



# **COMPETITION REGULATIONS 2026**

# CONTENTS

ORGANISATION AND ADMISSION .....	3
1. SCOPE AND APPLICATION.....	3
2. CONFIRMATION OF COMPETITIONS.....	3
3. REFERENCE .....	3
4. CONTROL OF COMPETITION.....	3
5. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.....	4
6. DISCIPLINE .....	4
7. ALTERATION .....	4
8. OUTSTANDING DEBTS.....	4
9. MEETINGS.....	5
10. ADMISSION INTO COMPETITIONS .....	5
11. TEAM REMOVED OR WITHDRAWN FROM COMPETITIONS.....	5
12. VIDEO TECHNOLOGY .....	5
TECHNICAL.....	6
13. LAWS OF THE GAME .....	6
14. PREMIERSHIP SEASON .....	6
15. PREMIERSHIP POINTS AND TABLES.....	6
16. FINALS SERIES.....	6
17. PLAY OFFS.....	7
18. DURATION OF MATCHES.....	7
19. MATCH ABANDONMENTS .....	7
20. GROUNDS .....	8
21. GROUND CLOSURES AND INCLEMENT WEATHER.....	8
22. MATCH BALLS .....	8
23. PLAYER EQUIPMENT .....	8
24. TECHNICAL AREAS.....	9
25. SUBSTITUTION AND INTERCHANGE .....	9
26. CLUB UNIFORMS AND COLOUR CLASH.....	10
27. FORFEITS .....	10
28. GROUND OFFICIALS .....	10
29. DUTY OFFICERS.....	11
30. MATCH OFFICIALS .....	11
31. TROPHIES.....	11
32. APPROVAL FOR OTHER COMPETITIONS.....	12
33. PROTESTS AND DISPUTES .....	12
34. REGISTRATION.....	12
35. AGE ELIGIBILITY .....	13
36. PLAYER BORROWING .....	13
37. DUAL TEAM ELIGIBILITY .....	14
38. INELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS .....	15
39. YELLOW AND RED CARD ACCUMULATION .....	15
40. TEAM SHEETS AND MATCH RECORDS .....	16
SCHEDULE A - REFERENCES .....	18
SCHEDULE B - AGE ELIGIBILITY .....	19
SCHEDULE C - TABLE OF FINES.....	20
SCHEDULE E - DEFINITIONS .....	21

# ORGANISATION AND ADMISSION

## 1. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1. These Regulations are established for Competitions conducted jointly across the Zones of Hunter Valley Football Association Incorporated and Macquarie Football Limited, and are binding on all Participants, Clubs and Teams involved in those Competitions.
- 1.2. Clubs and/or Teams from outside of the above-mentioned Zones may compete in the Competitions only with the written confirmation of their usual Affiliated Zone.
- 1.3. Hunter Valley Football Association Incorporated and Macquarie Football Limited are responsible for the organisation, promotion and regulation of football within their respective Zones under the framework of Northern NSW Football.
- 1.4. Where these Regulations are silent on any particular aspect, then all Zones, Clubs, and Referee bodies shall first have regard to the Policies of NNSWF, NNSWF Rules and Regulations, Football Australia (FA) rules and regulations and where applicable rules and regulations of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA.
- 1.5. All Clubs, Players, Team Officials, Match Officials, spectators, or any person participating in any manner at a Fixture, Match, or event will submit exclusively to the jurisdiction of these Competition Regulations.
- 1.6. Penalties may be imposed for any breach of these Regulations and Policies and for any matter which is not expressly mentioned.
- 1.7. The CMC may, from time to time, adopt Policies. Failure to adhere to policies may carry similar consequences to breaching these Regulations.

## 2. CONFIRMATION OF COMPETITIONS

- 2.1. The administered Competitions will be:

COMPETITION	COMPETITION
Interzone	Under 12, Under 13, Under 14, Under 15, Under 16, Under 17, Under 18, All Age, Over 35, Under 12 Girls, Under 13 Girls, Under 14 Girls, Under 15 Girls, Under 16 Girls, Under 17 Girls, Under 18 Girls, All Age Women, Over 30 Women

- 2.2. Girls and Women Grades shall be an exclusive playing option for Female Players only.
- 2.3. Girls and Women Competitions as listed in Section 2.1 shall be referenced within these Regulations as being of the same conditions as the mixed Gender Competitions. E.g., a reference to Under 12 conditions shall be the same as Under 12 Girls.
- 2.4. Competitions may be broken into Grades. A or one (1) being the highest grade.
- 2.5. Competitions may be separated by the day of Competition. E.g., All Age Women Friday or All Age Women Sunday.
- 2.6. The composition of the Competitions, including the number of teams per grade, will be determined by the CMC.

## 3. REFERENCE

- 3.1. Where these Regulations refer to a "Club" that reference is to a Club of a Zone that has been accepted for affiliation with that Zone.

## 4. CONTROL OF COMPETITION

- 4.1. The administrative control and conduct of the Competitions are vested with the CMC.

4.2. If any part of these Regulations is void, that part shall be severable and will not affect the enforceability of the remaining sections of these Regulations.

4.3. The CMC may choose to not enforce a term of these Regulations in some cases, in its absolute discretion, while acting reasonably and in the best interests of the Competition, without affecting its right to enforce that term in other cases.

4.4. Subject to Section 7, the CMC will interpret and apply all articles of these Regulations, and any such interpretation or application will be final and binding on all parties and not subject to challenge or appeal.

## **5. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

5.1. The CMC will have the power to consider Special Circumstances outside the prescribed limits of the Regulations should it be clear those special considerations are in the best interest of the game and does not contradict those as mentioned at Section 1.4.

5.2. The decision by the CMC to review and consider special circumstances under this section is not subject to appeal or review.

## **6. DISCIPLINE**

6.1. Breaches of these Regulations that attract a prescribed monetary penalty will be dealt with by reference to Schedule C in the first instance.

6.2. On-field disciplinary matters relating to the accumulation of Cautions (yellow cards) and Expulsions (red cards) will be administered in accordance with these Regulations.

6.3. The disciplinary function for this Competition is administered in accordance with the Zone Regulatory Amendment Schedule, as amended from time to time.

6.4. For the purposes of these Regulations, the Centralised Unit is the body appointed to deliver and administer the disciplinary function, including the receipt and management of reports, the issuing of charge notices where applicable, the coordination of disciplinary proceedings, the maintenance of records, and the communication of outcomes.

6.5. To the extent of any inconsistency between these Competition Regulations and the Zone Regulatory Amendment Schedule in relation to the disciplinary function, the Zone Regulatory Amendment Schedule prevails.

## **7. ALTERATION**

7.1. These Regulations may only be amended, altered or rescinded with the approval of the Parties in accordance with the agreed Competition Charter and the Competition Management Agreement.

7.2. The Competition Management Committee (CMC) is responsible for the ongoing administration, interpretation and application of these Regulations, and may make operational determinations, directives, and clarifications consistent with the intent of these Regulations.

7.3. The CMC may, where necessary for the effective operation of the Competitions, issue guidelines, procedures or interpretations to give practical effect to these Regulations.

7.4. Clerical, typographical or administrative corrections, or clarifications that do not alter the substantive operation of these Regulations, may be made by the CMC and do not constitute an amendment for the purposes of this section.

## **8. OUTSTANDING DEBTS**

8.1. Treatment of outstanding debts for matters relating to Competitions listed in Section 2 will be as per the discretion of the CMC.

8.2. For the avoidance of doubt, failure to comply with outstanding debts may result in:

- a. ineligibility for competition points while the debt remains unpaid; and/or

- b. ineligibility to participate in Premiership or Championship Matches.

## **9. MEETINGS**

- 9.1. The CMC may schedule meetings pre-season and during Season to update Clubs on various matters.
- 9.2. Attendance at meetings is compulsory for each Club which participates in the Competition unless otherwise stated.

## **10. ADMISSION INTO COMPETITIONS**

- 10.1. Participation in the Competitions is on an annual basis unless otherwise specified.
- 10.2. Clubs must submit Teams with the minimum number of registered players, being eleven (11) players via the process and by the date and time as specified by the CMC.
- 10.3. Clubs may submit late entries. Late entries may be accepted subject to a Bye being available in that Competition.

## **11. TEAM REMOVED OR WITHDRAWN FROM COMPETITIONS**

- 11.1. In the event of any team withdrawing or being removed from a Competition, the following procedure will take effect to allow the altered Competitions to proceed to a conclusion.
  - a. Removed or withdrawing before Competition has started: The team will be withdrawn from the Competition and if necessary, replaced with a Bye.
  - b. In the event of a Team being removed or withdrawing prior to versing every other team once will result in:
    - i. all opposing Teams that have played the removed or withdrawn Teams shall have Competition Points and goals for and against deleted from their records and shall be credited with a bye result.
    - ii. Teams that have not played the removed or withdrawn Team will obtain a Bye result.
  - c. In the event of a Team being removed or withdrawing after versing every other Team:
    - i. All points and goals for and against will be retained by opposing Teams for the completed Matches in the Season Cycle(s).
    - ii. Competition Points and goals for and against will be deleted arising from Matches versing the removed or withdrawn Team and a Bye result awarded to those Teams.
    - iii. Teams that have not played the removed or withdrawn Team will obtain a Bye result.
  - d. Where a postponed or deferred Match from an earlier Season Cycle of Match remains to be played at the time of removal or withdrawal, the result shall be deemed to be a forfeit.

## **12. VIDEO TECHNOLOGY**

- 12.1. Clubs who record Matches will make all recordings available to their Affiliated Zone or the Zone which administers the Competition upon request.
- 12.2. All videos of Matches must be submitted to the requesting Zone within forty-eight (48) hours of request and must be unedited.

# TECHNICAL

## 13. LAWS OF THE GAME

13.1. All Matches will be played in compliance with the Regulations in force at the time and in accordance with FA and NNSWF regulations, codes and directives, and under the IFAB Laws of the Game.

## 14. PREMIERSHIP SEASON

14.1. Subject to Sections 4 and 5, the Premiership Season shall be determined via the number of teams within a Competition.

- a. A six (6) team Competition will play fifteen (15) rounds.
- b. An eight (8) team Competition will play fourteen (14) rounds.
- c. A ten (10) team Competition will play eighteen (18) rounds.

14.2. Matches shall be played on grounds set down by the CMC and shall commence at stipulated times, with no amendment, except where extenuating circumstances have delayed the previous games, and it is not possible for a game to commence at the stipulated time. In such cases the games will commence immediately following the preceding game.

14.3. The CMC may alter any Fixture's details at its discretion.

14.4. The Team listed first in the draw shall be deemed as the Home Team.

14.5. Where a team with more than ten (10) players are participating in a competition conducted by NNSWF or FA, the Premiership Match will be postponed and played within fourteen (14) days of the original date, decided by the CMC.

## 15. PREMIERSHIP POINTS AND TABLES

15.1. Competition points will be awarded as follows:

RESULT	OUTCOME
Win (by Match result or Forfeit)	Three (3) points
Draw	One (1) Point
Loss	Zero (0) Points
Bye	Zero (0) Points

15.2. The Premiership shall be decided upon competition points, then goal difference, then goals for.

15.3. In the event that partial rounds are unable to be played, and therefore there are uneven games in a Competition, the Premiership ranking will be determined by the competition's points divided by the number of games played.

## 16. FINALS SERIES

16.1. A Finals Series to determine the Championship winner shall be conducted for each Age and Grade consisting of the teams finishing in the highest four (4) positions of the final Premiership Table.

16.2. Unless explicitly described, all conditions described in these Regulations remain for all Finals Series Matches.

16.3. Subject to Sections 4 and 5, the Championship shall be determined via the following format:

MATCH NUMBER	MATCH
1 (Semi-Final)	Position 1 vs Position 2
2 (Elimination Final)	Position 3 vs Position 4
3 (Final)	Loser Match 1 vs Winner Match 2

- 16.4.** Match durations will be that as listed in Section 18.
- 16.5.** Time added on will be enforced for all Finals Series Matches.
- 16.6.** During the Finals Series, if the scores are equal at full time, Matches will move to Extra Time consisting of two (2) periods of ten (10) minutes. There is no break at the half time of Extra Time.
- 16.7.** If the scores are still equal at the conclusion of Extra Time, the result of the Finals Series Match shall be determined via a Penalty Shoot Out.
- 16.8.** The CMC shall determine venues and kick-off times for all Finals Series Matches.
- 16.9.** Unless otherwise advertised, each Team competing in a Finals Series Match must supply one (1) Match ball for use in the Fixture.

## 17. PLAY OFFS

- 17.1.** If a play-off is required to determine the Premiership winner, or which team is to proceed to the Finals Series, that is where teams in the same section of a division are equal on competition points, goal difference and goals scored, a play-off shall be arranged by the CMC, on a neutral ground.
- 17.2.** The conditions of a play-off shall be that of a Finals Series Match as described in Section 16.
- 17.3.** If it is not possible to determine a Premiership winner, or which team is to proceed to the Finals Series, the decision will be made by the drawing of lots.

## 18. DURATION OF MATCHES

- 18.1.** The duration of Matches will be:

AGE/GRADE	DURATION	HALF TIME
All Age A Grade	Two Periods of 45 minutes	10 minutes
All Age B and lower Grades	Two Periods of 40 minutes	10 minutes
Over 30 Women and Over 35's	Two Periods of 40 minutes	10 minutes
Under 17 & Under 18	Two Periods of 40 minutes	10 minutes
Under 15 & Under 16	Two Periods of 35 minutes	5 minutes
Under 13 & Under 14	Two Periods of 30 minutes	5 minutes
Under 12	Two Periods of 25 minutes	5 minutes

- 18.2.** There is no time added on for any Premiership Match.
- 18.3.** The Referee is the sole adjudicator of the Match duration.

## 19. MATCH ABANDONMENTS

- 19.1.** Any Premiership Match which is Abandoned for reasons out of the control of the Participants during the first half, at the half-time break and up to the actual start of the second half (i.e., the blowing of the whistle by the Referee to commence the second half) shall be deemed not to have reached its natural conclusion and will be re-scheduled for play at a date, time, location and under the conditions as determined by the CMC.
- 19.2.** Any Premiership Match which is Abandoned for reasons out of the control of the Participants during the second half (i.e., at any time after the whistle blowing by the Referee to commence the second half) shall be deemed to have reached its natural conclusion and will not be re-scheduled.
- 19.3.** Match Abandonments caused by unnatural causes (e.g. spectator interference, mass violence, mass walk-offs, refusal to start a fixture) will have the outcome of the Match determined by the CMC but adhering to any disciplinary determinations in the first instance.

## 20. GROUNDS

- 20.1. The Host Club shall be responsible for correct and adequate marking of the field, including Technical Areas, and shall provide properly secured goal posts, goal nets, and corner flags.
- 20.2. The Host Club shall provide seating for Players, Coaches and Team Officials within both Technical Areas.
- 20.3. Toilet facilities shall be available for Participants at all Matches.
- 20.4. For unfenced Grounds or Fields, spectator areas shall be three (3) metres from the Field of Play and Technical Area.
- 20.5. A Fixture may be played wholly or in part under floodlights, provided that the standard of lighting meets the requirements of an average of 100 Lux.
- 20.6. Should a Ground become unfit for play (except in the case of a wash-out), the Home Club may arrange an alternative venue for Matches to be played. The Zone must be notified eight (8) days before the scheduled kick-off. Zones may inspect the Ground for final determination.
- 20.7. Should any Ground or Field be deemed unacceptable for use for any reason during a season, the CMC reserves the right to reschedule Matches to alternative venues.
- 20.8. A visiting team may protest the conditions of the ground, goal posts, nets, corner flags, or balls and shall make their protest to the Referee prior to the Match. The Referee shall note the protest via an Incident Report.
- 20.9. The Referee shall be empowered to order the game to be played despite the protests made as per Section 20.8, but only where the protests relate to the ground, goal posts, nets, corner flags or balls not conforming to the Laws of the Game.

## 21. GROUND CLOSURES AND INCLEMENT WEATHER

- 21.1. In the event of inclement weather causing ground closures, as many games as possible shall be played on the day.
- 21.2. Clubs who close their fields must do so by the following time in accordance with their Affiliated Zone Policy:

SCHEDULED MATCH DAY	REQUIRED TIME OF GROUND CLOSURE
Monday through to and including Friday	4:00pm on the day of the Match
Saturday	7:00am Saturday
Sunday	7:00am Sunday

- 21.3. Matches affected by Ground closures may be relocated to an alternative venue at the discretion of the CMC.
- 21.4. Matches which have been affected by ground closures will be re-scheduled at the discretion of the CMC and there is no correspondence to be entered unless there is a clear and obvious error.

## 22. MATCH BALLS

- 22.1. The ball sizes are:

COMPETITION	BALL SIZE
Under 12 & Under 13	Size 4
Under 14 and older	Size 5

- 22.2. The Home team shall be responsible for supplying two (2) Match balls for use in the Fixture.

## 23. PLAYER EQUIPMENT

- 23.1. Players competing in a Match must:

- a. Be wearing their Club uniform, including jersey, shorts and socks.
- b. Wear shin pads.
- c. Be identifiable to the Match Officials with a number of the back of their jersey.
- d. No two players on the same Team shall be allowed to have identical numbers displayed on their jerseys.

**23.2.** Caps may only be worn by Goalkeepers.

**23.3.** Spectacles may be worn. The referee is the sole judge who determines whether spectacles are a risk to those playing a Match. Referees should show tolerance when authorising their use, especially for younger players.

**23.4.** Plaster casts or any splint of any hard material (e.g., metal, plastic) are not permitted to enter the Field of Play. The use of soft material to hide or protect the hard material splint is not permitted.

**23.5.** Jewellery of any type is not permitted onto the Field of Play, including metal, leather, plastic, or any other material. Hidden jewellery must be removed before entering the Field of Play. Using tape to cover jewellery is not acceptable.

**23.6.** Medi-alert items are exempt from Section 23.5.

**23.7.** Compression clothing may be worn. The colour of the garments must be of the same prominent colour as the uniform or black.

**23.8.** Hijabs may be worn. The colour of the Hijab must be of the same prominent colour of the uniform or black. Referees are not permitted to check the affixing material or touch the garment.

**23.9.** No kind of demonstration or political, religious, or racial propaganda is permitted to be worn prior to, during, or after any Match.

## **24. TECHNICAL AREAS**

**24.1.** Home Clubs must ensure there is sufficient seating for seven (7) people in each Technical Area.

**24.2.** Only currently registered and eligible Players, Coaches and Team Officials named on the Team Sheet are permitted in the Technical Area during Matches.

**24.3.** All Coaches and Team Officials in the Technical Area must be listed on the Team Sheet and be wearing their Zone distributed ID Tag.

**24.4.** All Players in the Technical Area must remain seated unless they move to and from warm-up or to enter the Field of Play.

**24.5.** A maximum of two (2) Team Officials are permitted within a Technical Area at any given time.

**24.6.** Only one (1) Participant at a time is authorised to stand and convey tactical instructions from the Technical Area.

## **25. SUBSTITUTION AND INTERCHANGE**

**25.1.** Interchange will be used in all Competitions and Grades unless specifically advised.

**25.2.** Interchange players may enter and/or leave the Field of Play as many times as necessary, but only with the express permission of the Referee and during a break in play. Interchange players will:

- a. Leave the Field of Play at the closest point of exit; and
- b. Enter the Field of Play from the sideline at the halfway point.

**25.3.** The number of maximum Interchange Players per Match is five (5).

## **26. CLUB UNIFORMS AND COLOUR CLASH**

- 26.1.** Clubs are required to wear their first-choice uniform for all Matches unless there is a clash of colours, and the Referee has determined that there is a clash of colours.
- 26.2.** Clubs are required to have an alternative playing uniform which is antithetical to their first-choice kit. E.g., a Club which usually wears a dark colour must have an alternative strip which is of a light colour.
- 26.3.** In the event of a clash of colours of field Players the Home Club will be required to wear their alternative uniform.
- 26.4.** In the event of a goalkeeper's jersey clashing with the opponent's jersey, the goalkeeper must change their playing uniform.
- 26.5.** The Referee will be the sole adjudicator regarding a clash of colours.

## **27. FORFEITS**

- 27.1.** Any Team not in attendance at the designated ground and ready to take the field at the scheduled time shall be deemed to have forfeited the Match. The Referee shall endorse the Team Sheet to the effect that: "the name of the team" was not ready to take the field.
- 27.2.** A Team must always field a minimum of seven (7) Players. If a Team falls below the minimum Players, the Match will be deemed as Abandoned by Forfeit and not be re-scheduled.
- 27.3.** Failure to maintain the minimum number of players shall result in the Match being awarded to the non-offending Team. No penalty will apply to the forfeiting team.
- 27.4.** If less than the minimum number of players are available prior to the Match, ten (10) minutes grace after the scheduled kick-off time will be allowed to equal the minimum Players whereby the referee will call the Match forfeited and endorse the Match Sheet.
- 27.5.** A Club may forfeit an upcoming Team's Fixture by notifying their Affiliated Zone.
- 27.6.** Teams forfeiting on two (2) occasions during the Premiership may be removed from the Competition by the CMC.
- 27.7.** Any Team forfeiting during the Finals Series will be removed from the Finals Series.
- 27.8.** Where there is a forfeit, the non-offending Team shall be awarded the Competition points and a winning score of 3-0, or their score will stand if better than a three (3) goal difference at the time of an Abandonment by Forfeit.
- 27.9.** Any Team who forfeits during the last four (4) calendar dated rounds of the season is ineligible to compete in the Finals Series.
- 27.10.** If, in the case of a team finishing in the top four (4) positions who becomes ineligible to compete in a Finals Series, then the next team in order of the table will move in the Finals Series.

## **28. GROUND OFFICIALS**

- 28.1.** All Teams must supply one (1) Ground Official for all Premiership Matches, who must be 18 years of age or older and must have their names recorded on the Team Sheet.
- 28.2.** All Teams must supply two (2) Ground Officials for all Finals Series Matches, who must be 18 years of age or older and must have their names recorded on the Team Sheet.
- 28.3.** Ground officials are designated for the control of their Team Spectators and assisting Match Officials when requested. The Ground Official must not enter the Technical Area or Field of Play unless specifically requested by the Match Official.
- 28.4.** Ground Officials must be present from the kick-off of the Match until fifteen (15) minutes after the completion of the Match.

**28.5.** All Ground Officials are to wear a high visibility vest supplied by their Club.

**28.6.** All Ground Officials must be in sight of the Match Officials during the Match.

## **29. DUTY OFFICERS**

**29.1.** Each Host Club must provide a minimum of one (1) identified Duty Officer, who must be 18 years of age or older and must have their names recorded on the Team Sheet. The Duty Officer is solely responsible for the management of that Ground.

**29.2.** Duty Officers may be approached by Referees, or Ground Officials to aid with behavioral issues from spectators, non-playing members and members.

**29.3.** Duty Officers must wear a high visibility vest supplied by the Club.

**29.4.** Duty Officers should not be acting in any other capacity while performing their duty.

**29.5.** Duty Officers are responsible for the safety of all Match Officials.

## **30. MATCH OFFICIALS**

**30.1.** Match Officials shall be appointed by the Zone which the Match is being played.

**30.2.** It is the responsibility of the Home Team to pay Referee fees via the Home Zone's documented process.

**30.3.** If a registered Match Official is not in attendance, a substitute must be appointed with the following preference:

- a. A qualified Referee
- b. Home Team Club Referee
- c. Any other Club Referee
- d. Any other capable person.

**30.4.** Failure to comply with Section 30.3 will result in the Match being forfeited by the Home Team and awarded to the Away team.

**30.5.** Once a substitute Match Official is appointed, they shall assume all responsibilities of an officially appointed Match Official and shall make themselves aware of their obligations regarding submitting reports.

**30.6.** If, in the case of Spectators abusing Participants taking part in a Match, a Match Official is empowered to stop the Match and request that Team's Ground Official manage the situation.

**30.7.** If in the opinion of the Match Official that there has been insufficient action provided to stop that abuse, that Match Official may Abandon the Match without question. The Referee is required to report the Match Abandonment via an incident report to their Zone which will be distributed to the CMC.

## **31. TROPHIES**

**31.1.** The Premiership winner, Grand Final winner and Grand Final runner-up in each Competition and Grade shall be awarded a trophy or similar.

**31.2.** The quantity of trophies is:

- a. Eighteen (18) for all Competitions except Over 35 and Over 30 Women; and
- b. Twenty (20) for all Over 35 and Over 30 Women Competitions.

**31.3.** Clubs may request to their Zone additional trophies at the expense of that Club.

## **32. APPROVAL FOR OTHER COMPETITIONS**

**32.1.** Clubs must obtain permission from the Affiliated Zone prior to submitting any application to enter any other Competition.

## **33. PROTESTS AND DISPUTES**

**33.1.** The judgement decisions of a Match Official during the playing of a Match, for example including whether a goal is scored, whether a Player is offside, disciplinary decisions and the result of the Match, are final and cannot be disputed by any party.

**33.2.** A Club cannot protest about a Match because it has formed the view that a Match Official was incompetent.

**33.3.** The CMC will consider a protest or dispute after a Match has been played only if there has been an obvious error made in the application of the Laws of the Game or relating to any other Section within these Regulations.

**33.4.** To be considered, a protest must be:

- a. In writing via the Club Secretary; and
  - i. For Premiership, Semi-Finals, Play-Off, or Finals Matches a protest must be lodged with their Affiliated Zone by no later than 5.00pm of the third Business Day after the completion of the Match.
  - ii. For a Grand-Finals Match, a protest or dispute must be submitted via text message to the CMC within fifteen minutes after the completion of the Match.

**33.5.** Any decision made in relation to a protest or dispute will be at the absolute discretion of the CMC and will not be subject to an appeal.

**33.6.** If a protest made in accordance with this Section is upheld, the CMC may determine that the Match to which the protest related be replayed either in its entirety or from the time of the error.

**33.7.** The CMC also reserves the right to investigate any matter at its own discretion even though a formal protest has not been lodged.

## **34. REGISTRATION**

**34.1.** All Players, Coaches, Team Officials and Match Officials must register with an Affiliated Club of a Zone through the National Registration Platform and pay all relevant fees to that Club.

**34.2.** All Players must be registered to a Team through the approved Competition Management System (CMS).

**34.3.** All Players must register as Amateur Players.

**34.4.** Player registrations will cease at 11:59pm on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June.

**34.5.** All Coaches, Team Officials and Referees must meet the requirements of the Working with Children legislation and:

**34.6.** If a Coach or a Team Official is compliant with Registration requirements and the legislated Working with Children requirements as stated in this Section, then they will be distributed an ID Tag by their Affiliated Zone.

**34.7.** Where a player has a known medical condition that is reasonably likely to require assistance, intervention, or modification to participation during a Match, that condition must be noted upon registration.

**34.8.** Disclosure is limited to conditions that, if not known, could reasonably pose a risk to the Player's health or safety during football activities. Minor, routine, or well-managed conditions that do not impact participation or emergency response are not required to be disclosed.

**34.9.** Where a relevant medical condition is disclosed:

- a. The Team Coach and Team Official must have knowledge of the medical condition and must be provided with the necessary information to assist the Player should the medical condition present.
- b. Prior to each Match, Match Officials must be informed only where the condition may reasonably affect Match management or require an immediate response, without disclosure of unnecessary medical detail.
- c. If the disclosed medical condition is such that it may reasonably require:
  - i. specialist medical intervention; or
  - ii. specific medical equipment not ordinarily available at a Match.

the Player's parent or legal guardian must be present at all Matches unless alternative written arrangements are approved by the Zone.

- d. Nothing in this Regulation creates a medical duty of care beyond the reasonable expectations of volunteers, Match Officials, or Zone.

## **35. AGE ELIGIBILITY**

**35.1.** A Player may only play in their own Age Competition. Any reference to an Under Competition is referred to as being the age in which the Player is turning in that calendar year. E.g., A Player turning fourteen (14) in the calendar year may play in the Under 14's but not in the Under 13's.

**35.2.** Players may only play in age groups of their own or a maximum of three (3) years above their age as of the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of the playing year. An Age Eligibility Matrix is available at Schedule B.

**35.3.** The age qualification for All Age Competitions is that that Player must be turning fifteen (15) in the year of Competition or older.

**35.4.** The age qualification for Over 30 Women is that the Player must have obtained the age of thirty (30) prior to taking part in a Match.

**35.5.** The age qualification for Over 35's is that the Player must have obtained the age of thirty-five (35) prior to taking part in a Match.

**35.6.** Requests may be submitted by Clubs to the CMC for players with a disability to play in a more suitable age group. Players who have requested consideration will be assessed by a nominated delegate and will work in conjunction with the CMC, the Player parents/guardians and Club to recommend a suitable Competition and Grade to play.

- a. The CMC will make the final decision upon the suitable Competition.
- b. There are no appeals regarding the CMC's decision arising from requests of this nature.

## **36. PLAYER BORROWING**

**36.1.** Teams may borrow Players from other Teams within their Club.

**36.2.** Teams may not borrow a Player to take the place of a Suspended Player.

**36.3.** Where a Club has more than one (1) Team in a Grade of a Competition, there will be no borrowing of Players between those Teams.

**36.4.** Players may not be borrowed into a Team competing in a Competition which is younger than the Competition which that Player is registered to.

**36.5.** A maximum of five (5) Players may be borrowed into a Team for a Match.

**36.6.** Teams competing in an Under Competition may borrow from Teams within their Club in a lower Grade

of the same Age, or:

- a. If the Club has multiple Teams in the Competition one year younger than the Team which wishes to borrow Players, that Team may only borrow from a Grade which is the same or lower.
  - b. If the Club has one (1) or zero (0) Teams within their Club one year younger than the Team which wishes to borrow, then there are no Grade restrictions on Player borrowing except for any Age restrictions.
- 36.7.** Players may be borrowed in an Under Competition between Female Competitions and Mixed Gender Competitions which are of the same Age and Grade or below. For clarity, an Under 15 Girls A Grade player may be borrowed into the Under 15 A Grade Team, and vice versa, of the same Club.
- 36.8.** Teams borrowing into their Under 12's, Under 13's, or Under 14's may borrow a Player from their Club's MiniRoos teams. Age and Gender restrictions apply as per Sections 2 and 35.
- 36.9.** All Age, Over 30 Women or Over 35's Players may be borrowed into a Team from a lower Grade of that Competition. For clarity, a Team registered to the All Age Women A Grade may borrow from the All Age Women B Grade team from the same Club.
- 36.10.** Players registered to an Over 35's Team may be borrowed into any All Age Team.
- 36.11.** Players registered to an Over 30 Women's Team may be borrowed into any All Age Team.
- 36.12.** Age eligible Players registered to an All-Age Team may be borrowed into an Over 30 Women, or Over 35's Team that is no more than three (3) Grades below. For clarity, an All-Age A player may be borrowed to an O35 A Grade, O35 B Grade and/or O35 C Grade. Gender restrictions apply as per Section 2.
- 36.13.** Age eligible Players registered to an Under 16, Under 17, or Under 18 team may be borrowed into an All Age Team. Gender restrictions apply as per Section 2.
- 36.14.** Age eligible Players registered to an All Age team may not be borrowed into an Under 16, Under 17, or Under 18 Team.
- 36.15.** Players registered to an All Age or Over 35's Team may only be borrowed into an All Age or Over 35's of a differing Competition in the same Grade, or Higher. For clarity, a Player registered to an All Age Friday H Grade may only be borrowed into an All Age Saturday H Grade or higher Team.
- 36.16.** Clubs may apply to the CMC for Player borrowing exemptions. Exemption requests must be submitted 72 hours prior to a match. All decisions of the CMC are final and are not open for appeal.

## **37. DUAL TEAM ELIGIBILITY**

- 37.1.** A Player may apply to compete in more than one Team within the one Club.
- 37.2.** The Club must complete the appropriate form and pay the appropriate administration fee as set by the Zone to which the Club affiliates.
- 37.3.** Approval of Players wishing to compete in more than one Team is vested to the Club's affiliated Zone.
- 37.4.** The primary Team is the Team which the Player is initially assigned to by the Club through the Competition Management System. The Player's priority is to the Primary Club Team.
- 37.5.** The secondary Team is the Team which the Player may be assigned to by the Club through the Competition Management System. A Player must prioritise their primary Team where scheduled matches overlap or occur within the same Match window as determined by the Competition.
- 37.6.** In the unlikely event of a Player wishing to compete in more than two (2) Club Teams, application must be made to the CMC which will determine the conditions and procedures that will apply to the application.
- 37.7.** A secondary Team may list a maximum of three (3) dual team Players on the Team Sheet for any Premiership or Finals Series Match.

## 38. INELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

38.1. An ineligible Player is that who:

- a. Does not meet the registration, age, or borrowing qualifying criteria as described in these Regulations; or
- b. Is a suspended Player; or
- c. Is not listed and confirmed on the Team Sheet of a Match; or
- d. A Player playing under a false identity; or
- e. In the case of Over 30 Women or Over 35's Competitions, has not obtained the age required.

38.2. An ineligible Coach or Team Official is that who:

- a. Does not meet the registration qualifying criteria as described in these Regulations; or
- b. Is suspended; or
- c. Is not listed and confirmed on the Team Sheet of a Match; or
- d. Does not have their ID tag clearly displayed when acting in the role of Coach or Team Official.

## 39. YELLOW AND RED CARD ACCUMULATION

39.1. A participant will retain accumulated yellow and red cards if that participant is to change Team's or Club's throughout the Premiership Season.

39.2. Accumulation of Yellow Cards.

- a. A participant who accumulates five (5) yellow cards in the Premiership Season must serve a one (1) fixture suspension.
- b. A participant who accumulates a further three (3) yellow cards (eight (8) yellow cards in total) in the Premiership Season must serve a further two (2) fixture suspension.
- c. A participant who accumulates a further two (2) yellow cards (ten (10) yellow cards in total) in the Premiership Season must serve a further three (3) match suspension.
- d. Yellow cards received throughout the Premiership Season which do not result in an accumulated yellow card suspension do not carry into a Finals Series or across to the next Season.
- e. There are no accumulations of yellow cards received during a Finals Series.
- f. Subject to Section 39.2 a-e, the serving of an accumulation yellow card suspension will be performed:
  - i. If the final yellow card was received while participating in the participants registered Team:
    - I. the next scheduled Fixture of that Participants Team; or
  - ii. If the final yellow card was received while participating in a Team, or squad as a borrowed Participant, either the:
    - I. next Fixture of the Participants registered Team; or
    - II. next Fixture of that Team or Squad which that yellow card was received, whichever is first.
- g. The only exception to the serving of an accumulation suspension is where a Participant, while participating in a secondary or borrowed Team or Squad, receives the final caution triggering the accumulation suspension, and their primary Team has a scheduled Fixture on the same day. In this

circumstance, the Participant is ineligible to participate in that Fixture; however, that Fixture shall not be counted as the match in which the accumulation suspension is served. The accumulation suspension must instead be served in the next eligible Fixture of the Participant's primary Team.

- h. A Participant is suspended from all football activities at the conclusion of the Fixture which the final yellow card is received.
- i. Two (2) yellow cards received in one match resulting in a R7 offence are removed from the Participant's records.

### **39.3. Accumulation of Red Cards**

- a. A Participant who accumulates red card offences during the same Premiership Season will receive further sanction:
  - i. Two red card offences will result in a further one (1) match suspension added to the sanction received via the second red card.
  - ii. Three red card offences will result in a further two (2) match suspension added to the sanction received via the third red card.
  - iii. Four red card offences will result in a further three (3) match suspension added to the sanction received via the third red card.
- b. Subject to Section 39.3 (a), the serving of an accumulation red card suspension will be performed:
  - i. If the final red card was received while participating in the participants registered Team – the next scheduled Fixture; or
  - ii. If the final red card was received while participating in a Team, or Squad as a borrowed Participant – either the next Fixture of the Participants registered Team, or the next Fixture of that Team or Squad which that red card was received, whichever is first.

**39.4.** Accumulation suspensions cannot be appealed.

**39.5.** It is the responsibility of the Club to maintain accumulation records of yellow and red cards.

## **40. TEAM SHEETS AND MATCH RECORDS**

**40.1.** Teams Sheets must be recorded for all Matches. It is the responsibility of each Club to ensure they have a Team Official who can access the Team Sheet to submit the required information or when requested by a Zone Employee at any time.

**40.2.** Team Officials must submit onto the Team Sheet all playing and non-playing Participants, including any borrowed Players, and enter the Players correct jersey number in the space provided no less than fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off time.

**40.3.** Team Officials must cross-reference all Participants to their photo and jersey numbers of their opposition no less than ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off.

**40.4.** Participants who are not present during the cross-referencing may not take to the Field of Play until they are presented to the opposition Team Official for cross-referencing.

**40.5.** A Player may not replace a Player already cross-referenced by the opposition Team Official.

**40.6.** The cross-referencing and confirmation of any late opposition Participants must be performed by the end of the half-time interval.

**40.7.** If there is a dispute regarding the eligibility of a Player, then that matter must be reported by the Team Officials to the Referee and their Club Secretary who will:

- a. In the case of a Referee, add this matter to an incident report; or

- b. In the case of a Club Secretary, they will submit a dispute to their Affiliated Zone for CMC consideration.

In both cases, the Match must proceed without prejudice.

- 40.8.** The Referee must enter the score result of a Match within 24 hours of the conclusion of that Match.
- 40.9.** If in the case of an appointed Match Official not being present, the responsibility of entering the score result falls to the Home Club and shall be completed by:
  - a. 9:00am Monday following a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday Match; or
  - b. 9:00am the following day of a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday Match.
- 40.10.** A Team Official must validate the data entered on the Team Sheet within twenty-four (24) hours after the completion of the Match. In the case of any discrepancies, those must be reported to their Club Secretary.
- 40.11.** All Players nominated on the Team Sheet shall be deemed to have played unless a protest has been lodged and it can be proven that that Players did not participate in the Match.
- 40.12.** It is the responsibility of the Club and Team Officials to ensure any suspended Player, Coach or Team Official, does not take the Field of Play or are present in the Technical Area, even if they do not show on the Team Sheet as suspended.

# SCHEDULE A - REFERENCES

FA National Registration, Status and Transfer Regulations  
FA National Disciplinary Regulations  
FA National Code of Conduct and Ethics  
IFAB Laws of the Game  
Zone Regulatory Amendment Schedule  
Northern NSW Football Promotion, Relegation and League Structure

# SCHEDULE B - AGE ELIGIBILITY

AGE GROUP	DATE OF BIRTH
Over 30 Women	Players born on or before 31/12/1995 or are born in 1996 and have reached the age of 30.
Over 35	Players born on or before 31/12/1990 or are born in 1991 and have reached the age of 35.
All Age	Players born on or before 31-12-2010
Under 18	Players born on or after 01-01-2008
Under 17	Players born on or after 01-01-2009
Under 16	Players born on or after 01-01-2010
Under 15	Players born on or after 01-01-2011
Under 14	Players born on or after 01-01-2012
Under 13	Players born on or after 01-01-2013
Under 12	Players born on or after 01-01-2014

# SCHEDULE C - TABLE OF FINES

<b>Team Withdrawing from the Competition after nominations deadline</b>	\$500
<b>Playing an Ineligible Player</b>	\$500 per offence and loss of any Competition Points and Goals For
<b>Poor ground markings or goal nets or corner posts - First offence</b>	\$100
<b>Poor ground markings or goal nets or corner posts - Second and subsequent offences</b>	\$200
<b>Failure to provide seating for Technical Area</b>	\$50
<b>Failure to provide a Ground Official</b>	\$200
<b>Failure to provide a Duty Officer</b>	\$500
<b>Forfeiting a Match outside of 48 hours prior to the scheduled kick-off</b>	\$50
<b>Forfeiting a Match within 48 hours of kick-off</b>	\$300
<b>Forfeiting a Match within the last four (4) calendar rounds of Competition and outside of 48 hours of the scheduled kick-off</b>	\$50 and the Team is ineligible to compete in the Finals Series
<b>Forfeiting a Match within the last four (4) calendar rounds of Competition and within 48 hours of the scheduled kick-off</b>	\$400 and that Team is ineligible to compete in the Finals Series.
<b>Failure of the Team to change uniform in the case of a colour clash</b>	\$100
<b>Incomplete Team Sheet</b>	\$50 per offence
<b>Failure of the Home Club to enter the Match results by the stipulated time</b>	\$50 per offence
<b>Failure to close Grounds by stipulated time</b>	\$100
<b>Failure to notify Zone Association of any change in Venue</b>	\$100

# SCHEDULE E - DEFINITIONS

**Abandoned Match** means a Match that has commenced but is terminated prior to its scheduled conclusion by a Match Official, the Competition Management Committee, or a delegated authority, due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the Participants, or due to misconduct or safety concerns, and which is dealt with in accordance with these Regulations.

**Age** means the age attained by a Player as at the applicable reference date specified in these Regulations, and where no specific reference date is stated, the age the Player will attain on 31 December in the year of the Competition.

**AFC** means the Asian Football Confederation, being the governing body of football in Asia.

**Affiliated Zone** means a Zone being either Hunter Valley Football Association Incorporated or Macquarie Football Ltd affiliated with Northern NSW Football and authorised to administer football competitions.

**All Age** means a senior Competition restricted by a minimum age only.

**Away Club** means the Club not playing the Match at its Home Ground and/or appearing second on the Fixture list.

**Business Day** means a day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or public holiday in New South Wales.

**Bye** means the absence of a scheduled Match for a Team in a particular Round of a Competition, whether arising from an uneven number of Teams, a withdrawal, or a decision of the CMC.

**Caution** means a formal warning issued by a Match Official to a Player, Coach, Team Official or other Participant during a Match in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

**Centralised Unit** means the unit established or appointed under the Zone Regulatory Amendment Schedule to administer the disciplinary function for Competitions.

**Championship** means the Finals Series conducted at the completion of a Premiership Season.

**Club** means a football club affiliated with a Zone and admitted to participate in a Competition.

**Coach** means a person registered in the approved Competition Management System as a coach of a Team.

**Competition** means any football competition conducted under these Regulations.

**Competition Management Committee or CMC** means Hunter Valley Football Incorporated in consultation with Macquarie Football Limited.

**Competition Management System or CMS** means the electronic system approved by the Competition Management Committee for the administration and management of Competitions

**Competition Manager** means the delegated person responsible for the management of a Competition.

**Employee** means a person engaged by a Zone, Club, or governing body under a contract of employment, whether on a full-time, part-time, or casual basis, and includes any person treated as an employee for the purposes of applicable workplace laws.

**Expulsion** means the dismissal of a Player, Coach, Team Official or other Participant from a Match by a Match Official in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

**Female** means a person who is registered as female within the National Registration Platform, in accordance with the applicable policies of Football Australia and Northern NSW Football.

**Field** means Ground.

**Field of Play** means the area of the Ground enclosed by the boundary lines of the pitch, together with any area immediately surrounding the pitch that is designated for spectator control in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

**FIFA** means Federation Internationale de Football Association, the world governing body of Football.

**Finals Series** means the series of Matches conducted to determine the Championship winner.

**Fixture** means a scheduled Match between two Teams.

**Football Australia or FA** means the national governing body of Football in Australia.

**Force Majeure** means any event beyond reasonable control including but not limited to fire, flood, storm, epidemic, or government restriction.

**Gender** means the gender with which a person identifies and is recorded in the National Registration Platform.

**Girls** means female Players who are eligible to participate in age-restricted Competitions designated as girls' Competitions under these Regulations, in accordance with the Gender recorded in the National Registration Platform.

**Goalkeeper** means the Player designated to play in the position of goalkeeper for a Team in a Match in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

**Grade** means a division of an Age Group or Competition.

**Ground** means the venue at which a Match is played.

**Home Club or Home Team** means the Club or Team playing a Match at its Home Ground and/or appearing first on the Fixture list.

**Host Club** means the Club that has been designated or approved to provide and manage the Ground or Venue for a Match, including at a neutral venue.

**ID Tag** means an official identification tag issued by a Zone, whether in physical or electronic form, which identifies a person's registered role and authorises their presence in a Technical Area.

**Interchange** means the process by which a Player is replaced during a Match by another Player from the same Team, with the replaced Player permitted to re-enter the Match at a later time

**IFAB** means the International Football Association Board, responsible for the interpretation and distribution of the Laws of the Game.

**Incident Report** means a written report submitted by a Match Official, Ground Official, Duty Officer, or other authorised person, in the approved form and within the required timeframe, detailing an incident, misconduct, safety concern, or irregularity occurring before, during, or after a Match

**Ineligible Player** means a Player not eligible to participate in a Match under these Regulations or applicable disciplinary rules.

**Lux** means the unit of measurement of illuminance equal to one lumen per square metre (lm/m<sup>2</sup>).

**Match** means a scheduled Fixture between two Teams.

**Match Commissioner** means a person appointed or authorised by a Zone to attend a Match in an official capacity to observe, monitor, and report on matters relating to Match conduct, facilities, compliance with these Regulations, and Participant behaviour, but who does not officiate the Match.

**Match Official** means a Referee or other official appointed to control or supervise a Match.

**National Registration Platform** means the national online registration system approved by Football Australia for the registration of Players, Coaches, Referees, and Officials.

**Northern NSW Football or NNSWF** means the state governing body of Football in Northern New South Wales.

**Over** means a Competition or age category in which eligibility is determined by a minimum age, such that a reference to "Over 35" includes Players who have attained that age prior to the commencement of the Match.

**Participant** means a Player, Official or Spectator participating in or attending a Match.

**Player** means any person participating in a Match, whether registered or unregistered.

**Premiership** means the regular season competition conducted prior to the Finals Series.

**Promoted** means the advancement of a Club or Team from one Competition or Grade to a higher Competition or Grade for a subsequent Season.

**Referee** means a Match Official appointed or authorised to control and officiate a Match.

**Regulations** means these Competition Regulations as amended from time to time.

**Relegated** means the movement of a Club or Team from one Competition or Grade to a lower Competition or Grade for a subsequent Season.

**Season** means the period from commencement to completion of a Competition.

**Special Circumstances** means circumstances that are exceptional, unusual, or unforeseen, and which, in the reasonable opinion of the CMC, justify a departure from the strict application of these Regulations in order to preserve the integrity, safety, or orderly conduct of the Competition, or avoid an outcome that is manifestly unfair or unreasonable, or protect the best interests of football within the Zones.

**Spectacles** means eyewear worn by a Player for vision correction, including glasses with lenses and frames, but excluding protective sports goggles specifically designed for use in contact sports.

**Spectator** means any person present at or in the vicinity of a Ground or Venue for the purpose of observing, supporting, or attending a Match.

**Squad** means the collective group of Participants registered by a Club for a Competition or Grade where that Competition is expressly designated as squad-based under these Regulations, including all Players eligible to be selected interchangeably across multiple Teams within that Competition or Grade.

**Substitute** means a Player who is named on the Team Sheet and who may replace another Player during a Match in accordance with these Regulations and the Laws of the Game, and who, once replaced, is not permitted to re-enter the Match.

**Suspended** means subject to a suspension imposed automatically or otherwise under the Laws of the Game, these Regulations, or any applicable Grievance and Disciplinary Regulations, which prohibits a Player, Coach, Team Official, or other Participant from participating in or being present in a Match, including the Field of Play and Technical Area, for the period of the suspension.

**Team** means a group of Players registered to compete in a Competition.

**Team Official** means a Coach, Manager or other authorised officials of a Team.

**Team Sheet** means the official record of a Match, in the approved format and through the approved system, listing all Players, Team Officials, Ground Officials and Duty Officers nominated to participate in and/or manage that Match.

**Technical Area** means the designated area for Team Officials and substitute Players during a Match.

**Under** means a Competition or age category in which age eligibility is determined by the age a Player will attain on 31 December in the year of the Competition.

**Women** means female Players who are eligible to participate in Competitions designated as Women's Competitions under these Regulations, in accordance with the Gender recorded in the National Registration Platform.

**Zone** means the regional governing body of Football in its region.