participate in more than one (1) match in the same age group (i.e. Under 12 Seniors and Under 12 Reserves).

Where fewer than 46 players are available on match day, Clubs must field the Senior match with five (5) interchange players, with the remaining players to participate in the Reserves match. In this instance, players may participate in two (2) matches.

20. Minimum Numbers to Constitute a Game

For all football competitions (excluding Senior, Under 8 and Under 10 Reserve competitions), the following rules apply:

- a) Eligible to Play for Points: A Club with twelve (12) or more players (registered or borrowed) is eligible to play for points. This includes recording the score, percentage, best players, and goal kickers.
- b) Loaned Players: If a Club lends players to another and the game proceeds with twelve (12) or more players per side, the rules in point (a) apply.
- c) Forfeiting Points: A Club with eleven (11) or fewer players forfeits the game. Both teams are encouraged to play with available players, and the size of the field can be adjusted if needed.
- d) Assisting Opposition: Clubs must assist their opposition to field at least twelve (12) players where possible.
- e) Equal Numbers for Borrowed Players: If a Club lends players, both teams must have the same number of players to proceed. If there is an odd number, the team with more registered players may play an extra player.
- f) Points Split: If both teams cannot field twelve (12) players, points will be split. The game may still proceed, but score, percentage, and goal kickers will not be recorded.
- g) Bye Round Assistance: The Team with a bye must assist other Clubs by providing as many players as possible.
- h) Best & Fairest Eligibility: Borrowed players cannot receive Best & Fairest votes, and goals kicked by them do not count towards League awards.
- i) Lending Players for Even Numbers: If a Team has fewer than eighteen (18) players, the opposition must lend players to ensure both sides have equal numbers. No players should remain on the bench.

21. Players Exceeding Permitted Number

If a team has more than the allowed number of players on the field, the provisions outlined in Section 5.5 of Laws of Australian Football will apply.

Penalty: Clubs exceeding the permitted number of players on the field will incur a \$300 fine.

22. Team Sheets

22.1. Submission of Team Sheets

Each Club must submit three (3) copies of its team sheet for each match.

- One (1) copy of the team sheet must be provided to the Match Umpires no later than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled commencement of the match. This copy must be signed by both Team Managers to confirm that the players listed are true and correct.
- One (1) copy of the team sheet must be provided to the opposing Team Manager.
- One (1) copy of the team sheet must be retained by the Club's Team Manager.

22.2. Required Information on Team Sheets

The following information must be fully completed on the team sheet submitted as part of match day paperwork to the League:

- Player names and allocated jumper numbers

- Coach name
- Assistant Coach(es) (if applicable)
- Trainer(s)
- Team Manager
- Runner(s)
- Water Carrier(s)
- Volunteer Umpire (if applicable)

22.3. Incorrect Team Sheets

Where a Club submits their team sheet to the Match Umpires prior to the commencement of a match, and it is subsequently determined by the League that a player or players have participated in the match without being listed on the team sheet, such player or players shall be deemed ineligible. Any breach of this bylaw will be dealt with in accordance with Section 1 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules.

23. Footballs

The League will allocate match balls to each club before the season starts and will issue an invoice accordingly.

Competition	Material	Specification
Seniors	Leather	Size 5 – Red
Reserves	Leather	Size 5 – Red
Under 18.5	Leather	Size 5 – Red
Under 16	Leather	Size 5 – Red or Yellow
Under 14	Leather	Size 4 – Red or Yellow
Under 12	Synthetic	Size 4 – Red or Yellow
Under 10	Synthetic	Size 3 – Red or Yellow
Under 8	Synthetic	Size 2 – Red or Yellow

The League may, from time to time, use an alternative colour or design football for special rounds or events, to raise awareness for designated causes.

24. Use of Two Footballs

In the event of extreme weather conditions, two (2) footballs may be used in a match with the change of footballs occurring at each quarter time break to ensure no advantage is gained by either Club. Both Clubs must agree to the use of two (2) footballs. If no agreement is met, only one (1) football may be used.

25. Officials in Bench Area

Only authorised persons may enter the playing arena during a match. Match Day Officials must remain within the marked area around the interchange box.

- Senior Clubs: Up to four (4) officials (including Coach, Assistant Coach, etc.) are allowed within the marked interchange box area.
- Junior Clubs: A maximum of one (1) Coach and one (1) Assistant Coach is permitted.

Both Junior and Senior Clubs may have up to:

- 2 Runners
- 6 Trainers and/or Water Carriers

All officials, except Trainers and Water Carriers, must remain seated in the coach's box or within its marked perimeter during play. If no lines are marked, they must stay within the coach's box. If space is insufficient, or no box is provided, additional officials should remain outside the boundary line.

Trainers and Water Carriers can move around the ground but must position themselves against the fence, not on the boundary line when at rest. Unauthorised personnel must be removed by the umpire.

Clubs wishing to authorise additional officials must apply to the League before Friday 5:00pm of the week of the scheduled match.

For Junior football, the head Coach must always wear the league-approved coach's vest during the game for easy identification by the umpires. If there are joint coaches, both must wear the approved vest.

Penalty: Coaches and coaching staff who fail to remain within the designated area will incur a \$100 fine.

Penalty: Clubs will be fined \$100 per offence where a coach is not correctly attired with the approved coaches vest.

26. Water Carriers

26.1. Minimum Age

Water Carriers must be a minimum of 12 years of age.

26.2. Duties of Water Carriers

The sole duty of a Water Carrier shall be to convey water to players and to immediately leave the playing arena. If a team's Water Carrier is found to be filling spaces on the ground, this will be noted in the umpires Match Report.

Penalty: Clubs in breach of this bylaw will incur a \$100 fine.

26.3. Number of Water Carriers

No team shall be permitted to have more than four (4) Water Carriers and no more than a combined total of six (6) Trainers and Water Carriers. In extreme weather conditions, Clubs will be permitted to appoint a further two (2) Water Carriers however this must first be approved by the Central Umpire(s).

26.4. Water Carrier Uniform

All Water Carriers are to wear uniforms as approved by the BFNL at the commencement of each season. Water Carrier tops must be a light blue shirt and carry the Club name and the words 'Water Carrier'.

Penalty: Clubs failing to comply with uniform requirements will incur a \$100 fine per offence.

27. Runners

27.1. Duties of Runners

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. If a team's Runner is found to be filling spaces on the ground, this will be noted in the umpires Match Report.

Penalty: Clubs in breach of this bylaw will incur a \$100 fine.

27.2. Number of Runners

Clubs may have a maximum of two (2) Runners. Should a Club use two runners, strictly only one Runner is permitted on the playing surface at a time. If two Runners are found to be on the ground simultaneously, the Umpire will pay a free kick against the offending team.

27.3. Runner Uniform

All Runners are to wear uniforms as approved by the BFNL at the commencement of each season. Runner tops must be fluorescent pink and carry the Club name and the word 'Runner'.

Penalty: Clubs failing to comply with uniform requirements will incur a \$100 fine per offence.

28. Trainers

28.1. Duties of Trainers

The duty of a Trainer/medical staff shall be to render medical assistance and convey water as required. Trainers may enter the arena at any time during the match or intervals, but only to attend to an injured player or replace a damaged uniform. No other purposes are permitted.

28.2. Number of Trainers

No team is permitted to have more than a combined total of six (6) Trainers and Water Carriers.

28.3. Trainer Uniform

All Trainers are to wear uniforms as approved by the BFNL at the commencement of each season. Trainer tops must carry the Club name and the word 'Trainer'.

Penalty: Clubs failing to comply with uniform requirements will incur a \$100 fine per offence.

28.3. Trainer Minimum Requirements

In accordance with Section 15 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

29. Ground Manager

Each BFNL Club must supply a Ground Manager for every home game. All Ground Managers are to wear uniforms as approved by the BFNL at the commencement of each season. Ground Manager tops/jackets/vests must be fluorescent yellow/green and carry the words 'Ground Manager'.

Penalty: Failure to supply a Ground Manager will result in a \$500 fine.

Penalty: Failure to wear correct uniform will result in a \$100 fine.

30. Timekeepers

Each Club must provide a Timekeeper for all grades. The Home Club is responsible for supplying an audible signalling device and a backup device for the Timekeeper.

Timekeepers are required to keep the scores during all matches. Goal Umpires' scorecards will be used, but in the event of a dispute, the Timekeeper's scores will be submitted to the League as evidence, in accordance with Section 8.2.4 (d) Laws of Australian Football.

Penalty: Clubs failing to provide a Timekeeper will incur a \$250 fine.

Penalty: Clubs failing to provide an audible signalling device and backup siren/bell will incur a \$200 fine.

31. Time clocks

All time clocks displayed to the public at BFNL venues must run continuously from zero upwards without stopping for time-on.

Penalty: Clock is not used or is used incorrectly will incur a \$100 fine per offence.

32. Match Timing (Excluding Senior Football)

The BFNL stresses the importance of adhering to the match day schedule to ensure all games finish on time. The following must be followed for all matches (except Senior football) in any BFNL competition:

- Both Timekeepers must assess the match time at halftime.
- If the match is running behind schedule, the remaining time until the scheduled finish will be split equally, while allowing sufficient time for a three-quarter time break.
- If additional time is lost in the second half, the siren **MUST** sound at the scheduled finish time, regardless of the duration of the final quarter.

Penalty: Clubs that fail to sound the siren at the scheduled time, as per the official BFNL running sheet will incur a \$100 fine, per offence.

33. Stopping and Recommencing Time

Refer to Laws of Australian Football 10.6: Stopping and Recommencing Time.

34. Teams not breaking from the Huddle

Teams must break from the huddle when the single siren is blown to indicate the end of a break.

Penalty: Clubs in breach of this bylaw will incur a \$100 fine, per offence.

35. Leaving playing field

Only Senior, Reserve and Under 18.5 teams shall be permitted to leave the playing field during the half time interval, including the finals series. Junior grade sides must remain on the field at half time, except under extreme weather conditions. Teams must return within the scheduled time.

Penalty: Clubs leaving the playing field outside of this bylaw will incur a \$200 fine.

36. Late appearance

Clubs must appear on the playing arena at the scheduled time.

Penalty: Clubs failing to return to the playing field at the scheduled time will incur a \$25 fine, per minute late.

37. Ground Entry and Warm-Up

Clubs must not interfere with the opposing team's warm-up during entry to the ground, both at the start of the game and at halftime.

Each Club must warm up at opposite ends of the ground: the Club using the easternmost Coach's Box will warm up at the eastern end, while the other Club, using the westernmost Coach's Box, will warm up at the western end. This applies to all BFNL competitions.

Penalty: Clubs in breach of this will incur a \$200 fine.

For Senior football, when entering the ground, Clubs must complete a lap of the centre square, ensuring they avoid the opposing team and their warm-up area if the other team is already at one end of the ground.

38. Points and Ladder Calculation

In all matches, four (4) points shall be awarded for a win, two (2) points for a draw, and zero (0) points for a loss.

At the conclusion of the Home and Away season, if two or more Clubs have accumulated an equal number of points, their position will be determined by the percentage of goals and behinds scored for and against.

In the event of a bye in the BFNL fixture, four (4) points will be awarded to the team with the bye for the purposes of ladder calculation.

If there is an uneven number of games played across any competition, the League will adopt the Match Ratio format to determine ladder positions. Teams will be sorted based on the ratio of matches won. If multiple teams share the same match ratio, they will be ranked according to highest percentage, points for, followed by last head-to-head results.

39. Team Allocation for Junior Competitions (Juniors Only)

Where a Club enters one (1) team in an age group, an application may be submitted to the BFNL Board, in extreme and compelling circumstances, for consideration to participate in the Reserve competition of that age group.

Where a Club enters two (2) teams in an age group, the Club must field one (1) team in the Senior competition and one (1) team in the Reserve competition.

Where a Club enters three (3) teams in an age group, an application may be submitted to the BFNL Board, in extreme and compelling circumstances, for consideration for the third team to participate in the Reserve competition of that age group.

All team allocations shall be determined by the BFNL Board, which retains full discretion in all matters relating to competition placement and approval of applications under this Bylaw.

Applications must be submitted by **January 31st** in the applicable playing year.

40. Mentors (Juniors Only)

Mentors are permitted in the Under 8, Under 10 and Under 12 Competitions.

40.1. Duties of Mentors

The duty of a Mentor shall be to provide on-ground coaching to players learning to play the game and teach them the basics of the game whilst out on the ground. Mentors must not barrack and must keep their instructions clear and concise in relation to the positioning of players on the ground, the movement of play and the provision of feedback to player's decision making out on the ground. Mentors must always be 10m away from the location of the ball. Club or appointed BFUA Umpires can remove a Mentor from the ground if they feel the Mentor is not abiding by the above guidelines.

40.2. Number of Mentors

Clubs are permitted to have one (1) Mentor out on the ground at a time.

40.3. Mentor Uniform

All Mentors are to wear uniforms as approved by the BFNL at the commencement of each season. Mentor tops must be purple and carry the Club name and the word 'Mentor'.

41. More Than One Match Per Match Day (Juniors Only)

Where more than 46 players are available on match day, a player must not participate in more than one (1) match in the same age group (i.e. Under 12 Seniors and Under 12 Reserves).

Where fewer than 46 players are available on match day, Clubs must field the Senior match with five (5) interchange players, with the remaining players to participate in the Reserves match. In this instance, players may participate in two (2) matches.

Penalty: Clubs that breach this bylaw will incur a \$250 fine and loss of premiership points if the match result was a win.

42. Playing Against a Club with Reserve Side Only (Juniors Only)

If a Club is scheduled to play against an opposition that only has a Reserve competition side (and no Senior side in that competition), the Club cannot "drop" any player who played in the Senior competition in the previous match (unless the player also played in the Reserves match on this day). Any player who participated in the Senior competition in their last match played will be ineligible to play in the Reserve competition match against a Club with only one side entered.

Penalty: Clubs found in breach of this bylaw will incur a \$250 fine and will forfeit premiership points if they won the match.

43. Yellow Cards (Juniors Only)

This applies to all players in the Ballarat Football & Netball League Junior competitions (Under 16 Seniors and below):

- b) A player's first yellow card in a season serves as a warning.
- c) A second yellow card in the same season results in an automatic one-match suspension.
- d) A third yellow card, and any subsequent yellow cards, result in a two-match suspension.

44. Finals Eligibility

When reading Finals Eligibility bylaws the below hierarchy of competitions, must be taken into consideration when determining where a player can compete during the finals.

When players qualify to compete in finals, they qualify for that competition and any competition that sits above them on the hierarchy.

These must be read in conjunction with AFL Vic Country Rules and Regulations.

BFNL Competition Hierarchy:

1. Senior Competition
2. Reserve Competition
3. Under 18.5 Competition
4. Under 16 Senior Competition
5. Under 16 Reserve Competition
6. Under 14 Senior Competition
7. Under 14 Reserve Competition
8. Under 12 Senior Competition

9. Under 12 Reserve Competition
10. Under 10 Senior Competition
11. Under 10 Reserve Competition
12. Under 8 Competition

44.1. Seniors Finals Eligibility

44.1.1 A player must play at least three (3) Home and Away matches in a competition to be eligible for finals, except in the following cases:

- Where a Reserves player is selected to play in the Senior side
- Where a registered Junior player is selected to play in the Under 18.5, Reserves or Senior side
- Where a player who competes in the AFL Talent League has their AFL Talent League games counted as Senior matches played

44.1.2 AFL Talent League games are counted as Senior matches played.

44.1.3 A registered player, playing three (3) games during the Home and Away season in a competition, shall be eligible to play finals in that competition and any competition that sits above it on the competition hierarchy, provided all other finals eligibility criteria is met.

44.1.4 A player selected as an interchange player and whose name is on the list of players exchanged before the commencement of the match and who is at the ground in uniform and ready to play and remains ready until the conclusion of the match, shall for all purposes be deemed to have played in such match.

44.1.5 Any player who changes Club mid-season shall be deemed a new player for the Club, with which he has been granted a clearance to play and shall be required to therefore complete no less than three (3) Home and Away matches with his new Club before being eligible to play in the final series of matches.

44.1.6 Any player who has played more than nine (9) matches in the Home and Away season with a specific competition shall be ineligible to compete in a final series of any competition that sits below that competition in the BFNL competition hierarchy.

A player may be eligible to play in a lower competition's finals only if:

- The team in the higher competition, where the player has played more than nine (9) matches, is still active in the finals and competing on the same weekend.
- All other eligibility criteria for the finals are met.

If the team in the higher competition is knocked out of the finals, the player is no longer eligible to play in the finals for any lower-ranked competition.

44.1.7 No player is allowed to play in more than one (1) finals match during the same weekend of finals, except in the following case:

- When a player has first played in an Under 18.5 or Reserve competition match and is required to play in the Senior competition for the second match, due to a late change in

player availability. This must not be at the expense of a registered and available player. In this case, the Club must notify the opposition and the League.

44.1.8 Finals eligibility is calculated at the conclusion of the Ballarat FNL Home and Away matches. Finals matches played are not included when determining finals eligibility.

44.1.9 VFL games are not counted as Senior competition matches played. Players may only play with their nominated home Club after being released by their VFL club on an Interchange Agreement.

Clubs found playing players who have not been released by their VFL club will incur a loss of four (4) points and percentage, in which the ineligible player participated, at the discretion of the Board.

44.1.10 A VFL-listed player who qualifies as a Category 1 – Home Player under the AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy – defined as a player who has played 40 or more games over a minimum of three (3) seasons with their aligned junior club, up to and including the Under 17 competition – must have played at least three (3) home and-away Senior competition matches with their BFNL club during the season to be eligible for finals.

Any other VFL-listed player must have played at least six (6) home-and-away Senior competition matches with their BFNL club during the season to be eligible for finals.

This bylaw applies regardless of the number of VFL matches the player has participated in during that season.

44.1.11 Permit players are not permitted to play finals, except in the following case:

- Where a Club does not have sides competing in the BFNL Junior competitions and a Junior player is selected to play in the Under 18.5 competition. All other finals eligibility must be met and this cannot be at the expense of a registered and available player.

Permit games played outside of BFNL competitions do not count towards a player's finals eligibility.

44.2. Junior Finals Eligibility

44.2.1 A player must play at least three (3) Home and Away matches in a competition to be eligible for finals, except in the following case:

- Where a registered Junior player has played in three (3) Home and Away matches in a lower competition on the BFNL Competition Hierarchy is selected to play in a higher ranked competition, provided this does not come at the expense of a registered and available player in that age group.

44.2.2 A registered player, playing three (3) games during the Home and Away season in a competition, shall be eligible to play finals in that competition and any competition that sits above it on the competition hierarchy, provided all other finals eligibility criteria is met.

44.2.3 A player selected as an interchange player and whose name is on the list of players exchanged before the commencement of the match and who is at the ground in uniform and ready to play and remains ready until the conclusion of the match, shall for all purposes be deemed to have played in such match.

44.2.4 Any player who changes Club mid-season shall be deemed a new player for the Club, with which they have been granted a clearance to play and shall be required to therefore complete no

less than three (3) Home and Away matches with their new Club before being eligible to play in the final series of matches.

44.2.5 Any player who has played more than eight (8) matches in the Home and Away season with a specific competition (excluding Under 18.5, Reserves and Senior competitions) shall be ineligible to compete in a final series of any competition that sits below that competition on the BFNL competition hierarchy.

A player may be eligible to play in a lower competition's finals only if:

- The team in the higher competition, where the player has played more than eight (8) matches, is still active in the finals and competing on the same weekend.
- All other eligibility criteria for the finals are met.

If the team in the higher competition is knocked out of the finals, the player is no longer eligible to play in the finals for any lower-ranked competition.

44.2.6 Where a Club competes in more than one competition during finals, a free interchange of players between competitions shall be permitted. However, a player shall not be eligible to play in the final series of matches of any competition unless they have played at least three (3) games in that competition or a lower competition on the BFNL competition hierarchy.

44.2.7 If a player participates in more than one (1) match on the same day during a Home and Away round, only one (1) match will be recognised for eligibility and match count purposes.

Where a player participates in multiple matches across different age groups or competitions on the same day, the match counted will be the Senior competition match within the player's registered age group.

- If a Reserves player participates in two (2) matches on the same day (i.e. Under 12 Reserves and Under 12 Seniors), the Senior match in the player's age group will be recognised as the match played.
- If a Seniors player participates in two (2) matches on the same day (i.e. Under 12 Seniors and Under 14 Reserves), the Senior match in the player's age group will be recognised as the match played.

44.2.8 No player is allowed to play in more than one (1) finals match during the same weekend of finals, except in the following case:

- When a player has first played in a Reserve competition match and is required to play in a Senior competition for the second match, due to a late change in player availability. This must not be at the expense of a registered and available player. In this case, the Club must notify the opposition and the League.

44.2.9 If a player has played more than eight (8) Home and Away games in a higher competition age group and is on the team that wins the 2nd Semi Final, skipping the Preliminary Final to go straight to the Grand Final, they cannot play in the lower competition age group during the Preliminary Final, even if both age groups are still in the competition.

44.2.10 Finals eligibility is calculated at the conclusion of the Ballarat FNL Home and Away matches. Finals matches played are not included when determining finals eligibility.

44.2.11 Permit games played outside of Ballarat FNL competitions do not count towards a player's finals eligibility.

44.2.12 Permit players from a Club outside of the Ballarat FNL cannot participate in BFNL Finals matches.

44.2.13 The BFNL Senior Competitions (Under 18.5, Reserves and Seniors) are classified as separate competitions. Any games played in these competitions will not be considered for Junior finals eligibility.

45. Independent Tribunal

The BFNL Board shall appoint persons to the Tribunal, who in their opinion, possess sufficient knowledge of Australian Football and are sufficiently qualified to completely perform the role of Chairman or Tribunal panel member. The BFNL Independent Tribunal will operate in accordance with the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

46. Match Review Panel

A Match Review Panel (MRP), shall be appointed by the BFNL Board. The MRP is an independent panel of members who shall be asked to review incidents raised by Clubs and Umpiring Associations from official league video evidence and asked to determine if a specific player or players in question may have a case to answer to under AFL Victoria Country rules, in accordance with Section 22.2 (b) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

46.1. Club Requesting Match Review Panel

If a Club wishes to have any on-field incident reviewed involving a player or official who has not been reported in a match, they must submit an Incident Referral Form by no later than 12:00pm Tuesday, following a round of matches. A \$100 lodgement fee shall apply for MRP requests and must be paid on submission of the Incident Referral Form.

- If an MRP case is requested and the MRP determines there is no case to answer to, the club who requested the case to be reviewed will be charged a \$100 fee.
- If the reported player(s) is found guilty at the Tribunal the the requesting Club shall be refunded the \$100 request fee.

If the MRP determine a player may have a case to answer to and a set penalty applies, the reported player may accept the set penalty and the requesting Club Shall be refunded the \$100 request fee.

47. Investigations

Refer to Section 5 of the AFL Vic Country Rules and Section 22 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook

48. Melee Matrix

Where a melee occurs at any football match, the following process shall be followed:

1. Umpires to complete Match Report form noting the following:
 - a) Players actively involved from the one team
 - b) Duration of the melee
 - c) Level of aggression in melee
 - d) Umpires intervention in melee

- e) Officials involved
- f) Approximate time of match melee occurred (for Match Review purposes)

2. Upon receiving notification of a melee from the match report, the League and/or Match Review Panel will review any footage (if available). The League will then use the information in the Match Report against the Melee Matrix (see appendix 2) to determine an outcome. The League will then contact the clubs involved in the melee and provide Clubs an opportunity to:

- a) Accept the resulting fine; or
- b) Dispute the details completed in the form by provision of official Club submission that outlines their version of events and witnesses who can attest to what is written.

3. The Club submission will be forwarded to the BFNL Football Manager to make final determination on:

- a) Whether the initial fine shall remain in place and apply
- b) Whether the initial fine may be reduced to a lower amount
- c) Whether the initial fine should be overturned; or
- d) Whether the initial fine should be increased

4. Clubs will be informed of the League’s final decision and sent an invoice (if applicable) that must be paid within 30 days of the invoice being issued.

Melee Details	Points
Players actively involved from one team	
1 – 4 players	1
5 – 9 players	2
10 or more players	3
Duration of melee	
Less than 30 seconds	1
30 – 60 seconds	2
More than 60 seconds	3
Level of aggression	
Low (minor wrestling, push and shove)	1
Medium (wrestling, jumper punches, etc.)	2
High (striking and/or reports)	3
Umpire intervention	
1 umpire intervening	1
2 umpires intervening	2
3 or more umpires intervening	3
Officials involved	
1 – 2 officials handling own players	1
3 or more officials handling own players	2
Any official handling opposition players	3

Penalty: Points will be tallied from the Melee Matrix above and a fine imposed as calculated below:

Melee Grading	Points Accrued	Fine
Low	5 points	\$200
Medium	6 – 10 points	\$300
High	11 or more points	\$500

In addition to the above fine, Clubs who are involved in more than one (1) melee during a season will incur further penalties as outlined below:

Melee	Additional Penalty		
First Offence	-		
Second Offence	\$500		
Third Offence	\$1,000		
Fourth Offence	\$2,000 and Coach suspended for two (2) matches		

Version Control

Version	Summary of Changes	Sections Affected	Date Approved	Approved By
1.0	Initial adoption	Various	21 Feb 2025	BFNL Board
1.1	Amendment to Finals Eligibility provisions of VFL-listed players. Amendment to Team Allocation and Interchange Players for Junior Competitions and removal of Junior Football Caps.	19.3-19.4, 39, 44.1.10	29 Oct 2025	BFNL Board
2.0	Comprehensive review of bylaws including terminology standardisation, removal of duplicated provisions, improved formatting and structural consistency and team sheet compliance. Amendments to interchange provisions and Interleague following Bylaw Committee consultation. Alignment with AFL Victoria Country Rules and National Community Football Policy Handbook. Structural renumbering and formatting improvements.	3, 7-9, 11.3, 16, 19.4, 22, 29, 41, 43, 44.1.1-44.1.2, 44.1.10, 44.2.7, 46.1, 48	25 Mar 2026	BFNL Board