



## **2026 MATCH DAY REQUIREMENTS**

A document specifically produced for all Club Secretaries, General Managers, Match Day Managers, and Team Managers.

Updated: March 2026  
Review Date: Annually

To be read in conjunction with the

Rules of the VAFA (Version 2026 1.4)

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## **2025 AMENDMENTS**

<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Description</b>
Timekeepers	Reserves and Thirds quarter lengths have reduced from 25 minutes with no time-on to 22 minutes with no time-on.
Both Team Responsibilities	Ensure that no more than ten (10) coaches and/or support staff are present on the coaches' bench at any one time.
Concussion	Any suspected Concussion reporting shall be submitted via Play HQ with 21 days clearance required.
Finals Eligibility	All women's competitions require 3 games minimum to qualify for finals.

# **COMPETING CLUB REQUIREMENTS**

## **Pre-Match Provisions**

### **Number of Players in a Team**

- a. Each team taking the field must have a minimum of fourteen (14) players before a match can commence.

### **Player Shortages – [Evening Up Rule](#)**

- a. An 'Evening Up' rule (Schedule F, VAFA Rules) applies in the Women's Divisional Competition, Women's Reserves Competition and Men's Thirds Competition where if one team has more than 12 players but not enough for a full side and the second team has more players than the first team, both teams shall field the same number of players, therefore an equal number of players shall take the field.
- b. Team Managers requiring the Evening-Up rule to apply must notify the opposition team in writing not later than 5.00pm on the Friday prior to the match

### **Player Shortages – Game Day Permit (PlayHQ)**

- a. Two VAFA clubs can agree to enter into a Local Interchange Permit Agreement which allows players to be permitted from one VAFA club to another VAFA club for a certain period during the season. This helps ensure that all available registered players have an opportunity to play in a match on any given weekend.

### **Match Day Permits – Interchange Agreements**

- a. The VAFA has entered into Interchange Agreements with the following leagues, allowing players to participate in matches between each league under certain Permit conditions:
  - a. **Yarra Junior Football League**
  - b. **South Metro Junior Football League**
  - c. **Southern Football Netball League** (Men's and Women's) – not applicable for Senior players
  - d. **AFL Victoria Country Leagues** – (Men's and Women's) – full time students during school holidays only
- b. The Permit of any player to represent a club in a premiership match of the Association during the season shall be cancelled and that player deemed an ineligible player pursuant to Rule 50 if the player breaches the rules and conditions applicable in each Interchange Agreement

- c. Clubs should always seek guidance from the VAFA as to whether a situation is within, or in breach of, the interchange agreements.

### **Forfeits**

- a. A club that forfeits a match is required to complete the [2026 Club Match Day Forfeit Form](#), preferably by 5pm before the day of the match.

### **Club Uniforms**

- a. For the purposes of these Match Day Requirements, a club uniform includes a guernsey, shorts and socks.
- b. [2025 On Field Requirements](#)
- c. Clubs must ensure that all players wear their uniform as approved by VAFA Football Operations and all players must wear numbers which differ.
- d. Home club players are to wear coloured shorts as approved by VAFA Football Operations.
- e. Away club players are to wear white shorts (men only) as approved by VAFA Football Operations.
- f. Players wishing to wear bike shorts/undershorts must only use neutral coloured ones and the length must not drop below the knee unless approved by VAFA Football Operations.
- g. All other undergarments shall be of soft material, neutral coloured and be non-visible unless approved by VAFA Football Operations.

### **Other Apparel**

- a. Other apparel including gloves, armbands, bandages, braces or any other protective equipment shall only be worn after seeking approval from VAFA Football Operations.
- b. A list of [compliant](#) and [not compliant](#) gloves is provided for reference.

### **Jumper Clashes**

- a. Jumper clashes during the home and away season as determined by VAFA Football Operations can be found within the [VAFA Clash Jumper Policy](#).
- b. Where a jumper clash occurs, the visiting club will be required to wear a distinctively different uniform as approved by VAFA
- c. If a visiting club does not have an approved clash jumper uniform, VAFA clash jumpers are free [to hire](#) through the VAFA.
- d. All hired clash jumpers must be returned to the VAFA fully washed and cleaned by 12pm Wednesday following the match otherwise cleaning charges will apply.
- e. A club breaching or failing to comply with the jumper clash requirements will receive a written warning for the first offence but then be financially penalised for any further offences in accordance with the VAFA Schedule of Fines.

### **Team Entry**

- a. The team entering the playing arena first has the choice of ends in which to warm up. The other team, upon entering the playing arena, must not encroach on the opposing team's chosen half of the ground during the warm up at any time.

### **Team Sheets**

- a. Team Sheets are to be completed online via PlayHQ prior to each match by both competing teams.
- b. Team Sheets are to be given to the Field Umpire within ten (10) minutes of the end of the second quarter and a copy must be handed to the opposition team no later than 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the match.
- c. A club failing to submit their Team Sheet to the Field Umpire within ten (10) minutes of the end of the second quarter will receive a written warning for the first offence but then be financially penalised for any further offences in accordance with the VAFA Schedule of Fines.
- d. A club failing to confirm the final list of players and officials representing the club on the Team Sheet by 10.00am on the Monday following completion of the match will receive a written warning for the first offence but then be financially penalised for any further offences in accordance with the VAFA Schedule of Fines.

### **Composition of Team Sheets**

- a. Each team sheet must include the following minimum information:
  - i. Numbers that each player wore
  - ii. Name of the Senior Coach according to the CoachAFL accreditation requirements
  - iii. Name of the Umpire if appointed by the club
- b. Note: If a player is unable to be added to the online team sheet prior to the match, that player's name may be handwritten, but updated asap via PlayHQ.

North Brunswick Football Club Senior Womens		vs	Preston Bullants Senior Womens		d24e98	
TEAM A			TEAM B		GAME CODE	
2024	Division 3 Women's		AICZ5 / AIAJ2	13 Apr 2024	10:20 am	1
SEASON	GRADE		GROUND	DATE	TIME	ROUND

TEAM A: North Brunswick Football Club Senior Womens									
NO.	PLAYERS	PLAYER SIGNATURES	PP	GOALS	BEHINDS	BEST	YEL CARD	RED CARD	
1	Denver Adams								
2	Jasmine Alcon								
3	Lauren Balcombe (c)								
4	Madeleine Bentley (vc)								
5	Naomi Best								
6	Holly Booth								
7	Carina Bronte								
8	Ash Brookes								
9	Emily Cartwright								
10	Molly Dale								
11	Kate English								
12	Matilda Franks (dvc)								
13	Ciara Hartnett								
14	Caitlin Hennessey								
15	Caiti Holzheimer								
16	Chloe Hoskinson								
17	Sophie James								
18	Jessica Lintermans								
19	Batsho Mandlebe								
20	Ruby McCormick								
21	Eva McLeod goodman								
22	Georgia Mckenzie								
23	Hannah Meyer								
24	Cassie Muscat								
25	Mary Ntalianis (dvc)								
26	Sarah Rohan (dvc)								
27	Katie Ruthven								
28	Ella Ryan (dvc)								
29	Amy Shaw								
30	Tahlia Shields-Bathgate								

COACH: _____ ASST. COACH: _____ ASST. COACH: _____ ASST. COACH: _____ TEAM MNGR: Rose Finlay TIMEKEEPER/INTERCHANGE STEWARD: _____ RUNNER: _____ RUNNER: _____ PHYSIC: _____ DOCTOR: _____ TRAINER 1: _____	TRAINER 2: _____ MEDICAL/WATER 1: _____ MEDICAL/WATER 2: _____ MEDICAL/WATER 3: _____ MEDICAL/WATER 4: _____  FIELD UMPIRE: _____ GOAL UMPIRE: _____ GOAL UMPIRE: _____ BOUNDARY UMPIRE: _____ UMPIRE ESCORT: _____
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TEAM A: North Brunswick Football Club Senior Womens			TEAM B: Preston Bullants Senior Womens		
GOALS	BEHINDS	TOTAL	GOALS	BEHINDS	TOTAL
Q1			Q1		
Q2			Q2		
Q3			Q3		
Q4			Q4		
T			T		

INCIDENT 1 {Umpires, Team Managers, Coaches, Leagues Admins only} <input type="checkbox"/> OFFENCE/BEHAVIOUR <input type="checkbox"/> INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> VENUE ISSUE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____ _____ _____	INCIDENT 1 {Umpires, Team Managers, Coaches, Leagues Admins only} <input type="checkbox"/> OFFENCE/BEHAVIOUR <input type="checkbox"/> INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> VENUE ISSUE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____ _____ _____
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TEAM MANAGER SIGNATURE: _____	UMPIRE SIGNATURE: _____
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## **Player Eligibility – Home and Away**

- a. The home and away matches of all VAFA Competitions and Sections shall be open to all eligible and registered players to represent the club with which they have been granted a permit.
- b. Applications for Transfers and a permit for men's and women's competitions received by the VAFA after the 30<sup>th</sup> June in each year shall not be granted.

## **Under 19 Men's Over-Age Player Policy**

- a. As per the [Under 19 Men's Over-Age Player Policy](#), Under 19 Men's teams are permitted to select and play registered players in home and away matches and finals who are born on or between the 1st January 2006 and 30th June 2006 inclusive in all Sections of the Under 19 Men's competition.

## **Finals Eligibility**

### **MPC and MDC**

- A minimum of **two (2)** matches for the club they wish to represent in finals.
- If the player is a **VFL or Coates Talent League** listed player the qualification is a minimum of five (5) matches for the team a player wishes to represent in finals, two (2) of which must be played after 30<sup>th</sup> June or in the alternative, a minimum of eight (8) matches in total during the season without any temporal limitation provided that an Under 19 Men's player may combine MPC and MDC and Under 19's Men's matches in order to meet the five (5) or eight (8) match qualification for MPC and MDC finals.
- Any listed AFL player, excepting a Category B listed Rookie, in the current calendar year, is not permitted to play in any VAFA Competitions in the current season.

### **MRC**

- A minimum of four (4) MRC or MTC Section matches and a maximum of ten (10) higher ranked matches (being MPC, MDC and Under 19 Men's).

### **Under 19 Men's**

- A minimum of four (4) matches for the club in any Under 19 Men's Section provided that a player who has played in six (6) or more higher-ranked matches (being MPC and MDC) must have played a minimum of six (6) Under 19 Men's matches.

### **MTC**

- A minimum of three (3) MTC Section matches and a maximum of eight (8) higher ranked matches (being MPC, MDC, MRC and Under 19 Men's).

### **WPC and WDC**

- A minimum of two (3) matches for the club they wish to represent in finals.
  - If the player is a VFLW or Coates Talent League listed player:
    - i. For an 18-round home and away season: the qualification is a minimum of five (5) matches for the team a player wishes to represent in finals, 1 of which must be on or before 30<sup>th</sup> June.
    - ii. For a 16-round home and away season: the qualification is a minimum of four (4) matches for the team a player wishes to represent in finals, 1 of which must be on or before 30<sup>th</sup> June.
    - iii. Any listed AFLW player, or a player placed on an AFLW supplementary or rookie list in the current calendar year is not permitted to play in any VAFA Competitions in the current season.

### **WRC**

- A minimum of three (3) WRC or WTC Section matches and a maximum of eight (8) higher ranked matches (being WPC and WDC).

**Clubs fielding more than one team in any competition (i.e. Thirds, Under 19s, Women's). To be eligible to play finals for the lower-ranked team, a player must not have played more games in the higher-ranked team (Thirds, Under 19s, Women's)**

### **Player Points Allocation (MPC, MDC, and WPC only)**

- a. The VAFA now controls the calculation and entering of player point values into PlayHQ
- b. MPC and MDC teams must ensure they do not exceed the 45 total team points.
- c. WPC teams must ensure they do not exceed 49 points
- d. Penalties apply to clubs who provide inaccurate or misleading information to the VAFA regarding a player point allocation
- e. Should there be a discrepancy between your club's player point value of a player and the VAFA's, please complete a [Player Point Reassessment Request Form](#)
- f. Should you have an eligible player that requires a player point value because you expect them to play senior football, please complete a [Player Point Application Form](#)

## Home Team Responsibilities

- a. Mark all appropriate line markings as per Rules 3.4 and 3.5 of the [AFL Laws of Australian Football](#). A small dot must also be marked 15 metres from the centre of each kick-off line to assist umpires with officiating the revised kick-in after a behind rule.
- b. Where a VAFA Umpire has not been appointed, provide minimum one (1) field umpire who has knowledge of the VAFA Rules and the Laws of Australian Football. The club umpire is expected to understand and adhere to instructions provided by the VAFA, via their respective club, whether online or in person
- c. Where a VAFA Umpire has not been appointed , provide one (1) boundary umpire with correct attire and equipment
- d. Where a VAFA Umpire has not been appointed , provide one (1) goal umpire with correct attire and equipment
- e. Provide the following equipment:
  - a Suitable padding for each goal and point post
  - b One (1) siren or bell (or any other suitable and audible device)
  - c Two (2) training tables (one for home rooms, one for away rooms)
  - d One (1) First Aid stretcher
  - e Dressing Rooms with suitable security
  - f Appropriate and suitable seating for the Senior Coach, interchange players and support staff of both home and away teams
  - g Umpire Rooms
  - h One (1) Umpire Escort
  - l A suitable scoreboard that accurately displays correct scores
  - j Operate Live Scores through PlayHQ (MPC, MDC, WPC and WDC required; all other Sections encouraged)
  - k Display a “No Alcohol” sign around the venue (as per VAFA Rule 73 (xiii))
  - l Minimum two (2) approved footballs handed to the umpire

## Approved Footballs

- a. All footballs used in each premiership match of the men’s and women’s competitions of the VAFA must be purchased via the [VAFA Online Store](#)
- b. A summary of the types of footballs each home club is responsible to provide to the Field Umpire prior to the commencement of each premiership match is below:
- c. The Field Umpire at their discretion can elect not to use the footballs if they are not presented in a new or suitable condition in which case the home club must provide replacement new or suitable conditions footballs.

# VAFA APPROVED FOOTBALLS 2026



COMPETITION	BRANDING	SIZE	LOGO
Premier Men's Premier Women's	William Buck	Size 5 Size 4	
Divisional Men's Divisional Women's Thirds	Tackle Your Feelings	Size 5 Size 4 Size 5	
Under 19's	Holmesglen	Size 5	

**PLEASE NOTE:** Yellow Footballs are to be used for all matches starting after 3:00pm

## Both Team Responsibilities

- a. For all matches, each club must nominate and provide:
  - i. Minimum one (1) field umpire who has knowledge of the VAFA Rules and the Laws of Australian Football. The club umpire is expected to understand and adhere to instructions provided by the VAFA, via their respective club, whether online or in person.
  - ii. One (1) boundary umpire each with correct attire and equipment in the event no boundary umpires are appointed by the VAFA
  - iii. One (1) goal umpire each with correct attire and equipment in the event no goal umpires are appointed by the VAFA
  - iv. Minimum two (2) goal flags
  - v. Minimum one (1) Trainer
  - vi. Maximum one (1) Runner
  - vii. One (1) Timekeeper
  - viii. One (1) Umpire Escort
- b. Ensure that the officials appointed through clubs meet the applicable dress code.
- c. Ensure that no more than ten (10) coaches and/or support staff are present on the coaches' bench at any one time.

**If agreed by both clubs in advance, and VAFA has been notified before the day of the match by the home team, the home team may supply supporting match day roles such as timekeeper, umpire escort, boundary umpires, field, and goal**

**umpires for the away team. In such instances, no applicable fines will be issued to the away team.**

### **Umpiring**

- a. The VAFAs will notify all clubs regarding umpire appointments for the upcoming round via the VAFAs Club Portal at 5pm, Thursday each week.
- b. Ultimately umpire allocations are a week by week proposition for all competitions and league coverage is subject to change due to the variable nature of umpires availability.
- c. Clubs should have 'club umpires' on standby each week in case an official VAFAs umpire is not available for their game.
- d. It is recommended that 'club umpires' are available each weekend for all MRC, WRC, and MTC competitions.
- e. All clubs must fulfill their competitions fixtures regardless of whether or not an appointed VAFAs umpire is present on matchday. Failure to do so may result in penalties.
- f. If there is not a VAFAs appointed field umpire allocated to a fixture, both teams must assume responsibility for the appointment of an umpire to officiate the fixture.
- g. If a VAFAs appointed umpire is late or does not attend a fixture due to an emergency situation, the home team must assume responsibility for the appointment of a replacement field umpire.
- h. If there are no VAFAs appointed boundary or goal umpires allocated to a fixture, the home and away teams must assume responsibility for the appointment of boundary and goal umpires.
- i. The decisions of the umpire about any fact connected with play are final and cannot be disputed by any party.

### **Thirds Competition - Boundary Throw Ups**

'Throw Ups' will replace boundary throw ins, in all Thirds Men's home and away and Finals matches.

Boundary Umpires if available may be utilised to adjudicate whether or not the ball is out of play, however the Field Umpire will throw the ball up at all times.

Boundary Umpires may be used, however there is no obligation on Clubs to provide Boundary Umpires, nor any applicable fines to Clubs for not supplying Boundary Umpires.

Field Umpires are to throw the ball up 10 meters inside the boundary line from the point where the ball has left play.

In the event that VAFA Boundary Umpires are appointed, i.e. Finals, the above rule will remain and the Boundary Umpires will only adjudicate if the ball has left the field of play, for the Field Umpire to then throw the ball up.

### **During the Match**

#### Interchange Bench Numbers

- a. Teams must not exceed the maximum number of players allowed on the interchange bench.
- b. Ensure that no more than ten (10) coaches and/or support staff are present on the coaches' bench at any one time.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Max no. of Players</b>
MPC, MDC, MRC	4 players
Under 19 Men's	6 players
MTC	6 players
WDC inc Premier B	6 players
WPC, WRC	5 players

#### Duration of Intervals

- a. Teams must not exceed prescribed intervals between quarters.

<b>Interval</b>	<b>Prescribed Time</b>
Quarter time	Five (5) minutes
Half time	Fifteen (15) minutes
Three-quarter time	Seven (7) minutes

- b. The playing members of the team are to be on the playing arena and prepared in all respects to re-commence the match immediately after the prescribed intervals. If a team is not ready to commence play after 5 minutes has elapsed since the appointed starting time after each interval, they will be fined the sum of \$2.00 for every minute which elapses thereafter until such team is ready to play.

## **Post-Match Provisions**

### **Match Results**

- a. Home clubs must enter the full match information for both teams into the online results database via PlayHQ including quarter by quarter and full-time scores, best players and goal-kickers.
- b. Information must be lodged by 5:30pm on the day of the match.
- c. All team sheet adjustments (if required) must be updated in PlayHQ by 10.00am Monday after the match by each respective club.
- d. Failure to complete these requirements will result in financial penalties as per Schedule C of the VAFA Rules.

### **Reporting a Concussion**

- a. In the event a player suffered a concussion during the match, clubs must submit the suspected concussion on PlayHQ. The concussed player does not return to play until the 21st day after the day on which the concussion was suffered.
- b. [Concussion Reporting Policy](#)
- c. Concussion Management Plan

## **COACHES REQUIREMENTS**

### **Coach Accreditation**

Prior to the start of the season all coaches (Senior, Reserves and Assistant Coaches) must have completed all accreditation requirements as referred to in the [National Community Football Policy Handbook](#).

This includes: [Register on CoachAFL](#)

**Note:** All Coaches must select their league and club on their coaching profile on CoachAFL to be able to select themselves on team sheets on PlayHQ. Coaches can list multiple clubs within their coaching profile.

### **Coach Replacement**





- a. Should a coach be unavailable, resign or be replaced, they must be replaced by a coach who has also completed the relevant accreditation.
- b. If the club is unable to find a suitably accredited replacement coach, the club will provide in detail to VAFA Football Operations the complete football and coaching background of the person they would like to coach the team.



Approval must be sought by VAFA Football Operations by 12pm Friday prior to the next scheduled match otherwise the coach will be deemed as ineligible.



- c. The use of unaccredited or unapproved coaches may result in an investigation by the VAFA's Independent Integrity Division which may lead to loss of points or a fine.





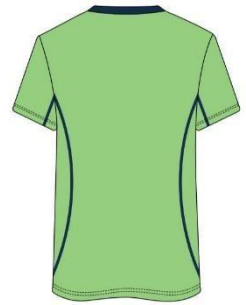
## MATCH DAY CLUB OFFICIALS DUTIES

Role	Number	Duties	Requirements	Identification
Trainer	Maximum two (2) per team	<p>Responsible for the treatment of injured players including any player who is unconscious or has suffered a concussion.</p> <p>Responsible to inform the Field Umpire and to call for a stretcher if a player who is injured during a match requires the assistance of a stretcher to leave the playing arena.</p> <p>Responsible for referring injuries to a more qualified health professional for further advice and management.</p>	<p>All trainers must hold Level 1 Sports Trainer accreditation or equivalent and understand the basic rules of first aid and emergency response coordination.</p> <p>Trainers are not permitted to act as an additional runner but may carry water to a player.</p> <p>Trainers must leave the playing arena immediately after their duty is complete.</p> <p>Trainers must not be within the 40m or 50m marked arc when ball is kicked out after a behind.</p> <p>Trainers must not be within the centre square when ball is being bounced at the start of the quarter or immediately following a goal being scored.</p> <p>Where a trainer refuses to leave the playing arena when directed to do so by a Field Umpire, the Field Umpire shall award a free kick to the opposing team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light blue trainer polo/ Grey trainer jacket</li> <li>Sport shorts/ pants</li> </ul>    

Role	Number	Duties	Requirements	Identification
Runner	Maximum one (1) per team	<p>Deliver messages from the coach to the players during the match.</p> <p>Advise officiating umpires if a player is wearing a replacement guernsey with a different number.</p>	<p>The runner must keep clear of play and vacate the playing arena immediately after their duty is complete.</p> <p>The runner is not to speak to opposition players whilst the match is in progress.</p> <p>The runner must not be within the 40m or 50m marked arc when ball is kicked out after a behind.</p> <p>The runner must not be within the centre square when ball is being bounced at the start of the quarter or immediately following a goal being scored.</p> <p>Where a runner refuses to leave the playing arena when directed to do so by a Field Umpire, the Field Umpire shall award a free kick to the opposing team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pink VAFA runner shirt</li> <li>• Sport shorts/ pants</li> </ul>  

Role	Number	Duties	Requirements	Identification
Water Carrier	Maximum four (4) per team	Delivery of drinks to players and umpires during the match.	<p>Water carriers are not permitted to act as an additional runner or trainer.</p> <p>Water carriers are to be stationed between the fence and the boundary line, and at least 15 metres away from the coaches boxes.</p> <p>Water carriers must not be within the 40m or 50m marked arc when ball is kicked out after a behind.</p> <p>Water carriers must not be within the centre square when ball is being bounced at the start of the quarter or immediately following a goal being scored.</p> <p>Where a water carrier refuses to leave the playing arena when directed to do so by a Field Umpire, the Field Umpire shall award a free kick to the opposing team.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Orange VAFA water carrier shirt</li> <li>● Sport shorts/pants</li> </ul>  

Role	Number	Duties	Requirements	Identification
Umpire Escort	One (1) per team	<p>Stand with all officiating umpires at quarter time and three-quarter time breaks to see if everything is going well and Home Umpire Escort to ensure they receive a drink.</p> <p>Escort the officiating field and boundary umpires from the playing arena to the umpire rooms at half time and full time and then return to assist the officiating goal umpires from the playing arena.</p>	Umpire escorts must not interfere with any player or coach and must not criticise umpires throughout the match.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Navy blue club armband</li> </ul> 

Club Field Umpire	Minimum one (1) per team if required	Officiate and control the match as per the AFL Laws of the Game.	<p>Have a current VAFA umpire registration.</p> <p>Have a sound knowledge of VAFA Rules and AFL Laws of the Game.</p> <p>Understand and adhere to coaching instructions provided by the VAFA Umpiring Department, via their respective club, whether online or in person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green VAFA umpire shirt</li> <li>• Blue shorts</li> <li>• Blue socks</li> </ul>  
Club Goal Umpire	One (1) per team if required	Fulfil goal umpire duties as per the AFL Laws of the Game		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White coat</li> </ul>
Club Boundary Umpire	One (1) per team if required	Fulfil boundary umpire duties as per the AFL Laws of the Game		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White shirt or green VAFA umpire shirt</li> </ul>

## Timekeepers

1. Timekeepers are required to keep time for each quarter of the match.
2. Timekeepers are required to sound the siren once at the scheduled starting time of each quarter and once at the end of each quarter.

### Quarter Lengths – Regular Season

Section	Quarter Lengths
MPC and MDC	20 minutes plus time-on
Under 19 Men's	25 minutes with no time-on
MRC, MTC	22 minutes with no time-on
WPC, WDC, WRC, WTC	20 minutes with no time-on

### Quarter Lengths – Finals

Section	Quarter Lengths
MPC and MDC	20 minutes plus time-on
MRC, MTC, Under 19 Men's	17 minutes plus time-on
WPC, WDC, WRC, and Masters	15 minutes plus time-on

3. Timekeepers are required to sound the siren (twice) two minutes prior to the scheduled starting time of each quarter and sound the siren (once) one minute prior to the scheduled starting time of each quarter.
4. Timekeepers are required to record on timecards the time taken to play each quarter and record the goals and behinds scored by each team during the match.

For matches with time-on, timekeepers shall stop the clock when:

- a. directed to do so by a field umpire raising their arm.
- b. the goal umpire signals that a goal has been scored.
- c. the goal umpire signals that a behind has been scored.
- d. the boundary umpire signals that the ball is out of bounds or out of bounds on the full.
- e. the field umpire crosses their arms to indicate they are going to throw the ball up.

For matches with time-on, timekeepers shall recommence the clock when:

- a. directed to do so by the field umpire raising their arm.
- b. the ball is bounced or thrown up by the field umpire.
- c. the football is brought back into play after a behind is scored, either by the player kicking the ball or exiting the goal square in the act of re-starting play.
- d. the ball is thrown back into play by the boundary umpire or brought back into play by a player after the ball has gone out of bounds or out of bounds on the full.
- e. the ball is obviously in play.
- f. the umpire calls 'Play On'.

## Time clocks

- a. The home club timekeeper's clock will be the official time for the match.
- b. The away club timekeeper's clock will act as a back-up.
- c. Should the away club timekeeper have any issues with the way the match is being timed, they are to bring this to the attention of the umpires at the next quarter time break and the umpires are to report this on the incident report sheet.

Note: In the event that play is forced to be stopped for an extended period (ie. serious injury or extreme weather) the Field Umpire will direct the timekeeper to stop the clock. The Field Umpire, in conjunction with VAFA Football Operations (if required), will then determine the direction of play after the incident has cleared.

## **VAFA RULES**

All matches played under the control of the VAFA shall be played under the [AFL's Laws of Australian Football](#) which can also be found on the VAFA Portal under 'Rules & Policies'.

The AFL's Laws of Australian Football also allows for a controlling body to adopt its own rules and interpretations in some instances and the VAFA follows the below rules and interpretations across all its competitions:

### **Centre Bounce Starting Positions**

1. A maximum of four (4) players from each team are permitted inside the centre square at a centre bounce.
2. There is no limit on the number of players required to be in each area defined by the boundary line and the 50m metre arc (or equivalent marking) at the time the field umpire throws up the football to start a quarter or recommence play after a goal has been scored.

### **Standing the Mark**

1. A player standing the mark when the opposition player is awarded a mark or a free kick may still move laterally or backwards, however is not permitted to move forwards over the mark until the umpire calls 'play on'.
2. The protected area behind the player on the mark applies.

### **50 Metre Penalty – Men's Competition**

1. After a mark or free kick has been awarded to a player in any men's competition, a 50 metre penalty will be awarded against the opposing team that unduly delays or impedes the play or behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner.

### **25 Metre Penalty – Women's Competition**

1. After a mark or free kick has been awarded to a player in any women's competition, a 25 metre penalty will be awarded against the opposing team

that unduly delays or impedes the play or behaves in an unsportsmanlike manner.

2. There will be no 50 metre penalties awarded in any women's competition.

### **Boundary Throw-In – Women's Competition**

1. The drop of the ball at the completion of the throw-in must be approximately 25 metres from where the football went out of play.
2. Boundary umpires may step inside the boundary line before the throw-in to ensure they are able to reach the 25 metre drop position.
3. The field umpire may recall any throw-in by the boundary umpire that, in their opinion, does not allow any opportunity for the football to be contested.

### **Boundary Throw-In – Umpire Shortage**

1. In the event of no boundary umpire, a player from the attacking side (team in attack) is asked to throw the ball in.
2. A player from the defensive side is asked to stand next to the player throwing the ball in to provide an even playing field and ensures no side gains an advantage.

### **Location Of The Mark At Kick-Ins**

1. The mark shall be set at 15 metres from the centre of the kick-off line towards the centre of the playing arena.

### **VAFAs Card System and players ordered off**

1. Players sent from the field under a yellow card (ie. audible obscenity) are to spend 12 minutes of actual playing time (does not include time-on) off the playing arena. This player can be replaced immediately.
2. Players sent from the field under a red card (ie. any reportable offence) are to spend 12 minutes of actual playing time (does not include time-on) off the playing arena. This player can be replaced immediately.
3. The timekeeper is to note the time of the player leaving the ground and will advise the runner or a team official when this penalty time has elapsed, and the player may again take the field.
4. When a black card is issued (ie. any 'serious' reportable offence) the player cannot take the field for the remainder of the match. They can be replaced after 12 minutes of playing time has elapsed. Again, the timekeeper is to note the time of the player leaving the ground and advise a team official once this period has elapsed.

Infographic found here - [VAFAs Card System – VAFAs Portal](#)

## **GROUND CHANGES**

1. Any ground changes approved by the VAFA will only be considered if the ground suggested is a reasonable standard for clubs of that Section and the request has been placed at least two clear days prior to the match.
2. VAFA Football Operations has the power to approve ground changes to grounds that are existing VAFA grounds as well as non-VAFA grounds.
3. Clubs wishing to play night matches must conform to the [VAFA Night Match Policy](#).

## **STRETCHER PROCEDURE**

### **Stretcher Procedure (as per Law 7.3, AFL Laws of the Game)**

- a. Any player who is injured during the match, and in the opinion of a doctor/trainer/official, requires a stretcher, shall be attended to by officials and a stretcher as soon as possible.
- b. Upon being advised or noticing that a player requires a stretcher, the officiating field umpire shall stop play at the earliest opportunity and unless a doctor considers or it is apparent that it is unsafe to do so, the player should be removed from the playing arena on the stretcher by the shortest possible route and taken directly to their team's dressing rooms;
- c. Teams may replace the injured player with a player listed on its team sheet, who must enter the playing arena via the Interchange Area.
- d. Once the injured player has been removed from the playing arena, the field umpire shall recommence play.
- e. A player for whom a stretcher was called shall not resume playing for a period of 20 minutes (including time on but excluding the quarter-time, half-time and three-quarter time breaks) from the time when the player left the playing arena. After the 20-minute period has expired, the player may be interchanged in accordance with the procedure set out under Law 7.2 of the AFL Laws of the Game provided the player is able, having due regard to their health and safety, to resume playing in the match; and
- f. Where a stretcher enters the playing arena, but the player elects to walk off, all stretcher provisions apply but the player may go to the Interchange Bench.

### **Recommencing Match (Law 7.3.2 (d), AFL Laws of the Game)**

- a. Once the injured player has been removed from the playing arena, the field umpire shall recommence play as follows depending on the circumstances:
  - i. Where the football was in dispute at the time play was stopped, by throwing up the football.
  - ii. Where the football was out of bounds at the time play was stopped, by directing the boundary umpire to throw the football in.
  - iii. Where a player had possession of the football at the time the play was stopped, by awarding a free kick to the player.

- iv. Where a player had been awarded a free kick or mark at the time play was stopped, by allowing the player to dispose of the football.

## **INCOMPLETE MATCH (LAW 11.1.2, AFL LAWS OF THE GAME)**

Where a match is unable to commence or continue within the time scheduled for the match for reasons beyond the control of either team, the following shall apply:

### **Match not commenced**

The result of a match which is unable to commence for reasons beyond the control of either team shall be determined by the VAFA.

### **Prior to half time**

If a match has commenced but is not able to proceed at any time prior to half time, the teams shall depart the playing arena. If the match is unable to commence within a 30-minute period, the match shall be deemed to be drawn and the scores of the teams at the time the match was interrupted shall be used in calculating the percentage of each team

### **Half time and beyond**

If the half time interval has been reached and the match is unable to proceed at any time, the teams shall leave the playing arena, or in the case of half-time, not return to the playing arena. If the match is unable to recommence within a 30-minute period, the scores of the teams at the time the match was interrupted shall be deemed to be the final scores of the match. The team with the highest score shall be deemed the winner of the match and the scores shall be used in calculating the percentage of each team.

### **Match not able to proceed**

A field umpire shall, having regard to the health and safety of the players and any other relevant circumstances, determine whether a match is unable to commence or proceed. A field umpire must determine that a match is unable to commence or proceed for such time as lightning is present at or within the immediate proximity of the playing arena where the match is being conducted.

## **MARSH AFL MATCHDAY CHECKLIST**

Clubs are required to complete (not required to be submitted) the online pre-formatted [Marsh Match Day Checklist](#).

The Marsh Match Day Checklist is a pre-match inspection tool for evaluating injury and accident causes on and around the player and public areas. It is designed to introduce and improve risk management processes.

## **TEAM MANAGER MATCH DAY CHECKLIST**

- Team sheets completed correctly
- Ensure all appointed officials listed on team sheet are present at least 5 minutes before the match start time.
- Ensure all players and officials are wearing correct uniform as approved by VAFA Football Operations.
- Match footballs provided to umpires as per section specifications.
- Ensure live scores are being entered correctly through PlayHQ (MPC, MDC, WPC and WDC required; all other Sections encouraged).
- A copy of the team sheet has been handed to the opposition team no later than 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the match.
- Team sheet has been submitted to the field umpire no later than 10 minutes after the end of the second quarter.
- **Attend the umpire's room within 15 minutes of the completion of the match to acknowledge the umpire's Match Day Paperwork as well as any match day reports and/or melee charges (NB. club officials are not to discuss matters relating to Match Day Paperwork or argue with umpires).**
- Hand the officiating field umpire the scorecards from the club appointed Goal Umpire and Timekeeper.
- All quarter-by-quarter scores, full-time scores, goal kickers and best players are entered into PlayHQ by 5.30pm on a match day.

## **MATCH DAY MANAGER CHECKLIST**

- Unlock all Dressing Room facilities for players and officiating umpires.
- Attach padding around each goal and point post.
- Introduce yourselves to the officiating umpires before the match commences.
- Advise the umpires where you will be stationed for the majority of the match.
- Ensure the ground and surrounding areas are safe for the day's activities and complete all ground inspection requirements via the Marsh Match Day Checklist.
- Act upon any issues that may arise throughout the match (this may include but is not limited to drinking of alcohol that does not comply with the [VAFA Alcohol Policy](#) and breaches of the [Spectator Code of Conduct](#)).

### **Other documents to assist:**

[National Community Football Policy Handbook](#)

[VAFA Coaches Code of Conduct](#)

[VAFA Players Code of Conduct](#)

[VAFA Spectator Code of Conduct](#)

[VAFA General Code of Conduct](#)

[2026 On Field Requirements](#)

[Vilification Match Day Action Plan](#)

[VAFA Alcohol Policy](#)

[2025 Regrading Policy](#)