



AFL
RECREATIONAL
FOOTBALL



Rule Book

THE GAME FOR EVERYONE



Australian Football League

Recreational Football

Rule Book

T H E G A M E F O R E V E R Y O N E

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General Manager AFL Game Development: David Matthews

AFL National Participation Manager: Dean Warren

AFL National Participation Projects Coordinator: Quinton Gleeson

AFL National Umpiring Development Manager: Adrian Panozzo

Editorial contributions: Lachlan Buszard – Football Victoria

Managing Director AFL Publishing: Geoff Slattery

Editor: Gary Hancock

Art Director: Sam Russell

Designers: Guy Shield, Jarrod Witcombe

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ENJOYMENT:
AFL RECREATIONAL
FOOTBALL CAN BE PLAYED
BY BOTH SEXES ... AND
IT'S HEAPS OF FUN!

AFL RECREATIONAL FOOTBALL

AFL Recreational Football has been developed to provide an opportunity for all Australian Football enthusiasts to enjoy participating in a game that has strong parallels with the traditional game. AFL Recreational Football is easy to play, is not physically demanding, can be played by all ages and genders and, most importantly, has an emphasis on fun and safety. Played in a friendly social environment, it enables people of all ages and ability levels to participate in male, female or mixed teams. This non-contact game is played between two teams of eight with an unlimited number of interchange players. Players can be interchanged at any time and as often as required. A player is dispossessed of the ball when an opponent removes one of two 'flags' attached to the player. The field has a maximum length of 100 metres, but this can be modified depending on the age and ability level of participants.

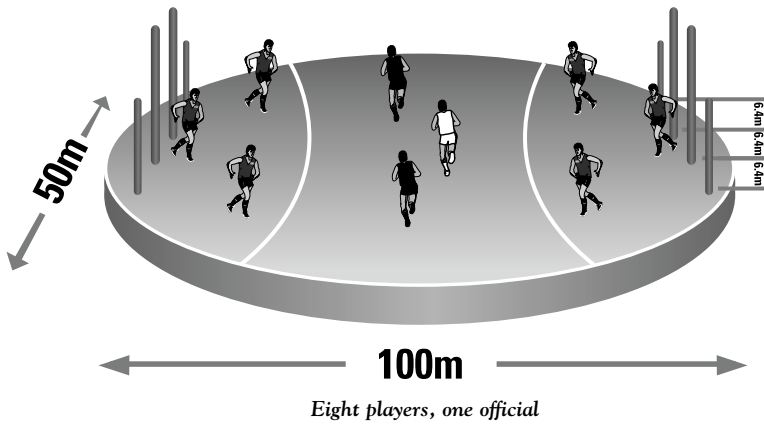
The field is divided into three zones – a mid zone and two scoring zones. Teams score by kicking the football to designated forwards in their attacking scoring zone. Forwards take a set shot for goal only after marking (catching) the ball in their scoring zone. Forwards may score only from a set shot at goal; playing on when kicking for goal is not permitted. A mark is awarded irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled.

AFL Recreational Football can be played in a variety of settings due to its social nature. The game is designed so that it can be picked up and played by a group of friends in a park or in a more structured environment at local community clubs. The game is flexible in its delivery and may be adapted to suit the age and ability level of participants and the space available. Minimal equipment is required: a footy (specific to this game), and a set of portable goalposts, markers or appropriate substitutes.

- *The following laws should be read in conjunction with the Laws of Australian Football.*

1. PLAYING FIELD AND PLAYING POSITIONS:

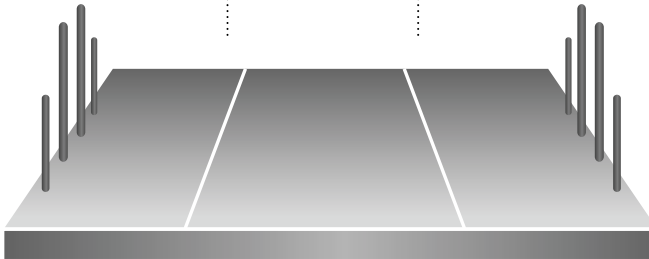
The playing ground measures a maximum 100 x 50 metres and is divided into three zones on a 20/60/20 basis. This can be modified depending on the age and ability level of participants. The field may be oval or rectangular in shape depending on facilities available. Field markers or line paint may be used to mark the boundary line and zones as illustrated below.



20m scoring zone

60m mid zone

20m back zone



The Laws of AFL Recreational Football are to be read in conjunction with the Laws of Australian Football.

2. ZONES

At the start of the match and after a goal has been scored, players must be in their zones with one defender and forward for each team starting on the goal line. Once the game is in progress, players may leave their zones, though they are not permitted to enter either team's scoring zone.

3. THE TEAM

- a. No more than eight players are per team permitted on the playing field at any one time with an unlimited number of interchange players.
- b. Interchanging of players may take place at any time and as required. However, the interchanging player must be correctly wearing a positional bib before engaging in play.
- c. Teams comprise three forwards, two centres and three backs and these players are distinguished by bibs.

MIXED COMPETITIONS

In mixed competitions, teams are required to have a maximum of five male and a minimum of three female participants on the ground at any one time. There must be a female participant in each positional line – forward, centre and back – at all times.

4. THE UMPIRE

The controlling body is to appoint an official to act as a field umpire. The sole official required for AFL Recreational Football must be accredited with a Level 1 AFL Recreational Football umpire's certificate.

5. DURATION OF THE GAME

The game will comprise 2 x 20-minute halves with no time-on. The half-time interval will be five minutes in duration.

The controlling body may vary the duration of the match and intervals depending on the age and fitness level of participants.

6. THE BALL

An AFL Recreational Football is to be used. This ball has been specially designed so it is easier to handle and to limit the distance it can be kicked due to the size of the ground. If an AFL Recreational Football is not available, a synthetic or soft touch ball is recommended.

7. DISPOSAL OF THE BALL

The ball must be disposed of by a handball or a kick (as per the Laws of Australian Football). If a player throws or hands the ball to another player, a free kick will be awarded to the opposing player.

8. START OF PLAY

- a. Choice of goal/end: the umpire shall toss a coin and the away or first-named team captain shall call heads or tails. The captain of the team that wins the toss shall choose the end to which his/her team kicks.
- b. The game shall be started by a ball-up between two centre-line players in the centre of the ground. Opponents must jump from a standing position within a half-metre radius of the ball throw-up.
- c. Both ball-up participants must engage in the ball-up and not engage in play until the ball has been possessed by one of the two remaining centre zone players.
- d. The two centre zone players not engaging in the ball-up must gain possession of the ball prior to the forward or defending players engaging in play. (The only time during the game that the ball will be in dispute is at centre ball-ups or if a ball-up is called in circumstances when the umpire is unsure which team last touched the ball before it went out of bounds – see Law 24b.)

9. GAINING POSSESSION OF THE BALL

- a. If a turnover occurs (i.e. when loose ball makes contact with the ground), the opposing team gains possession of the ball from where the ball first made contact with the ground.
- b. Players may intercept the ball in flight, but must not make contact with an opposing player.
- c. Either of two flags is removed from a player who has had prior opportunity to dispose of the ball while in possession.

10. DISPOSSESSING A PLAYER

- a. The player with the ball is dispossessed when one or both of his/her flags are completely removed by an opponent.
- b. If there has been no prior opportunity for the player in possession to dispose of the ball – even if a flag has been removed by an opposing player – play-on will be called, and the player in possession must dispose of the ball within three seconds (comp. rules).

11. RETAINING POSSESSION

A player may stay in possession of the ball for any length of time, except when a mark has been taken unless:

- a. The player has a flag correctly removed.
- b. The umpire directs the player to dispose of the football.
- c. The player doesn't comply with Law 16d.

12. BUMPING/TACKLING/BARGING

There is to be no contact or spoiling.

Players cannot:

- a. Hold an opponent with their hands.
- b. Knock the ball out of an opponent's hands.
- c. Push a player in the side.

- d. Steal the ball from another player.
- e. Deliberately bump another player.
- f. Smother an opponent's kick.
- g. Barge, fend off or chop past opponents.
- h. Touch the ball while another player has possession.

13. SHEPHERDING

A player is not permitted to push, shoulder or block an opponent not in possession of the ball.

14. SCORING

A player can shoot for goal only after marking the ball in his/her scoring zone. After marking the ball, the player may go back and take a set shot for goal. The player is not permitted to play on and shoot for goal. The player standing the mark must be inside the scoring zone. The field umpire will be the sole judge of whether the kick for goal is successful.

A penalty in the scoring zone is awarded if the umpire believes a forward would have taken a mark inside his/her scoring zone but was illegally infringed against in the marking contest. The player may take a set shot for goal.

A forward may not shoot for goal after a turnover or if the ball has gone out of bounds in the scoring zone.

If a ball is rushed over the scoring line by a forward, a free kick will be awarded and no score will be added to the total. If the defensive player rushes a ball over the scoring line, a point to the opposition will be awarded and a kick-in will take place.

In single-sex competitions, a goal is worth six (6) points. In mixed competitions, a goal scored by a male forward is worth six (6) points and by a female forward, nine (9) points.

15. RESTART OF PLAY

- a. After a goal is scored, play is restarted from the centre as in Law 8.
- b. If a behind (one point) is scored, the ball must be kicked back into play from between the goalposts by a defender.

16. MARK

- a. A mark is taken if, in the opinion of the umpire, a player catches or takes control of the football after it has been kicked by another player irrespective of the distance travelled.
- b. It is not a mark if the ball touched the ground or was touched by another player between the moment the ball was kicked and when it was caught or controlled by the player.
- c. The player determined to be in the ball flight or drop zone first is determined to have right of way in a marking contest. If both players are equal distance apart, the intended attacking player has right of way.
- d. The player who has taken the mark will have five seconds to dispose of the ball before the umpire calls 'play-on'.

17. PLAYING ON

The umpire shall call play-on when:

- a. A player, after taking a mark, runs around or over the spot (the mark) where he/she caught the ball.
- b. A player, after a turnover has occurred, runs around or over the spot (the mark) where the ball made contact with the ground due to the turnover.
- c. The ball, after being kicked, was touched in transit.
- d. A player has not had prior opportunity to dispose of the ball before a flag is removed.

18. STANDING THE MARK

- a. When a player is awarded a mark or free kick, an opposing player may stand at the position on the playing surface known as the mark, where the mark or free kick was awarded.
- b. No opposition player (except for the player on the mark) may be closer than five metres away in any direction.

19. BOUNCING THE BALL

- a. Where a player is moving while in possession of the ball, he/she must bounce the ball or touch it on the ground after 15 metres, irrespective of whether such player is running in a straight line or otherwise.
- b. A player in possession may bounce the ball only once. He/she must then dispose of it by hand or foot and may not touch it again until it has been touched by another player.

20. BALL TRANSITION

When the ball is in transition from the back zone to the team's scoring zone, it must be possessed by a different player in each zone. If this fails to occur, a free kick will be awarded to the opposition team at the point where the ball entered the scoring zone.

21. FREE KICKS

It is the spirit and intention of these laws that a free kick shall be awarded to ensure the match is played in a fair and safe manner.

A free kick may be awarded when:

- a. A flag is removed from a player who has had prior opportunity to dispose of the ball while in possession.
- b. A flag is removed when a player is not in possession of the ball.
- c. A player makes contact with another player.
- d. A player runs too far while in possession of the ball without bouncing it, or bounces the ball more than once.

- e. A player kicks the ball off the ground.
- f. The ball fails to be touched by a player in the mid zone when in transition from the team's back zone to the team's scoring zone.
- g. A turnover occurs (loose ball makes contact with the ground). The free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the position from where the ball first makes contact with the ground.

22. PLAYING THE ADVANTAGE

- a. Instead of awarding a free kick, the field umpire may allow play to continue by calling: "Advantage, play on."
- b. If the advantage called results in no advantage to the team, the umpire may call back play and award a free kick where the original incident took place.

23. FIELD BOUNCES/BALL-UPS

The ball shall be thrown up:

- a. To start play.
- b. When the umpire is unsure which team touched the ball before it went out of bounds or hit the ground.

24. OUT OF BOUNDS

- a. When the ball goes out of bounds (completely over the line) by hand or foot, the nearest opponent shall kick the ball back into play from behind the mark.
- b. If there is any doubt as to which team last touched the ball before it went out of bounds, the umpire shall call a ball-up five metres in from the boundary line.
- c. A forward may not shoot for goal if the football has gone out of bounds in his/her scoring zone.

25. KICKING OFF THE GROUND

A player is not permitted to deliberately kick the ball off the ground.

26. PLAYERS EXCEEDING PERMITTED NUMBER

The captain of a team may, at any time during a match, request that the umpire count the number of players of the opposing team on the playing field.

Where a request is made, the field umpire shall stop play at the first available opportunity and call into line players from both teams on the playing field and count the number of players.

Where a team has more than the permitted number of players on the playing field (as determined by the umpire), the following shall apply:

- a. The field umpire shall award a free kick to the captain or acting captain of the opposing team. This shall be taken in the centre of the ground or where play was stopped, whichever is the greater penalty.
- b. The team shall lose all points it has scored up to the time of the count.

27. INJURED PLAYER

Where a player is awarded a free kick or mark and, in the opinion of the umpire, that player is suffering from injury or illness preventing the player from disposing of the football, then the nearest teammate to the incident may take the kick.

28. PLAYERS' BOOTS, JEWELLERY AND PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- a. During a match, a player shall not wear any form of jewellery.
- b. Protective equipment or boots with studs or cleats or similar cannot be worn unless the field umpire is satisfied that any such item does not constitute a danger or increase the risk of injury to other players.
- c. A field umpire must inspect a player's boots or hands or any protective equipment that he/she intends to wear or use during a match. The umpire may instruct that equipment of any nature be removed or varied. Failure to follow this instruction shall make the player ineligible to play.

29. FIFTEEN-METRE PENALTY

A reportable offence results in a 15-metre penalty and a send-off. A 15-metre penalty may be awarded when a player:

- a. Oversteps the mark.
- b. Engages in time-wasting.
- c. Enters the protected five-metre area around a player who has been awarded a mark or free kick.
- d. Has not returned the football directly and on the full to the player awarded the free kick or mark.
- e. Engages in any other conduct for which a free kick would originally be awarded.

30. SEND-OFF RULE

A send-off rule will operate as follows:

- a. A player may be sent off at the discretion of the umpire for any reportable offence. The player sent off may be replaced. He/she shall take no further part in the remainder of the game (umpire issues a

red card.) The period of suspension will depend on the offence. (See chart right)

- b. A player may also be sent off by the umpire for a minor breach for a 'cooling-off' period of 10 minutes and may be replaced (umpire issues a yellow card). Two yellow cards are the equivalent of a red card.
- c. If a player accumulates two yellow cards over the course of the competition, the player will receive an automatic one-match suspension.

31. SET PENALTIES

The spirit of AFL Recreational Football is to provide participants with an easy-to-play, non-contact version of Australian Football in an enjoyable, social, fun and safe environment. Rough play, and threatening language or behaviour has no place and will not be tolerated and set penalties will be enforced.

Team captains will be informed of players who are to receive yellow or red cards.

The manager of the competition reserves the right to invoke heavier penalties if circumstances require. Repeat offenders may have their suspensions doubled from the previous time or have the prescribed penalty doubled if a different incident has occurred involving the same player.

Explanation	Penalty
Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an umpire	2 weeks
For a second offence in the same season	6 weeks
Behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to another participant	2 weeks
For a second offence in the same season	6 weeks
Disputing an umpire's decision	1 week
Using an obscene gesture	1 week
Kicking another player intentionally	4 weeks
Striking another player	2 weeks
Tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg	2 weeks
Engaging in time wasting	1 week
Charging another player	2 weeks
Throwing or pushing another player after that player has taken a mark, disposed of the football or after the football is otherwise out of play	2 weeks
Engaging in rough play against an opponent that is considered unreasonable	2 weeks
Spitting at or on another player	2 weeks
Attempting to kick another player	1 week
Attempting to strike another player	1 week
Attempting to trip another player by hand, arm, foot or leg	1 week
Intentionally shaking a goal post or behind post when another player is preparing to kick or is kicking for goal or after the player has kicked for goal and the ball is in transit	1 week
Wrestling another player	2 weeks
Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language – grade 1	1 week
Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language – grade 2	2 weeks
Failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by a field umpire	2 weeks

32. APPEALS

A player will have the right to appeal if he/she believes the umpire has made an error of judgment. The appeal must be lodged with the controlling body within 48 hours of the incident taking place. Teams will be issued with this form if a player is reported.

The appeal form must be accompanied by an appeal fee of \$50. This fee will be fully refunded if the appeal is successful. The controlling body will inform the player of the time, date and place of the hearing. Such a hearing will take place within seven days of the appeal being lodged.

A player may withdraw the appeal within the seven-day timeframe, but the fee will not be refunded.

Upon hearing the evidence at such a hearing, the Appeals Committee may:

- Uphold the on-field decision.
- Overturn the on-field decision.
- Find the player guilty of a lesser offence and impose a lighter penalty.
- Find the player guilty of a more serious offence and impose a greater penalty.
- Find the player guilty of the offence, but, in light of the circumstances, impose a lighter penalty.

The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final and there will be no further avenue for appeals.

33. ALTERNATIVE RECREATIONAL FOOTBALL RULES

TOUCH OPTION

If flag belts are not available, the following touch option can be applied:

When a player in possession of the ball is touched by an opposing player, he/she must dispose of the ball by hand or foot within three steps or three seconds or a free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.

An opposing player is not permitted to touch a player unless the player is in possession of the ball.

FOOTBALL TOUCHING THE GROUND

If the age and or skill level of the participating players is causing the ball to continuously make contact with the ground (turn over), the following option can be applied:

If the football makes contact with the ground, play continues. The ball is still in play. It is vital in this situation that there is strictly no contact.

This alternative is suited to a controlled environment such as a secondary school.



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