



# **MEN'S FOOTBALL BY-LAWS**

Revised and to be adopted 2024

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## OPERATIONAL

### 1. Interpretation

- a) **The League** - means the Millewa Football Netball League Inc and all registered members of affiliated clubs.
- b) **MFNL** - means Millewa Football Netball League.
- c) **The MFNL Board** means the MFNL Board Directors of the of the League and shall consist of a minimum of 7 members.
- d) **MUA** – means the Millewa Umpire Association.
- e) **Club** includes all affiliated clubs.
- f) **Club delegates** - refers to persons aged 18 years or over appointed by a member club to represent that club pursuant to the by-laws of the League.
- g) **Statement of Purpose & Rules** - means The Purpose and rules of the of the Millewa Football Netball League. It may otherwise be referred to as the constitution.
- h) **By-laws** - are additional rules which apply to members which generally deal with internal and administrative matters. The by-laws are made under the constitution. Accordingly, the by-laws are subordinate to the constitution and must not be inconsistent with the constitution. The League shall have a clause in the constitution that provides the power to the League to make by-laws.
- i) **Executive** - shall consist of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer of the MFNL Board.
- j) **Game** - Any game played between two (2) member clubs and played in accordance with the current official rules of Australian Football.
- k) **Round** - is a scheduled series of games as allocated by MFNL and published in the official draw. A round may consist of games played any day of the week and may be split over two or more days. Each entire weekend of the finals series constitutes a round.
- l) **Team officials** - coaches, trainers /water carriers, runners.
- m) **AFL VIC** - means Australian Football League Victoria
- n) **Leagues Operations Manager** - means person appointed to provide Administration Support to the MFNL.
- o) **Penalty Unit** - is defined as \$10.

### 2. Powers

The League shall, subject to its Statement of Purposes and rules, comply otherwise with the Laws of Australian Football (released by the AFL) and AFL Victoria Country.

Amendments to By-Laws must be made at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting provided notice of intention to amend any clause shall be sent out in the circular convening such meeting and each member shall be furnished with a draft of the proposed amendment at least fourteen days before the date of the meeting and provided that no amendment shall be made unless a simple majority of members or their proxies in attendance at the meeting vote in favour of the amendment.

In the event of an issue which deems immediate action the Board has the power to make immediate changes to these By-Laws as required and seek retrospective approval from member clubs.

The MFNL Board shall be empowered to issue fines in accordance with these Rules and By-Laws.

All fines stated in these Rules and By-Laws shall be automatically levied, however, Clubs wishing to appeal against such fines shall do so in writing to the MFNL Board.

The MFNL Board who shall have the power to confirm, reduce, amend, or withdraw such fine. The decision of the MFNL Board shall be final.

Any amendments to the AFL Vic Rules and Regulations and to the Laws of Australian Football shall automatically be included in these by-laws, and to any levels of inconsistency the AFL Vic Rules and Regulations and the Laws of Australian Football shall prevail.

### **3. Matters not Provided for**

In the event that any matter arises which is not provided for in the MFNL Statement of Purpose & Rules; in these By-Laws; or in the Rules of the Australian Football League, or the AFL Victoria Country rules, the MFNL Board shall have full power and discretion to determine such matter.

### **4. League Structure**

The MFNL shall consist of one senior grade.

The League shall comprise the following clubs: Bambill, Cardross, Gol Gol, Meringur, Nangiloc and Werrimull; and other such clubs as may be admitted to the League.

The League shall be governed by a Board of Management (herein called the MFNL Board which shall consist of at least seven persons elected by member clubs as per League Constitution).

Each Board member of the League shall hold office for a term of one, two or three years expiring at the Annual General Meeting after the date of his/her election but shall be eligible for re-election.

The Board shall have entire control and management of all matches appoint all necessary officials and employees and may do all other acts and deeds which it may consider to its interest or the game of football.

The MFNL Board reserves the right to review the position of any club or clubs in this League and to make recommendations to exclude such club or clubs from the League in accordance with the Constitution of the MFNL.

The Board may also at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose re-admit any such club or club's representation in the League upon such conditions as the Board may deem advisable in accordance with the Constitution of the MFNL.

### **5. League Operations Manager**

A Leagues Operations Manager shall be appointed annually at an agreed salary, which shall also have power to dispense with his/her services at a months' notice.

The MFNL Board may contract out to a third party for the provision of Administrative Support Services

## **6. Meetings**

The Annual General Meeting of the League shall be held within (5) five Months of the completion of the financial Year.

Additional Special General Meetings may be called at other times throughout the year as deemed necessary.

## **7. Amendments to Bylaws**

Amendments to By-Laws must be made at the Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting provided notice of intention to amend any clause shall be sent out in the circular convening such meeting and each member shall be furnished with a draft of the proposed amendment at least fourteen days before the date of the meeting and provided that no amendment shall be made unless a simple majority of members or their proxies in attendance at the meeting vote in favour of the amendment.

In the event of an issue which deems immediate action the Board has the power to make immediate changes to these By-Laws as required and seek retrospective approval from member clubs.

## **8. Admission Prices**

Admission prices will be determined by the MFNL Board prior to the commencement of each season, with sufficient time for clubs to complete their budgets for the coming year.

All visiting players and officials shall pay admission charges. Club membership tickets admit to home games only.

Gate receipts for home and away games shall be retained by the clubs, gate receipts for finals shall be retained by the MFNL Board on behalf of the League.

In the case of Mega Day the MFNL holds all rights to decide on the round and venue, all gate takings and receipts shall be retained by the MFNL Board on behalf of the league.

## **9. Change of Venue**

The Fixture Committee consisting of the Leagues Operations Manager and MFNL Board shall set each match venue prior to Christmas the year prior to the commencement of the home and away season. If required, the Board hold the right to review all match venues on a weekly basis and determine any venue change not later than 5pm on the Wednesday preceding the round of matches.

## **10. Club Officials, Notification of Office Bearers & Annual Reports**

The Leagues Operations Manager shall circulate each year a Club Information Review Form to be completed and returned by a date nominated by the MFNL Board.

Clubs must inform the League of any change of personnel after submission of the form or changes of communications details for any individual listed on the form.

All affiliated Clubs must, notify the Leagues Operations Manager, in writing, of the names of all office bearers, their address, telephone number(s) and email address. Clubs must also submit to the League a copy of their audited Annual Report as presented at their

Annual General Meeting by the End of March. Failure to provide a copy of a clubs audited Annual Report will see the Millewa Football & Netball League impose a fine of 10 penalty units.

## **11. Working with Children Checks**

Clubs are responsible for ensuring that all Team Officials undergo a Working with Children Check. Forms can be collected from any Post Office and WWCC are free of charge for volunteers. It is the responsibility of the club to have all Club Officials who have contact with children under the age of 18 undergo a WWCC. The club must then keep records of each Club Official's WWCC check.

## **12. MFNL Record**

Each Club shall submit weekly Club notes for the 'MFNL match report record" or any other title deemed appropriate by the board, no later than Tuesday 5pm prior to the next round of matches.

Club notes shall not contain offensive words or subject matter and shall be used to promote the activities of the Club.

The Leagues Operations Manager shall be the Editor of the 'MFNL match report record" located on the MFNL website on behalf of the MFNL Board who shall be the Publisher.

The MFNL shall have the power to edit or withdraw any Club notes that are deemed to be detrimental to the interests of the MFNL.

The 'MFNL match report record" shall be published in such versions, numbers, and formats as the MFNL Board shall direct.

## **13. Club Levies & Statement**

The MFNL Board will determine the club Levies at a Board Meeting prior to the commencement of each season, giving clubs sufficient notice for budgeting purposes.

The Club Levy will be set by the MFNL Board prior to the commencement of the season, at a Board Meeting. Clubs will be invoiced in instalments throughout the year, with the number of instalments confirmed each year upon the adoption of the MFNL Budget. Failure to provide payment in full along with the invoice receipt within such time frame will incur a 10-penalty unit fine.

The Club Levy is calculated to cover the following direct expenses:

- Umpires
- Record
- Balls
- Administration
- Other items determined by the MFNL Board.

## **14. Interleague Policy**

When applicable, The League expects all member clubs to support the Interleague campaign (when played) and encourage players and officials who are selected to participate. From time to time, the League may approach clubs for the use of its facilities for training and/or matches.



The Match Committee, comprising of four Selectors plus one Chairman of Selectors and the Coach, shall coordinate the selection of the training squad, and from time to time any additions or deletions can be made.

All squad members (fit & injured) are expected to attend training unless excused by the coach or a member of the selection panel. Players who fail to attend training without notification or make themselves unavailable for Interleague may incur a suspension of a minimum of one match.

MFNL Board. All senior Interleague representatives will be supplied with playing shorts and socks if selected to represent the MFNL league.

## **15. Submission of Selected Sides**

Each club must submit their completed team lists into the Play HQ system at least ½ hour prior to the commencement of their game with enough time to print out and use as the club's official team sheet for match days.

The Official team sheet shall include the jumper number, registration number of each player, trainer / water carrier, runner, coach and up to 3 club officials. (The correct number of players allowed must be entered, changes may be made on the day up until the team sheet is handed to the umpires).

The jumper numbers on the official team sheet must be as per the Team List in the MFNL Game Day Record published by the MFNL or on other mediums used to publish them by the League.

All grades must print off copies of their team sheet from the system. Team sheets must represent a 100% accurate account of the players who take the field on a weekly basis.

Team sheets must be handed to the field umpires and opposing team manager ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled start times.

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 the Play HQ system immediately following each game in time for submission of results deadline. Refer to By-Law 13. Any changes made must also be replicated on any other team sheet in circulation on the day.

## **16. Submission of Final Results**

All clubs will be responsible for the submission of final results immediately following the completion of each game. It will be the responsibility of the HOME club to enter the final scores of each game however each club is responsible for entering their own best players and goal kickers for every match.

The deadline for submission of best players and goal kickers results for each match is the 5 pm Monday following the match. For night matches, the deadline will be 10pm Sunday. All final scores, best players and goal kickers must be submitted by this time, clubs failing to meet this deadline shall incur a penalty of 5 penalty units per offence.

## **17. Incorrect Team Sheet Listings**

In the case where a club submits their team sheet prior to the start of the match to the Umpires and Opposition and it has been determined that specific players, who end up participating in the same match and have not been included on the official team sheet for that match, shall be subject to penalties as deemed appropriate by the MFNL Board of Directors.

Penalties may be distributed in the way of a fine, the loss of premiership points and percentage or a combination of both, depending on the set of circumstances surrounding the scenario. These penalties are on top of those issued for breaching other MFNL By-Laws in relation to the selection of sides.

## **18. Live Scores**

For Senior competition football matches, it will be the responsibility of the HOME club to conduct at a minimum ¼ by ¼ live scores via Play HQ. Failure of a club to conduct the live scores service (without a valid excuse) shall incur a fine of 10 penalty units.

## **19. Media Commitments**

Each club should attempt to make personnel available to the media as requested in order to aid the promotion of the League.

## **20. Umpires**

The MFNL Umpires may be required to register with the League and conform to such conditions as are laid down by the League. Compensation for the Umpires' injuries will not be a League responsibility. However, a proportion of any premium paid for this purpose may be reimbursed by the league  
In the event of an umpire becoming injured or unable to continue during a match, any person agreed to by the opposing captains shall act as Umpire. Should the captains fail to agree, a senior official of the Home Club must appoint, a replacement.

## **21. League Passes**

League passes shall admit to all home and away matches. These passes shall be issued to Life Members, League Board members and other such officials of the MFNL or persons as determined by the MFNL Board.

The following outlines what passes entitle bearer to:

### **Ticket Admits**

- MFNL Board Pass - bearer, guest & vehicle
- MFNL Sponsors Tickets - bearer, guest & vehicle
- MFNL Umpires Pass - bearer only
- MFNL Media Ticket - bearer only
- MFNL Life Member Pass- bearer & guest

## **22. Life Membership**

The major criteria must be service to the League, and such service must incorporate recognisable achievement over a period of time. Guidelines for life membership requirements can be located in the MFNL Statement of Purpose and Rules. Refer to MFNL Life Member Nomination form.

### **23. Affiliation**

- a) The League shall admit such Football Netball Clubs as it may from time to time determine provided such Football Netball Clubs comply or are capable of complying with the Rules and these By-Laws and the Regulations of AFL Victoria Country.
- b) Each Football Netball Club affiliated with the League during the previous season shall be deemed to be an affiliated member of the League for the following season subject to payment of such affiliation fees as are specified and fixed by the League at its Annual General Meeting and any other outstanding monies due to the League.

### **24. Affiliation Fee**

- a) Each affiliated Club shall pay to the League such affiliation fee as is fixed at a Board meeting of the League.
- b) Affiliated Clubs neglecting or refusing to pay its affiliation fee; its declared share of any loss that may be incurred; any levy that may be made; or any fine as imposed by the Rules or these By-Laws, and such failure or refusal continues for one month after due notice has been given by the MFNL Board, shall be subject to the next following By-Law, be subject to expulsion.

### **25. Expulsion**

A two thirds majority of members of the League present at a Special General Meeting called for that purpose, may expel such Club from the MFNL League or take such other action as it may determine in relation to the Club's affiliation with the League or permit its continued affiliation on such terms and conditions as it may deem advisable.

### **26. Fixturing/Fixture procedure**

The MFNL Board shall arrange the programming of all matches and shall have the power to re-arrange the order of games and the grounds upon which matches are to be played if at any time, the question of suitability or availability of grounds arises.

The Leagues Operations Manager, in conjunction with the MFNL Board, shall determine the fixture for each season. Each club shall be entitled to make a submission to the League on issues to be taken into consideration, although no guarantee is made that all or any situations will be catered for.

Such submission should be received by the League not later than a date as nominated by the League Operations Manager, for the following season. The fixture will be released publicly prior to Christmas each year, for the following season.

### **27. Practice Matches**

Where pre-season practice matches are played, with official MFNL umpires in control, both competing teams in all grades shall complete a 'team sheet' signed by all competing players and guernsey numbers.

Team sheets shall be delivered to the umpire/s prior to the commencement of the game.

In practice matches, umpires may report players as per the 'Laws of the Game'.

## 28. Other Matches

No affiliated Club shall, without the prior approval of the MFNL Board, engage in any match other than those programmed.

Any MFNL club wishing to take part in any football competition that is not administered by the Millewa Football & Netball League, must write to the MFNL Leagues operations Manager seeking approval from the MFNL Board to compete. This excludes any pre-season competition organised by a club outside the league.

## 29. Points/Match Ratio system

In each season, the clubs shall play up to (18) rounds, hereafter referred to as the 'home and away' matches, according to the fixture prepared by the MFNL Board each season. (or such number and configuration of matches as determined by the MFNL Board in extraordinary circumstances such as Covid-19)

The MFNL will use the **Match Ratio System** to determine ladder positions each season

In the home and away series, four (4) points will be allotted for a win, four (4) points for a team in whose favour a forfeit or walkover, two (2) points for a draw and zero (0) points for a bye or loss.

At the conclusion of each round of home and away matches, the Leagues Operations Manager shall prepare using the Match Ratio System a ladder for each Grade. Including games played, won, lost, drawn, forfeit/walkover, bye, points for and points against for each team.

In the event that selection for the finals series is between teams with the same match ratio percentage, the team with the most wins will be entitled to participate in the final's series ahead of a team with lesser wins.

In the event that teams are level on match ratio percentage and wins, the higher position on the ladder shall be determined in the following manner.

- a) the team that has scored the most points 'for' shall be awarded the higher position on the ladder.
- b) in the event that the teams cannot be separated, the team that has recorded the least points 'against' shall be awarded the higher position on the ladder
- c) in the event that the teams cannot be separated, as in (a) or (b), the effected teams shall compete in a 'play off' match under such conditions as the MFNL Board deems appropriate.

The scores used by the MFNL to calculate the Match Ratio ladder for each grade shall be based on the scores contained in the official goal umpire cards uploaded onto Play HQ.

### 30. Forfeiture

If any Club forfeits a match, provided such opposing Club has a completed team sheet, four points shall be awarded to the Premiership score of the opposing Club, which also shall have added to its percentage account, the average number of goals and behinds scored in matches against the defaulting Club during the season with the exception of round 1 were the average scores for and against in other games conducted in round 1 will be applied.

Fines may be imposed by the MFNL to Clubs who forfeit scheduled fixtures or any scheduled match within the Millewa Football Netball League.

The following fines may apply -

- Senior Football 30 penalty units

### 31. Calling off Games

The Millewa Football Netball League has a fixture committee comprising of the Leagues Operations Manager and MFNL Board who shall monitor the condition of venues and make a judgement call as to whether matches shall proceed for a given round. Individual matches called off by clubs are deemed as forfeiture and nil points awarded for the fixture.

If agreement is reached between clubs to call off a match, it is to be in writing, endorsed by the controlling umpire on the day and forwarded to the League Operations Manager immediately and premiership points shall be shared. For all other matters not catered for in this By-Law, refer to the AFL Laws of the Game in the AFL Victoria Country handbook.

Team sheets must still be submitted for games even in the event that a match is called off. In the event of a forfeit, the opposing team shall submit a team sheet and those players named are deemed to have played in the game. This information is important when determining finals eligibility.

In the event where a suspended player is a representative of the non-forfeiting side, these games shall count as games served in reference to the suspension the player in question has received.

**31.1** In the event that a game does not reach its conclusion, due to factors which may include (but not necessarily be restricted to): -

- a) An invasion of the playing arena of which the umpire/s consider it unsafe to continue and are not able to resume play after a reasonable time
- b) A player or umpire is so seriously injured that it is deemed inappropriate to move him until medical assistance arrives
- c) If in the opinion of the umpire/s, the playing conditions deteriorate to a level that make it unsafe to continue
- d) That if in the course of a night match, the power supply fails.

- 31.2** Where a Senior match has been delayed due to factors as in 29.1, play may continue until no more than thirty (30) minutes beyond the estimated finishing time if in the opinion of the umpire that adequate light permits
- a) The minimum amount of playing time to be completed for a match to be considered 'completed', shall be one half
  - b) If the match is deemed to be abandoned prior to the completion of the first half, both teams shall be awarded two (2) Premiership points and will receive the points scored for and against at the abandonment of the game
  - c) If a match is deemed to be abandoned after the completion of one half of the match, the Premiership points shall be awarded to the team leading at the time of the abandonment of the game, notwithstanding, the Board shall retain the right to over-rule, reverse or amend the result following an investigation into the abandonment of the game
- 31.3** Umpires shall award votes for the Best and Fairest Award where a game has completed one half. No votes shall be awarded where a game is abandoned prior to the completion of the first half.

## **32. Match Day Paperwork**

The home club is responsible for accurately entering each game results into Play HQ database by 6pm on the day of the match. For night matches, the deadline will be 10pm. Game results information includes quarter by quarter scores and final score, best players (1 to 6), goals score per player.

It is the responsibility of the home club to ensure that all match day paperwork is entered into play HQ by 5pm on the second working day following the game. Failure to comply shall result in a fine of 10 Penalty Units.

The following match day paperwork will be required to be submitted in play HQ

<b>Seniors</b>
League B&F vote cards (sealed)
Goal Umpire Cards
Match Results Sheets (including yellow card/order off)
Match Day Report sheets

## **33. Scoreboards**

Each venue used for MFNL must be equipped with an operational scoreboard. Scoreboard attendants must be of a suitable age and competent to do a satisfactory job.

Scoreboards should operate throughout all games and must be kept as accurate as possible. Clubs must supply scoreboard attendants for each game.

A fine of 10 penalty units will be issued for each game where the scoreboard fails to be attended and/or operational.

### **34. Match Report Sheet**

It is the responsibility of the home club to ensure that umpires fill out and sign off on a match report sheet for each competing team in each football game have it inserted in the match day paperwork envelope. Penalty 10 units per offence.

### **35. Umpire – Officials HQ**

All Umpires will be required to confirm their allocation the day before the match via Officials HQ.

### **36. Use of Two Footballs**

In the event of extreme weather conditions, two 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 footballs. If no agreement is met, only one football may be used.

### **37. Ground Lighting**

If natural light is deteriorating during a game, Clubs or Umpires shall have the authority to turn on ground lighting to improve conditions to allow a fixture to continue. The Umpire shall however have the authority to call a game off if he/she considers the conditions unsafe.

Prior to a venue being considered suitable for night or twilight games, clubs must apply to the League for permission to host a night or twilight game, and meet criteria as determined by the League.

### **38. Outstanding Debt to League**

All clubs must ensure any outstanding debt to the League **does not exceed 60 days** from the date of the invoice. The following process shall apply to clubs who have outstanding debt that reaches the 60-day mark:

- a) Clubs shall be given written formal notice and provided with seven (7) days to pay all outstanding debt exceeding 60 days.
- b) Should a club fail to pay the full amount that has exceeded 60 days within the seven (7) day period provided, the MFNL Board shall determine which of the following penalty/ies may be applied:
  - Additional financial penalty at the discretion of the MFNL Board

- Loss of premiership points for the current and/or following season, which may be applied at the discretion of the MFNL Board
- c) Clubs who have any debt exceeding 60 days on the 1st August in each season, and where and unless approval has been given by the Board, may be deemed ineligible to compete in the Leagues finals series. In addition, the club will not be considered eligible to host any finals matches or provided with any Catering/Bar rights.
  - d) All clubs must settle all outstanding debts with the League prior to the League's AGM in each year.
  - e) Clubs who carry debt into the new year may be subject to the above stated penalties in point b) being applied for the upcoming season.

Clubs may apply to the MFNL Board for special consideration by providing a written submission outlining how the club's debt has exceeded 60 days and outlining the club's commitment to a repayment plan to clear in full all debt in a timely manner. Submissions will only be accepted on club letterhead submitted via email and if the MFNL Board is satisfied that the above criteria is met.

## DISCIPLINARY

### 39. Melee Rule

#### Definition

An incident involving six (6) or more players and/or officials who are pushing, grappling, wrestling or otherwise struggling with one another and which, in the opinion of the umpire(s) is likely to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute or prejudice the interests or reputation of the MFNL or the competitions conducted by the MFNL.

#### Incident and Penalty Procedure

- a) In the event of a melee taking place and following three (3) continued instructions from the umpire(s) to break up the melee, if the melee continues, the umpire(s) shall report the incident to the league. The match appointed field umpire(s) shall record on the umpire's match report at the conclusion of the game and incident where the melee has taken place. This will include the quarter and the position on the field where the melee took place.
- b) Such form shall be signed by the umpire(s) and a copy of the umpire match report containing notification of the incident given to each club as per normal match day procedure.
- c) If clubs are reported for a melee a fine of \$500 per club will be charged
- d) All melees occurring during MFNL finals games will be referred directly to the MFNL Board for consideration regarding penalty.

### 40. Codes of Conduct

The MFNL has adopted various codes of conduct, which include (and are available from the league website):



- Football - Coaches Code of Conduct
- Football - Players Code of Conduct
- Football - Club Officials Code of Conduct
- Football - Parent & Spectator Code of Conduct
- Football - Club Umpire Code of Conduct
- Football - AFL Safeguarding Children & Young People Code of Conduct (refer to AFL Website)

Throughout the process of dealing with code of conduct breaches, the club and offending member(s) or supporters will provide their full cooperation to the MFNL and provide information as requested within the stated timelines outlined by the MFNL.

Breaches to any Code of Conduct may result in penalties being applied to the club.

#### **41. Investigations**

Any investigation requested by a club must be lodged in writing with the league secretary within 5 business days after the act or incident, accompanied by a fee of \$100 deposited into the MFNL bank account.

Within 2 days of the request for an investigation the league will advise all parties notification of the investigation including outlining details of the requested incident or matter for investigation.

When the Board conducts an investigation, they shall provide at least 48 hours' notice to a club notifying of any interviews. Interviews will be conducted over the phone or at a place to be determined by the Board.

Fees deposited under this rule should be dealt with, as the Board sees fit.

#### **42. Independent Tribunal**

- a) The MFNL Board, shall appoint an Independent Tribunal panel annually, of no less than (5) five members, (3) three of whom shall form quorum for any meeting of the Tribunal.
- b) The Tribunal shall convene as directed by the Board Secretary, Board Director of Football or the Leagues Operations Manager.
- c) For reports arising for League matches the Tribunal will convene at 7:30 pm of the following Tuesday, or as directed the Board Secretary, Board Director of Football or the Leagues Operations Manager.
- d) The Tribunal may adjourn any hearing from time to time as it deems appropriate.
- e) Member clubs shall be responsible for the attendance at Tribunal meetings of all player, officials and witnesses involved in any report and also for representation of any charged player by an advocate who may be a board appointee or a club delegate but shall not be a member of the legal profession.
- f) Reporting umpires may be represented by an umpire's advocate who shall not be a member of the legal profession.
- g) If the umpire is unable to attend the hearing, written evidence may be submitted in accordance with the AFL Vic. Rules.
- h) Video evidence is permitted at Tribunal hearings; however, the charged player and the umpire/s must have the opportunity to view the video prior to the hearing

- i) The Tribunal shall have the power to disqualify for a period it deems fit within accordance with the Rules of the Victorian Country Football League any player or official found guilty of an offence as charged and/or any player who without reasonable excuse has failed to attend a Tribunal meeting.
- j) The Tribunal Procedure shall be in accordance with the AFL Vic Handbook – Tribunal Procedure.
- k) For the application of Prescribed Penalties, refer to AFL Vic Rules.

### **Statutory Declarations**

Statutory Declarations may be accepted if any party to a report (ie. the reported player, the player allegedly offended against and the reporting umpire), is unable to attend owing to work or study commitments, or in the case of illness or injury.

**Note:** A “letter” submitted as evidence will not suffice, and the Statutory Declaration must be signed by a certified signatory (E.g., Justice of Peace, Police Officer, Teacher etc.) and date stamped at least 12 hours earlier than the scheduled start time for a tribunal case.

Providing the MFNL is notified as early as possible after the report (no later than 12pm Monday), and that such Statutory Declaration is lodged with the MFNL no later than 12 hours prior to start time on the day of the hearing, the Statutory Declaration may be accepted.

Any Statutory Declaration submitted must set out:

- a) The reason for the missing party’s inability to attend the hearing of the person cannot attend the Tribunal on the scheduled night
- b) A full description of the incident (or incidents) being the subject of the report. This must include – Time of incident (e.g., early in 3rd quarter), location of incident (e.g. right side wing), location of ball, any provocation, details of incident (e.g. blow with right hand), force of blow, result of impact / collision / blow, etc.

Any reported player who fails to attend or fails to submit a Statutory Declaration as outlined above, or fails to give notice as above, may have the charge or charges heard in their absence.

Similarly, any witness who fails to attend or submit a Statutory Declaration or fails to give notice as above, may be dealt with as the Tribunal sees fit. Any such non-attendance may result in action as determined by the Tribunal and can includes fines upon a Club or the suspension of the player.

### **Advocates / Appearance**

The MFNL also requires that both the reported player and the offended player / witness bring along a competent Club Advocate with them to the hearing.

The MFNL also requires that both the reported player and the offended player / witness, and their advocates, do dress in an appropriate manner (minimum of smart casual or Club attire) that recognizes and respects the sanctity of the Tribunal.

Anyone who is a Barrister or Solicitor or is qualified to act as a Barrister or Solicitor is prohibited from acting as an Advocate.

### **Video/DVD Evidence**

If clubs wish to use their own video/DVD evidence they must provide a signed Statutory Declaration, which certifies that the video/DVD has not been altered or tampered with. League video evidence does not require a statutory declaration to be used as part of any tribunal case or investigation.

#### **43. Decisions Final**

Notwithstanding any appeals to the AFL Victoria Country Appeals Board, the Tribunal's decisions and penalties shall be final and such penalties may extend beyond its term of office.

#### **44. Lack of Quorum**

In the absence of a Quorum at a meeting of the Tribunal, or if for any other reason it is unable to meet, any players charged shall be eligible to play for their Club until the matter is heard and determined by the Tribunal. In the event of a member of the Tribunal reporting a player or an official of a Club, such person charged shall be dealt with by the officers of the League.

#### **45. Player Unavailability for Tribunal Hearing**

In instances where a charged player is unable to attend a scheduled hearing of the MFNL Independent Tribunal, he/she shall be ineligible to play until the matter is heard and determined by the Tribunal.

#### **46. Club Umpire Reporting Powers**

Under AFL Victoria Country Rules and MFNL By-Laws any person who takes the field and acts as an Umpire does have the full powers of an "officially accredited" Umpire, and therefore can report or send off players at their discretion.

Volunteer Club Umpires who lodge a report are also represented by an advocate at any subsequent tribunal hearings.

It is further worth noting the following rules from the AFL Victoria Country Rules Handbook to clear up any confusion – In the AFL Victoria Country Rule Book the definition of an umpire includes all field, boundary and goal umpires officiating or at a match.

Therefore, once we establish that any Volunteer Club Umpires are "official umpires" they have an obligation to report as part of their duties as an umpire.

To ensure that your Volunteer Club Umpires are registered as Volunteer Club Umpires and that they have the full power as outlined above, all Clubs must ensure that these Volunteers do complete the official AFL Victoria Country Clearance/Registration Form – circling the Registration field, and then write at the top of this form "CLUB UMPIRE". The League shall then register these Umpires with the AFL Victoria Country Football Development Manager as a Club Umpire. Clubs must also carry out this step to ensure that your Club Umpire is covered by the AFL Victoria Country Insurance Policy.

#### **47. Comments in the Media**

Any Club Member (player or official) found to have made inappropriate comments in the media towards a member of the MFNL or AFL Victoria Country shall be fined an amount at the discretion of the Board.

The MFNL Board shall decide appropriateness of the comments made and the offending party will be given the opportunity to explain their actions prior to a fine being handed down.

#### **48. Teams not Breaking from the Huddle**

When the single siren is blown to indicate the end of a break the club/s not breaking from the huddle will be fined 5 penalty units per occasion with clubs to be named on the umpire's match report sheet.

#### **49. Leaving Playing Field**

Seniors shall be permitted to leave the playing field during the half time interval - including the Finals Series.

Failure of Clubs to return to the playing field by the specified time will result in a fine of 2 Penalty Units per Minute being applied.

#### **50. Late Appearance**

Clubs who fail to appear on the playing arena at the scheduled time shall receive a fine of 2 penalty units per minute. The offence shall be recorded by the officiating Umpire on the match report sheet following the match and the club will be informed of their fine by the Leagues Operations Manager. Umpires have the ability to start the game after repeated warnings.

#### **51. Incorrect Program Listings**

Players participating who are not listed in the program or are listed with a number that does not correspond to the number worn during a match may be fined 5 penalty units.

#### **52. Bringing the MFNL into Disrepute**

Any club that in the view of the MFNL Board brings the MFNL into disrepute can be fined any amount as determined by the MFNL Board. In such instances clubs will be given the opportunity to show due course as to why further action should not be taken against them.

#### **53. Suspension**

In the event of the Tribunal deciding at any time that a player of any Club shall not be permitted to play, the club upon receiving such notice from the Leagues Operations Manager of the League shall discontinue to play such player until such notice is withdrawn by the Tribunal.

#### **54. Disqualifications**

A Club expelling a player or official from its Club shall forward within a week of such decision, particulars of such person and offence to the Leagues Operations Manager of the League and the Regional Manager of AFL Victoria Country – Wimmera Mallee Region. The person so expelled shall have the right of appeal against his expulsion to the MFNL Board.

No Club shall be permitted to play such player, nor shall an official be entitled to hold office until his appeal has been determined by the League.

## **55. Unauthorised Entry onto Playing Arena**

Any Player or Official who enters the playing arena during a match including intervals and somehow involves themselves in any type of incident shall receive an automatic four (4) match suspension. Suspensions are subject to approval from the MFNL Board and further sanctions may also apply depending on the severity of the incident.

Supporters from clubs who conduct similar behaviour shall be banned from attending MFNL matches for a period of time to be determined by the MFNL Board.

## **AWARDS**

Annual Presentations may be held with the format and venue to be determined annually by the MFNL Board.

## **56. McDonald Medal Best Player Award**

- An award known as the McDonald Medal shall be made each year to the fairest and best player or player in the competition.
- Runners-up shall also be recognised with an award.
- Secret voting for the McDonald Medal shall be made by the Central Umpires officiating at all senior grade matches. As well as an official of each team involved in the match.
- selection to receive two votes, and number three selection to receive one vote. They shall then hand the sealed envelope to the home club official.
- The Field Umpires officiating, shall immediately following the conclusion of the match, select their idea of the three fairest and best players in the match. They shall then number one, two and three in order of preference in a sealed addressed envelope their three nominations. Their number one nomination to receive three votes, number two selection to receive two votes, and number three selection to receive one vote. They shall then hand the sealed envelope to the home club official.
- In the event that the two Central Umpire system is in operation, then the two Central Umpires shall confer and agree upon a joint nomination.
- At the end of the minor rounds of matches, the League shall gather all votes made during the minor rounds and the votes shall be counted and the player or players receiving the largest number of votes shall be awarded the award. In the case of an equal number of votes being awarded to more than one player, then players receiving such equal number of votes shall be declared joint winners and separate awards shall be struck and awarded.
- Any player who has incurred disqualification during the season shall be ineligible to receive the award unless they have been suspended for the following reasons: Time Wasting, Wrestling, or refusing to play inter-league football for the MFNL. Players who are suspended from an incident that occurred while playing inter-league football will be eligible to win the award.

- Clubs will be invoiced for 20 tickets with the option to purchase more to the MFNL presentation night which is the premier evening on the MFNL calendar.
- No Club shall conduct a function on the same date as an official MFNL Function. This shall include, but not be limited to, the Annual Presentation Dinner, MFNL and/or League Vote Counting Night/Day and the MFNL Annual General Meeting.

### **57. Best Player Award**

- An award known as the Best Player Award shall also be awarded each year to the player who is deemed to be the best player by the clubs in the competition.
- Voting for the Best Player Award shall be made by the Officials of each team involved in the match shall at the conclusion of the match, select their idea of the three fairest and best players in the match. They shall then number one, two and three in order of preference in a sealed addressed envelope their three nominations. Their number one nomination to receive three votes, number two.
- A runner-up shall also be awarded at the end of each season.
- At the end of the minor rounds of matches, the League shall gather all votes made during the minor rounds and the votes shall be counted and the player or players receiving the largest number of votes shall be awarded the award. In the case of an equal number of votes being awarded to more than one player, then players receiving such equal number of votes shall be declared joint winners and separate awards shall be struck and awarded.

### **58. Leading Goal Kicker**

Each game a goalkicking tally shall be recorded for each team, at the end of the minor season the player that has kicked the most goals in the MFNL home and away season shall be awarded the Leading Goal Kicker Award.

### **59. Team of the Year**

Team of the Year shall be voted on by teams within the MFNL. These votes must be completed after the minor season has finished and prior to the completion of the final's series. All clubs will be issued a sheet of eligible players and their playing positions, they must select from this list and may not vote for anyone within their own club. Once all votes have been collected the MFNL Board will finalise Team of the Year and this will be presented at the MFNL Presentation evening.

### **60. Best Defender Award**

Team officials at the conclusion of each home and away match must nominate (2) two and (1) one points to the best defenders from the opposing team, these must be sealed in an envelope and handed to the home team official. On the completion of the minor season the player with the most votes will be awarded the Best Defender Award at the MFNL presentation night.

### **61. Other Awards**

Other awards may be awarded annually pursuant to such guidelines as may be determined by the MFNL Board annually.

The MFNL Board shall have the power to award naming rights to these awards in any Grade.

## **62. Premiership Awards**

The Premiership team of each grade shall receive a Premiership Cup, Flag and the match ball mounted and labelled.

Each player and the coach/s of the Premiership team shall receive a 'Premiership Medal' at the conclusion of the Grand Final.

Each player and coach/s of the Runners Up teams shall receive a runner up medallion.

The player nominated as the 'Best on Ground' shall receive a medal to recognise their achievement, at the conclusion of the Grand Final.

## **OFFICIALS**

### **63. Coaches/Umpires Meetings**

A Maximum of 4 Meetings may be convened annually between MFNL, Coaches and representatives of the MUA. The structure of the meetings will be determined by the league with meetings relating to football matters.

Meetings of the football subcommittee shall meet as required at the discretion of the MFNL Board Director of Football.

A penalty of 5 penalty units per coach for non-attendance will be imposed on the offending club.

### **64. Ground Manager**

For match days, the Secretary, or an approved representative/s of the Home Club in any match arranged by the League, or alternatively (during finals) a person so appointed by the MFNL Board, shall be regarded as Ground Manager.

The Ground Manager's duties shall include the supervision of arrangements for the proper conduct of such matches and may include:

- Ensure Game Day Checklist (Ground Audit) has been completed and signed by both clubs
- Ensuring Match Day Pre Game and Post Game paperwork is completed
- Be aware of the Extreme Weather policy – stop in play, changing of balls etc
- Be aware of who is allowed in the interchange and on field of play
- Be aware of Spectator Behaviour and be assertive in asking for behaviours to be modified, code of conducts are meant to be followed
- Be aware of player numbers, yellow card, send off and Mercy rules

Any club who fails to supply a Ground Manager, a penalty of 10 penalty units shall apply.

## **65. Stretchers**

Clubs must ensure a sports medicine approved 'MES Scoop Frame' style stretcher is placed at the interchange area. It is recommended an additional stretcher is also placed at the interchange area. Failure to comply shall result in a fine of 10 Penalty Units.

## **66. Coaches Accreditation**

All Coaches within the MFNL shall be registered with the MFNL and shall be so accredited to the level as determined by the AFL Victoria Coaches Accreditation policy.

This policy is provided to clubs prior to the commencement of the season and is available from AFL Victoria Football Development Managers.

## **67. Officials in Bench Area**

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

Clubs competing in the MFNL competition are permitted to have up to 4 officials (including Coach, Asst Coach, Chairman of Selectors, etc) within the marked confines of the Interchange box.

Furthermore, Clubs are permitted to have up to two (2) runners, six (6) trainers and/or water carriers, and four (4) interchange players. Clubs will be allowed to use an additional two (2) water carriers in extreme weather conditions; however, this must be approved by the Umpire.

All, apart from Trainers and Water Carriers, are to remain seated in the coach's box during play, or within the confines of the perimeter lines surrounding the Coach's Box. If no lines are marked, all must remain within the confines of the Coach's Box.

If there is insufficient space within the coach's box, or no box is provided, then remaining officials are to be situated outside the boundary line.

Trainers and Water carriers may be spread around the ground but must be positioned against the fence and not on the boundary line when at rest. All other personnel not mentioned above are considered unauthorised, and umpires have been instructed to remove them from the ground.

Any Club desiring authorisation of any other officials must apply to the League for such authorisation, prior to the commencement of the match.

Coaches and their coaching staff who don't remain within the perimeter lines surrounding the coach's box may be penalised 10 penalty units per offense.

## **68. Club Runner**

Refer to AFL Victoria Country Handbook, "Runners". Clubs may use up to two (2) club runners for each match however only one (1) runner is permitted to be on the field of play at any time. There is no requirement for runners to use the interchange gate.

Shall during any match wear only an approved MFNL runners' uniform.

Enters the playing arena for the purpose of delivering a message or instruction of a coach to a player of the Club or other similar purpose.



Exits the playing arena immediately upon fulfilling their task.

Does not cajole, or in any way attempt to influence the conduct or performance of any player or players present on the playing arena.

Does not communicate, provoke or in any way interfere with any umpire or any player from the opposing club during any match.

The officiating field umpire, may upon infringement of this By-Law, order the runner of the offending club from the arena.

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

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

## **69. Trainers/Water Carriers**

Each Club must have a minimum of one (1) AFL Vic Level One accredited trainer present during the entire match in which a team is fielded by the Club.

A qualified trainer must be registered with AFL Vic in play HQ. No approval shall be given unless the person seeking it is qualified as a Level One accredited trainer with the AFL Vic.

There shall be a maximum number of six (6) trainers/watercarriers to be registered for each team.

No trainer/watercarrier shall enter the playing arena unless-

- a. The trainer/watercarrier is wearing the correct attire provided by the club.
- b. The trainer/water carrier is required for medical treatment of an injured player, the replacement of damaged attire of a player, give the players a drink or other like purpose.

No trainer/water carrier shall communicate, provoke or in any way interfere with the umpire or any player from the opposing Club during any match. Nothing in this clause shall be construed to prevent a trainer attending to assist an injured person.

Trainers/water carriers may be stationed at various positions in the area around the playing arena between the boundary and the fence.

Trainers/Water carriers shall be a minimum age of fourteen (14) years old.

All trainers and Water Carriers shall be listed on the official team sheet for each game.

The sole duty of a water carrier shall be to convey water to players and to immediately leave the playing arena'.

The sole duty of a trainer shall be to render medical assistance and he/she may carry water.

The officiating field umpire may, upon infringement of this rule, order the trainer or water carrier of the offending club from the arena.'

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

## **70. Timekeepers**

One responsible timekeeper is to be provided by each club. Each club shall be responsible for the provision of a time clock or stop-watch.

This By-law shall also apply to finals matches.

The matches shall be played in accordance with the starting times and intervals set out in 92. *Commencing Times*

A siren, bell, or gong, capable of being heard across the ground at its furthest point, shall be sounded prior to the start of each quarter and at the conclusion of each quarter. A back-up or emergency siren, bell or gong shall be provided for all matches.

Failure by teams to appear at the designated times will constitute a breach of By-Laws.

Timekeepers shall complete the required details on the official MFNL timekeepers' card.

The minimum age for timekeepers shall be sixteen (16) years old.

The timekeepers shall be the only people to be located in the timekeeper's box or area designated for timekeeping during matches.

The appointed timekeepers shall have the sole control of match time and no person shall interfere with the timing of a match.

## **71. Interchange Stewards**

The team managers/club officials or volunteers of both teams will act as the interchange steward on game days. In the event a player is sent off (yellow card) both teams representatives will meet at the interchange gate to set the timer. The home club team manager/club official or volunteer will be responsible for stopping the timer at breaks if required. When time is up the home club team manager/club official or volunteer will inform the away team of the players ability to return to the game.

When a player is sent off (yellow Card) for 15 minutes this means playing time, therefore the timer must be paused when there is an interval ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  &  $\frac{3}{4}$  Time) and restarted again at the commencement of the next quarter.

The home club will be responsible for supplying a timer on the bench during home and away matches.

During finals matches, the League shall provide an interchange steward and timer.

## **72. Boundary Umpires**

A Club shall, where required, provide a Boundary Umpire who shall be attired in a white shirt or jumper.

Boundary umpires supplied by a Club shall make themselves thoroughly familiar with and become proficient in their respective duties as required under these By-Laws and the Laws of Australian Football.

Boundary umpires provided by clubs may have sponsors on apparel.

Boundary umpires provided by the MUA shall dress in accordance with the requirements of the MUA.

### **73. Goal Umpires**

A Club shall, where required, provide a mature person as a Goal Umpire who shall be attired in a white coat. All Goal Umpires supplied by clubs are to wear white coats and use white flags.

At the conclusion of each quarter the goal umpires shall compare score cards and confirm the scoreboard is correct. If they agree at the conclusion of the game, they shall sign the cards. Final scores must be endorsed in ink on the scorecards. Score cards must be returned to the team manager.

Goal umpires supplied by a Club shall make themselves thoroughly familiar with and become proficient in their respective duties as required under these By-Laws and the Laws of Australian Football.

Where goal umpires are provided by the clubs, each club shall provide their own goal umpires flags.

The minimum age for goal umpires shall be sixteen (16) years of age.

Goal umpires provided by the MUA shall dress in accordance with the requirements of the MUA.

### **74. Non-attendance of Umpire**

In the event of the non-attendance or incapacitation of any field umpire appointed, the remaining appointed umpires shall determine who shall replace the absent or incapacitated field umpire. Where (2) field umpires have been appointed, it shall be appropriate for the remaining umpire to continue the game on his own.

Where an appointed boundary umpire or goal umpire fails to attend or is incapacitated the home club shall provide a replacement.

### **75. Umpire Escorts**

Umpires shall be escorted from the field to their dressing room by an official from both teams, when leaving the ground at half time and final sirens. This By-Law shall apply to all home and away fixtures. During finals, this duty will be the responsibility of the MFNL Board.

During the home and away series, it shall be the responsibility of both Clubs to protect all umpires from unnecessary abuse or violence, on and off the field.

The home Club shall be responsible for the provision of refreshments to umpires at break of play, and shall where necessary, provide medical assistance. The host club shall be responsible during the finals.

## **76. Officials Uniform**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Runners               | Orange Top – Runner across front and back |
| • Trainers              | Orange Vest with number                   |
| • Water Carriers        | Orange Vest with number                   |
| • Club Goal Umpires     | White Coat                                |
| • Club Volunteer Umpire | White top                                 |

Club Officials not wearing uniforms as outlined above shall be removed from the ground by the Central Umpire and shall not be allowed to return until correctly attired.

Clubs who have incorrectly attired officials shall be fined 5 penalty units per offence

## **PLAYING GUIDELINES**

### **77. Match Conditions**

The MFNL Board shall have the power to change the venue or day of any match if the assigned ground is considered unfit for play or facilities do not meet minimum standards (as per the Risk Management Ground Audit).

Prior to competitive matches commencing, match day ground inspections must be completed and duly signed by a representative of each club. Home club to supply documentation.

All matches shall be played on Saturdays, except for in the case of Friday night twilight games and except where the MFNL Board sanctions or directs those matches be played on other days.

When arranging the match fixture, the MFNL Board shall (where possible) ensure that there is no economic or geographic disadvantage to any team.

### **78. Playing Facilities**

Each club shall provide the following playing facilities as a minimum standard, which shall be approved by the MFNL Board.

Two goal posts 6.4 metres apart and not less than 6.0 metres in height shall be placed at each end of the playing ground.

Two behind posts shall be placed at a distance of 6.4 metres apart from each goal post and in a straight line with them: the minimum height of the behind posts shall be 3.0 metres.

The whole of the goal and behind posts shall be painted white.

Padding is to be attached to each goal and behind post as follows:

- of a minimum thickness of 35mm; and
- of a minimum height of 2.5m from the bottom of each post.

All areas behind the goal and behind posts, plus fifteen (15) metres in each direction shall be fenced.

A scoreboard, which shall be operational for each game, with numbers for scores, at least thirty (30) centimetres high.

A suitable stretcher on the boundary at the interchange area at all times during the matches being played.

A properly marked playing oval in accordance with the Laws of Australian Football and shall be marked.

The boundary line markings shall be no less than 3.0 metres from the boundary fence.

A timekeeper's box complete with efficient siren and back-up siren, bell, or gong.

Adequately covered stop-cocks, valves, or sprinkler heads where underground water reticulation is provided.

All clubs to provide a suitable coaches box with seats for the home and visiting teams.

Suitable fencing around ovals.

## 79. Commencing Times

All matches shall commence at such times that are fixed and appointed by the MFNL Board.

Commencement times will be as follows:

Friday Night Games:

Grade	Start	Quarters	$\frac{1}{4}$ time Break	$\frac{1}{2}$ time Break	$\frac{3}{4}$ time Break
Seniors	8:00 pm	20 min + Time On	5 Min (3)	15min (12)	5 Min (3)

Saturday Games:

Grade	Start	Quarters	$\frac{1}{4}$ time Break	$\frac{1}{2}$ time Break	$\frac{3}{4}$ time Break
Seniors	2.30pm	20 min + Time On	5 Min (3)	15min (12)	5 Min (3)

**Note:** *Numbers in brackets denotes times for timekeepers to sound warning siren.*

If all Clubs and Umpires are in agreeance the games may commence at an earlier time.

Finals Games - The starting times and conditions of play shall be determined annually by the MFNL Board.

## **80. Clearance/Permits**

In accordance with AFL Victoria Country Rules, the League imposes a clearance & permit curfew. No clearance or permit shall be handled after 5pm on the Friday preceding a round of matches, until 9am on the Monday following a round of matches unless & except whereby exceptional circumstances apply and approval is granted by the League Operations Manager.

## **81. Illegal Clearances**

Any player who illegally obtains a clearance or permit shall be disqualified and the League after consultation with the AFL Victoria Country may impose such penalty it considers appropriate upon the Club playing such ineligible player. Further sanctions may also be applied by the AFL Victoria Country.

## **82. Count of Players**

The procedure for such counting of players shall be in accordance with The Laws of Australian Football (refer rules 5.5.2, 5.5.3, 5.5.4)

A fine of up to \$500.00 shall be imposed on the club calling for the count, if the MFNL Board has considered that the count was frivolous.

Any side who is found to have breached the pre-determined number of players allowed on the field during play will have the following sanctions imposed:

- The time of the quarter and score at the point in time the incident occurs shall be noted.
- The incident will be referred to the League to investigate the matter and if proven:
- All points scored in the quarter that the breach occurred will be forfeited; and
- In addition, offending clubs may be issued a fine at the MFNL Board's discretion.

## **83. Footballs**

The home club on match day will be responsible for supplying 2 footballs in case of bad weather.

- Seniors                                      Full Size (Red) Leather

The Field Umpire/s shall have the power to reject a football prior to the commencement of the game, and if it is considered unsatisfactory for match play, the home club shall supply a ball of satisfactory quality.

Whenever night matches have been approved in accordance with these By-Laws, white or yellow leather footballs of full size and of a type and brand approved by the MFNL Board shall be used.

In severe adverse weather conditions, white- or yellow-coloured footballs of full size and of a type and brand approved by the MFNL Board may be used subject to the agreement of the captains of the competing teams.

## **84. Composition of Teams**

All Senior teams shall consist of up to twenty-one (21) named players, not more than eighteen (18) of whom shall take part in a match at any one time.

## **85. Interchange of Players**

Two (2) short lines across the boundary lines fifteen (15) metres apart shall mark the interchange area. The interchange area shall be located on the centre wing, on the same side of the ground as the Coaches Boxes.

The procedure for the interchange of players shall be as follows: -

- Players shall leave and enter the playing arena through the interchange area during the match, player off first, player on second.
- A player who does not leave the playing arena through the approved area, shall not be permitted to take any further part in the match, unless the player is taken from the field on a stretcher, in which case he may be taken from the ground at any point. His replacement must enter the playing field through the interchange area. The injured player may return to the playing field by way of normal interchange.
- When it is necessary for a player to be taken from the playing field on a stretcher, the field umpire shall stop play at the first appropriate opportunity after he is advised that a stretcher is on the playing field and play will not commence until the stretcher has left the playing field and is outside the fence.
- When a player has been or appears to have been so seriously injured as to prevent him being removed immediately from the playing field, the interchange steward or field umpire may approve his replacement prior to leaving the ground.

The Field Umpire shall respectively report any breach of the provisions of this By-Law to the Leagues Operations Manager, and the offending player/club shall be subject to such penalty as determined by the Board.

## **86. Colours and Uniforms**

Each Club shall register its uniform with the MFNL Board upon affiliation the MFNL. Any Club desiring to register new uniforms must submit a sample to the MFNL Board and seek approval for such registration.

No Club shall compete in any match in any uniform or colours other than its registered uniform or colours and may only change, modify, or alter such registered uniform or colours with the written approval of the MFNL Board.

Home and Away teams shall wear the Club's registered colour shorts Away teams may

All uniforms shall carry the AFL or AFL Vic. endorsed products logo on jumpers and shorts.

No lace-up guernseys shall be worn.

## **87. Logos on Uniforms**

Only AFL Vic authorised suppliers can supply playing apparel using the AFL Vic Country & WorkSafe Logo.

A maximum of four logos may be attached to the front of playing Guernsey, each of which must not exceed 10 cm x 6 cm, one of which must be the AFL Victoria Country & WorkSafe logo. One logo would be permitted under the number on the back of Guernsey, it would not exceed 35cm by 15cm.

Four logos 10cm x 6cm would be permitted on shorts. In special instances, clubs may apply to the MFNL Board for permission for an additional sponsor on the front or rear of their Guernsey, and such requests will be determined at the discretion of the Board.

## **88. Bike Shorts**

No player shall wear Lycra or like fabric bicycle shorts under their football shorts unless they are of flesh colour, the same colour as their club uniform shorts or another colour approved by the MFNL Board. Where other types of shorts are required on medical grounds, the MFNL Board may approve the wearing of such shorts.

## **89. Numbers, Shorts and Socks**

All players must wear AFL Victoria Country approved uniforms complying with the registered colours of their club and including numbered guernsey, and wear shorts and socks of registered colours. The numbers worn by players must correspond with the player's card and official League record, otherwise the Club shall be liable to a minimum fine of 5 penalty units for each such offence.

In the event of replacement of a guernsey during a match, the Ground Manager and Central Umpire must be notified of the change of player's number, or the Club shall be liable to a fine of 5 penalty units.

## **90. Football Stops, Jewellery & Protective Equipment**

No player or official shall be permitted to play or officiate in a match with apparel or protective equipment which may cause injury to themselves or opponents. This shall include: -

- a. Aluminium stops are not permitted. Magnesium stops are acceptable
- b. A finger ring, body piercings or other jewellery
- c. specialised protective equipment to be approved prior to use by the MFNL Board.
- d. A field umpire may inspect players' boots, hands, guards, and surgical appliances prior to the commencement of play or at any time prior to the conclusion of the match. The field umpire shall have the sole prerogative to determine whether apparel or protective equipment has the potential to cause injury

## **91. Wearing Gloves during competition**

Gloves are permitted to be worn in the MFNL competition.

## **92. Registration**

Every club is responsible for the registration of their own players, coaches, and officials; however, all registrations expire on the 31st day of October. Players must be reregistered



with their club on an annual basis should they wish to continue to play with that club control of the League and such registration must be filed with the League before that player will be permitted to play provided:

- a. In the case of such registration being completed on the day of the match, the registration must be completed in Play HQ prior to the match.
- b. Any Club playing an unregistered player at any level will be penalised as per AFL Victoria Country Rule 1.3. Such penalties will include loss of match points and fines not less than \$500 (Senior & Reserve) or not greater than \$250 (Under 17 & Under 14). A player participating without signing a form is not insured and the club may be held liable for any injury via negligence, therefore, such a process exists to protect clubs.
- c. Clubs will forfeit points from match that an unregistered player plays in, unless extraordinary circumstance exist and the decision is over ruled by the MFNL Board and the AFL Victoria Country Area Manager.

The MFNL Board shall retain the power to withdraw or suspend the registration of any player, coach, or team official, who fails to comply with any reasonable request from the Board or who, by his actions, is deemed to have brought the game and/or the MFNL into disrepute.

## **FINALS**

### **93. Final Venues**

The WFNL Board will determine all finals venues (except the Grand Final). Factors that will be considered include ground condition, participating teams, amenities, spectator attraction and the respective positions on the ladder of the participating teams.

The MFNL Grand Final is to be played at Lake Cullulleraine

### **94. Catering**

Catering for finals shall follow a rotating roster every year.

### **95. Bar**

The MFNL Board has developed a roster for Final Bar. If clubs pass up their opportunity in their allocated year, the bar will be awarded to the next club in the schedule. The club that has passed up their opportunity will move to the bottom of the draw and all other clubs will move up. If 2 teams are unwilling in one year, the MFNL may run the bar at there discretion.

If the MFNL deem it beneficial to the entire league they may with notice take over the running of the bar from year to year, as long as this does not disadvantage any given club.

#### 96. Raffle

The club who has the catering rights will also be given the rights to the ground raffle during the final's series.

#### 97. Rooms

The MFNL reserves the right to allocate the use of rooms to clubs during the final's series. Consideration will be given to clubs who have more than one team participating in a finals series and clubs will be kept together as much as possible.

#### 98. Shorts

The MFNL reserves the right to allocate what colour shorts each club is required to wear during the final's series.

#### 99. Final 4

At the conclusion of the home and away matches, a finals series will be conducted between the top (4) four teams.

The finals series shall consist of.

WEEK 1		
A	1 v 2	1 <sup>st</sup> Semi Final Qualifying Final
B	3 v 4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semi Final Elimination Final
WEEK 2		
C	Loser A v Winner B	Preliminary Final
WEEK 3		
E	Winner A v Winner C	Grand Final

#### 100. Drawn Finals

In the event of a draw in any finals match, extra time shall be played.

Where extra time is to be played in a final, two (2) halves of five minutes each, with time on added, shall be played.

In the event of scores being level after the two (2) five-minute halves, the process shall continue until there is a result.

At the completion of the fourth quarter of normal match time and scores are tied, the following shall apply:

- the teams shall kick to the same ends to those used in the fourth quarter.
- coaches shall not be permitted to address players between the end of the fourth quarter and the start of extra time or at any change of ends during the playing of extra time.

The MFNL Board shall determine the use of changing rooms and the colour of shorts for all finals matches.

The MFNL Board may call for tenders from interested Clubs or groups to provide certain works or services.

No passes shall be allocated to Clubs playing in finals.

### **101. Player Eligibility for Finals**

To be eligible to play in finals matches, a player must play in a three (3) home and away matches in any grade for that Club during the current season.

## **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **102. De-Registration / Non-Registration Policy**

The MFNL has adopted the AFL Victoria Policy regarding De-Registration / Non - Registration.

### **103. Racial, Religious & Sexual Orientation Tolerance Policy**

The MFNL has adopted the AFL Victoria Policy regarding Racial, Religious & Sexual Orientation Tolerance. The following shall apply to all MFNL football competition:

- a. Any registered MFNL player who is guilty of racial or religious vilification of a MFNL player, official or spectator, or abuse based on sexual orientation, will incur a minimum of a 4-week suspension. This suspension may be increased at the discretion of the MFNL Board and/or Independent Tribunal if they see fit.
- b. Should a member or supporter of a MFNL Club be found guilty of racial or religious vilification of a MFNL player, official or spectator, or abuse based on sexual orientation, the spectator will incur a minimum of a 12-week suspension from attending MFNL fixtures and his/her Club fined an amount of no less than \$250. This suspension may be increased at the discretion of the MFNL Board and/or Independent Tribunal if they see fit.
- c. Should a MFNL Club have a 2nd racial or religious vilification offence, or a 2nd offence involving abuse based on sexual orientation (across all playing grades and codes) the Club will be fined no less than \$500 and this fine may be increased at the discretion of the MFNL Board and/or Independent Tribunal if they see fit.
- d. Should a MFNL Club have a 3rd racial or religious vilification offence, or a 3rd offence involving abuse based on sexual orientation (across all playing grades and codes), the Club will be fined no less than \$1,000 and may face the loss of premiership points from each grade of their football sides. Further, this fine may be increased at the discretion of MFNL Board and/or Independent Tribunal if they see fit. In addition, the Club will be asked to undertake "Culture Awareness Training" for all players and members that will be presented by a Facilitator appointed by the MFNL at the club's expense.

### **104. Cyberbullying Policy**

The MFNL has adopted the AFL Victoria Policy regarding Cyberbullying.

### **105. Photography & Video Footage at WFNL Games**

Photography and taping of players at MFNL football matches shall be allowed so long as the photos and/or footage is taken of MFNL competition matches in play. At no stage may any person take a camera into the change rooms of either club to take any kind

photograph or video footage without the permission of the people whose image is being recorded.

Further to this, photographs and video footage of MFNL games shall not be used for commercial gain without first obtaining the permission from the MFNL and the participating clubs. Failure to adhere to this By-Law shall result in punishment as deemed necessary by MFNL Board of Directors.

**106. Alcohol Policy**

The MFNL will adopt AFL Victoria Country's Alcohol Charter to help facilitate a consistent approach to alcohol related issues across Community Football.

**107. Anti- Doping Policy**

The MFNL has adopted the AFL Policy regarding Anti-Doping.

**108. Gender Regulation Policy**

The MFNL has adopted the AFL Victoria Policy regarding Gender Regulation.

**109. Infectious Diseases Policy**

The MFNL has adopted the AFL Victoria Policy regarding Infectious Diseases.

**110. Respect & Responsibility Policy**

The MFNL League has adopted the AFL Victoria Policy regarding Responsibility.

**111. Smoke Free Policy**

The MFNL has adopted the AFL Victoria Smoke Free Policy.

**112. Protests and Disputes**

As in accordance with the AFL Vic Rules and Regulations.

**113. Appeals**

As in accordance with the AFL Vic Rules and Regulations.

**114. Order Off Rule**

As in accordance with the AFL Vic Rules and Regulations.

**115. Treatment of Bleeding Players**

As in accordance with the AFL Vic Rules and Regulations.

**116. Unbecoming Conduct**

As in accordance with the AFL Vic Rules and Regulations.

**117. Grievance Procedure**

As in accordance with the MFNL Statement of Purpose and Rules 2020

**118. Investigations Policy**

As in accordance with the MFNL Investigations Policy