

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the Community Football Rules & Regulations for all Junior and Youth competitions conducted by the West Australian Football Commission (WAFC). These competitions shall be played according to the AFL Laws of Australian Football and any modified form of Australian Football as amended by the Australian Football League (AFL) or the WAFC.

1. SPIRIT OF JUNIOR FOOTBALL

Every participant understands that Football in Western Australia is delivered to the Community with the Spirit of the Game in mind.

It is incumbent on every participant irrespective of their place in the game, to ensure that they will;

- 1.1 **Not focus on winning at all costs** and understand that the role of Junior & Youth Football is to foster the development of players, volunteers, umpires, coaches, and officials. Learning to win and lose is part of the developmental journey of a participant but must remain secondary to the primary focus of player development.
- 1.2 Maximise the enjoyment and development of Junior & Youth footballers.
- 1.3 Provide our children with a game environment that is safe, fun, and fair.
- 1.4 Ensure that the values which add to the spirit of our game, which include fairness, equality, respect, and teamwork are encouraged and celebrated.
- 1.5 Uphold, promote, and protect the Rules, Laws, Codes, Policies and Spirit of the game.
- 1.6 Not accept poor behaviours around our game and deter practices that undermine our games environments (coaching, playing, volunteering, spectating, and umpiring).
- 1.7 Adhere to any directive issued by the games controlling bodies in the best interests of achieving the above.
- 1.8 Coaches should adopt an athlete centred coaching philosophy.
- 1.9 A Person, Club or Team must not engage in conduct which is unbecoming or likely to prejudice the interests or reputation of Junior Football in Western Australia or to bring the game of football into disrepute.
- 1.10 Any person attending or participating in a match, event or training session is required to behave in a manner that supports the values of Spirit of the Game. Failing to do so may result in penalties being applied to individuals, teams or clubs.
For the avoidance of doubt, this includes spectators.

2. INTERPRETATION & DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 All Committees, Coaches, Players and Parents are to request interpretations, clarifications and explanations of the Competition Policies, Rules and Regulations via their respective Club's Executive Committee.
- 2.2 Should any dispute or objection arise as to the meaning, interpretation or intent of any of these Rules & Regulations or Competition Policies, the WAFC shall settle such dispute or objection.

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3. SUPPORTING UMPIRES AND OFFICIALS OF JUNIOR FOOTBALL

Umpires and Competition Officials play a key role in the successful delivery of Community Football.

Coaches, club officials, players, and parents play a vital role in developing the highest quality umpires and game day officials.

- 3.1 All team players, officials, parents, and spectators are expected to adhere to the following: WA Football has a **ZERO TOLERANCE** stance against any form of umpire or official abuse, verbal dissent, intimidation or disputing of decisions.
- 3.2 Players, officials, parents, and spectators are not permitted to comment about an umpire or the performance of an umpire in any way other than in writing to the Umpires Coach via their Club President.
- 3.3 Only the Captain or Team Manager from either team can approach an umpire during the breaks in a match. The Captain or Team Manager cannot question decisions, interpretations or question the free kick count.

SECTION B: COMPETITION GOVERNANCE

4. REGISTRATION

No player shall be eligible to take part in any official match under the control of the WAFC until an online registration form is completed and approved through the WAFC approved Registration System.

- 4.1 Players must not alter their name or date of birth to register via the Registration System.
- 4.2 Players are not permitted to be registered more than once in the Registration System.
- 4.3 No Junior or Youth Player is to receive cash/cheque/monies as payment, incentive, or reward for playing football in underage competitions. Vouchers from a sponsor or the club canteen are the preferred incentive method.

5. SCRATCH MATCHES & INSURANCE

Clubs may arrange scratch/practice matches outside of WAFC fixtured competitions.

For insurance purposes:

- 5.1 All scratch matches must be played within the WAFC Policies and Rules & Regulations
- 5.2 Any new player (i.e. a player that is not currently registered to a Club) can register from 1 November 2022 and will be covered under the AFL National Risk Protection Program from the date of registration. In addition, that new player will be covered for up to 4 weeks prior to registering (i.e. considered as a 'prospective player');
- 5.3 Any current player (i.e. a player who played in 2022 season and is registered with a Club) who will be transferring clubs for 2023, but who cannot complete the transfer until February 2023, will be covered whilst training with the new club prior to the transfer being completed; and
- 5.4 Any former player (i.e. a player who did not play in the 2022 season but remains registered with a Club) who will be transferring clubs for 2023, but who cannot complete the transfer until February 2023, will be covered whilst training with the new club prior to the transfer being completed.
- 5.5 All scratch matches with official umpires are bound by the Laws of the Game, including penalties for reportable offences.

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6. ALTERATION OF RULES & REGULATIONS

Should any situation arise which is not covered in these Rules & Regulations, then the WAFC will refer to the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook and;

- 6.1 The WAFC will resolve any matter, which is not provided for in these Rules & Regulations.
- 6.2 Any variation (exemptions) to these Rules & Regulations must be approved by the WAFC Competition Specialist, prior to implementation.

SECTION C: SEASON ADMINISTRATION

7. YEAR GROUPS, AGE DISPENSATION, ELIGIBILITY & FINALS QUALIFICATIONS

This section has been removed and is now a standalone policy, 'WAFC Competition Rules - Eligibility & Finals Qualification.

8. GENDER DIVERSITY

The WAFC is committed to inclusion and will utilise the [AFL's Gender Diversity Policy](#) in instances where Trans, Non-Binary or other Gender Identity is raised.

9. WORKING WITH CHILDREN - CLUB OFFICIALS

All District and Club volunteers are bound by legislative requirements relating to [Working with Children Checks](#). Clubs and individuals are required to comply with legislation

SECTION D: RULES OF THE GAME - TRIBUNAL GUIDELINES

10. INTRODUCTION & SCOPE

These Tribunal Guidelines are adopted by WAFC and Country Junior Competitions to provide clubs, players, and officials with clear guidelines for those who commit reportable offences.

The offences covered in this section and subsequently bound by the Tribunal process, are as per the most recent AFL Rules of the Game, [AFL Laws of Australian Football](#)

Procedure for governance of WAFC Policy Breaches and Penalties are explained in **SECTION E: POLICIES & CODES OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS**.

The span of the Tribunal Guidelines is outlined below:

- Team Officials – Year 3 to Year 12
- Players – Year 7 to Year 12

Any player involved in an AFL Rules of the Game reportable incident occurring in Year 3, 4, 5 or 6 Competitions will be managed by the player's club, in consultation with the WAFC Competition Team who will provide an appropriate penalty range, based on evidence provided by the umpires and team officials.

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11. PROCESS

Report

The Junior Match Committee will assess all reports and potential Reportable Offences. Reportable Offences can be reported by the following groups:

- Umpire
- Umpire Coach
- Competition Official
- WAFC Staff Member

11.1 All timelines mentioned below may be adjusted at the discretion of the WAFC under exceptional circumstances.

11.2 All Notice of Reports are to be received by **12pm Monday** after the match is played.

The Junior Match Committee will gather the required information relevant to deciding on whether a charge is made.

11.3 The Junior Match Committee will inform the player or official and their club president whether a reported or referred player/official has been charged, and the corresponding base sanction for that charge by **5pm Monday** after the match is played.

11.4 Determination of type of offence and appropriate charge

Following the review of each report or referral, the Junior Match Review Committee will determine whether the charge is appropriate and alter the charge if required.

There are three types of Reportable Offences:

- A low-level offence
- A classifiable offence
- A direct to tribunal offence (referred directly to the Community Football Tribunal)

12. REPORTABLE OFFENCES

A reportable offence occurs where a Player or Official commits any of the offences set out in Law 22.2.2 of the 2023 Laws of Australian Football, or any superseding Rules as provided by the AFL.

There are three categories of Reportable Offences - Low Level, Classifiable, and Direct to Tribunal Offences. Any Offence defined in the AFL Laws of the Game but not specified in these Tribunal Guidelines will be categorised by the WAFC Junior Match Review Committee.

13. LOW LEVEL OFFENCES

The following are low-level offences which do not require classification however may be addressed by the Junior Match Review Committee through the issuing of a Yellow or Red Card. In the case of a Red Card, the player will receive an automatic 1 match suspension.

13.1 If relevant and appropriate evidence is present, the Junior Match Review Committee have the powers to:

- Issue Yellow & Red Cards
- Upgrade a Yellow Card to a Red Card
- Downgrade a Red Card

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13.2 Low Level Offences cannot be contested at the Community Football Tribunal.

13.3 List of Low-Level Offences

- Attempt to Strike / Kick / Trip
- Careless Contact with an Umpire
- Disputing a Decision
- Instigator of a Melee (*see 13.4*)
- Engaging in a Melee (*see 13.4*)
- Interfering with a Player Kicking for Goal
- Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Injured Player
- Not Leaving the Playing Surface
- Obscene Gesture
- Pinching
- Prohibited Boots, Jewellery or Equipment
- Scratching
- Shaking, Climbing or Interfering with Goal or Behind Posts
- Spitting at Another Player
- Staging
- Time Wasting
- Tripping
- Using Abusive, Insulting, Threatening or Obscene Language
- Wrestling
- Any Other Act of Low-Level Misconduct which is not a Classifiable Offence or Direct Tribunal Offence

13.4 Penalties may be applied to Teams who engage in a melee at the discretion of the Junior Match Review Committee as outlined in 16.1 and 16.2.

14. CLASSIFIABLE OFFENCES

14.1 The following reportable offences are graded by the Junior Match Review Committee to determine an appropriate base sanction:

- Striking
- Kicking or stomping
- Kneeing
- Charging another person
- Charging or engaging in rough conduct against an opponent which in the circumstance is unreasonable
- Forceful front-on contact
- Head-butting an opponent or making contact to an opponent using the head
- Making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the eye region of an opponent
- Making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of an opponent
- Using abusive, insulting, or obscene language towards or in relation to an Umpire
- Behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an Umpire

14.2 As indicated in the table below, the determination of a base sanction for a Classifiable Offence will be made based on an assessment of whether:

1. The conduct is Intentional or Careless;
2. The impact is Severe, High, Medium or Low; and
3. The contact with the other Player / Official is High / Groin or to the Body.

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14.3 Grading of Classifiable Offences

Conduct	Impact	Contact	Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea
Intentional	Severe	All	Tribunal	N/A
	High	High/Groin/Chest*	Tribunal	N/A
		Body	4 Matches	3 Matches
	Medium	High/Groin/Chest*	3 Matches	2 Matches
		Body	2 Matches	1 Match
	Low	High/Groin/Chest*	2 Matches	1 Match
		Body	1 Match	1 Match
	Careless	Severe	All	Tribunal
High		High/Groin/Chest*	3 Matches	2 Matches
		Body	2 Matches	1 Match
Medium		High/Groin/Chest*	2 Matches	1 Match
		Body	1 Match	1 Match
Low		High/Groin/Chest*	1 Match	1 Match
		Body	1 Match	Yellow Card/Reprimand

*Chest applies to Female football only

14.4 At the discretion of the Junior Match Review Committee, all penalties (Base Sanction and Early Guilty Plea) may be doubled if the player or official has been found guilty of a reportable offence within the past 12 months.

14.5 Reduction in base sanction for early guilty plea

The base sanction for Classifiable Offences can, in many instances be decreased where a player submits an early guilty plea.

14.6 Options available to the player or official charged with a classifiable offence:

A player or official charged with a Reportable Offence may:

- Submit an early guilty plea, in which case the relevant sanction for the Reportable Offence will apply subject to a reduction available because of the early guilty plea as per grading table.
- Contest a charge at the Community Football Tribunal using evidence to show they are not guilty of the classifiable offence or guilty of a lesser charge.

The player or official charged must submit their Option by **12pm Tuesday** after the match is played.

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15. DIRECT TO TRIBUNAL OFFENCES

15.1 List of Direct to Tribunal Offences

The following offences are Reportable Offences that are sent directly to the Community Football Tribunal to determine an appropriate penalty within the Standard Range of Penalties:

- Intentionally making contact with, or striking, an Umpire.
- Attempting to make contact with, or strike, an Umpire.
- Spitting at or on an Umpire.
- Spitting on another person.
- Any classifiable offence which attracts a base sanction that the Junior Match Review Committee finds inappropriate.
- Any other act of serious misconduct which the Junior Match Review Committee considers appropriate to send to the Community Football Tribunal.

15.2 Standard Range of Penalties

The Community Football Tribunal will in most instances, determine the appropriate sanction for a Direct to Tribunal offence within the Standard Range of Penalties.

Offence	Standard Penalty Range
Striking	2-10 weeks
Kicking	2-10 weeks
Kneeing	2-10 weeks
Stomping	2-10 weeks
Charging	2-10 weeks
Rough Conduct	2-10 weeks
Forceful front on contact	2-10 weeks
Headbutt or contact using head	2-10 weeks
Eye-gouging/unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the eye region	2-10 weeks
Unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face	1-5 weeks
Scratching	1-5 weeks
Tripping	2-10 weeks
Intentional contact with an umpire	4 weeks – 2 years
Striking an umpire	2 years – 10 years
Spitting on or at an umpire	1 year – 5 years
Spitting on another person	2 – 10 weeks
Attempting to strike an umpire	1 year – 5 years
Behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an umpire	2 - 10 weeks

15.3 Extreme Incidents

The WAFC Competitions Team and Community Football Tribunal reserve the right to apply penalties beyond the Standard Penalty Range in circumstances that are deemed necessary.

- Any such penalty must be endorsed by either the relevant WAFC Executive Manager or WAFC Head of Competitions.

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16. MELEES

16.1 The Junior Match Review Committee assesses all melees, and the maximum penalties may be applied to teams who engage in a melee as per the following table.

Offence	E Points	Fine
1 st Melee for the season	-4	\$500
2 nd Melee for the season	-4	\$750
3 rd or any further Melee for the season	-4	\$1000

16.2 A melee is defined as an incident involving three or more Players and/or Officials who are grappling or otherwise struggling with one another and which, in the opinion of the field Umpire or any other person authorised by the relevant Controlling Body, is likely to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute or prejudice the interests or reputation of the relevant Controlling Body or the competition(s) conducted by that Controlling Body.

17. TRIBUNAL HEARING

All tribunal hearings will be heard via the WAFC Community Football Tribunal which operates as per the WAFC Community Football Tribunal Guidelines. The below points provide a summary for Junior Football Participants.

The tribunal will hear a charge for which a Player or Official has pleaded not guilty or has pleaded guilty to a lesser charge. The tribunal may find the Player or Official guilty of the original charge, a lesser charge or not guilty of any charge. The tribunal will determine the appropriate sanction within the Standard Range of Penalties for the Reportable Offence if it finds the player guilty of a Reportable Offence.

Unless requested for attendance by the Tribunal Chairman, Umpires or Victims may provide evidence prior to the Tribunal hearings however must be available to be contacted by the Tribunal Chairman during the hearing period if required.

Players, Officials and Umpires are permitted to be accompanied by an advocate however this advocate may not be a legal practitioner and is only to act in the role of providing support. An advocate will not be asked to provide evidence.

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18. TRIBUNAL APPEAL HEARING

18.1 Appeal Hearing

A player or official may decide to appeal the decision of the Tribunal to the Community Football Appeal Board based on one of the following criteria being applied:

- An error of law has occurred.
- The decision of the Tribunal is so unreasonable that no Tribunal acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it.
- The classification of the offence by the Tribunal was manifestly excessive or inadequate, or
- The sanction imposed by the Tribunal was manifestly excessive or inadequate.

18.2 All appeal lodgements must:

- Occur within 48 hours of notification of the Tribunal decision,
- Be accompanied by a \$500 fee, and
- Supply supporting evidence that articulates how the decision fits into one of the appeal criteria in **18.1**.

Competition Management also reserves the right to appeal decisions of the Tribunal to the Community Football Appeal Board based on the above stated appeal criteria.

18.3 The grounds for appeal must first be reviewed and confirmed to meet the criteria by a majority vote of 3 independent WAFC staff members, including no less than 1 member of the WAFC Integrity Unit. This determination is final.

18.4 The Appeal Board may not substitute its own opinion for that of the Tribunal merely because it would have exercised its discretion in a manner different from the way the Tribunal exercised its discretion.

SECTION E: POLICIES & CODES OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

19. RULES & REGULATIONS, POLICIES & CODES OF CONDUCT

19.1 All clubs, players, parents, spectators, and officials are bound by the WAFC's Junior & Youth Football Rules and Policies and True Sport Codes of Conduct (WAFC Rules) and are subject to penalties at the discretion of WAFC for any breach of the WAFC's Rules.

19.2 Should any dispute or objection arise as to the meaning or interpretation of any of the WAFC Rules, the WAFC shall settle such dispute or objection by making a determination in its sole discretion. That determination is final and binding.

19.3 If WAFC is made aware of a club or individual who is in breach of its WAFC Rules, WAFC may, if it considers appropriate and in exercising its independent discretion, conduct an investigation and make a determination based upon its own investigations.

19.4 When WAFC makes a determination and imposes a penalty (if any), it must immediately inform the club in writing detailing:

- the alleged conduct and its findings in relation to it;
- the penalty; and
- the club's right to appeal.

19.5 Penalties handed down by the WAFC for breaches of WAFC Rules can only be applied and served in competitions within the scope of these rules.

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20. DISPUTES & APPEALS – COMPETITION POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

20.1 Clubs are entitled to appeal penalties and / or decisions made by WAFC for any breach of the WAFC's Rules on the grounds that the club's application for appeal meets any one of the following criteria:

- an error in the application of a rule has occurred;
- the decision is so unreasonable that no decision maker acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it; or
- the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive or inadequate.

20.2 Request to Appeal

20.2.1 E-Points cannot be appealed if aligned to a Red or Yellow Card infringement.

20.2.2 The club requesting an appeal must provide submissions in writing and addressed to WAFC requesting to appeal a penalty. Appeal submissions must be submitted within 48 hours of receiving notification of the penalty, and must be accompanied by a \$500 fee. Any appeal submissions received after this time will not be considered by the Appeal Panel.

20.2.3 The club must outline on what basis the penalty meets the appeal criteria outlined in 20.1 in its appeal submissions.

20.2.4 If additional time is required to provide further evidence to support the appeal, this must be noted in the submissions and must be supplied before the Appeal Panel meets.

20.2.5 If an appeal is ultimately successful and penalty imposed by WAFC is reduced by the Appeal Panel, the club will be refunded 50% of the appeal fee (being \$250).

20.3 Appeal Panel

20.3.1 The Appeal Panel will consist of no less than three (3) people, who must consist of the following:

- the WAFC Integrity Department Member (Chairperson); and
- two (2) relevant WAFC Community Competition Staff or Community Football Tribunal Members.

20.3.2 All members of the Appeal Panel must be independent to the case and original penalty.

20.4 Appeal Hearing

20.4.1 The Appeal Panel will meet prior to the appeal proceeding, review all evidence presented before it (including the club's submissions) and determine whether the club's appeal submissions meets the Appeal Criteria outlined in **20.1**

20.4.2 The Appeal Panel has the sole discretion and power to determine whether a case should be heard or not on the basis that it does or does not meet the appeal criteria.

20.4.3 If an appeal is not allowed the Appeal Panel must notify the Club as soon as reasonably practicable and provide written reasoning why the appeal request does not meet the Appeal Criteria.

20.4.4 If the Appeal Panel determines that an appeal will not be heard, then the club will have no further right of appeal and must accept the penalty originally imposed by WAFC.

20.4.5 The appeal will be considered by the Appeal Panel based solely on written submissions. The club will not be entitled to attend appeal hearings.

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- 20.4.6** In making its determination, the Appeal Panel may refer to any information it thinks fit or believes is relevant to the case before it.
- 20.4.7** The Appeal Panel will determine whether the penalty fits within one of the appeal criteria based on the evidence before it and any new additional evidence provided by the club (if any).
- 20.4.8** The Appeal Panel may not substitute its own opinion for that of the original decision maker's merely because it would have exercised its discretion in a manner different from the way the original decision maker exercised its discretion.
- 20.5 Appeal Decision**
- 20.5.1** The Appeal Panel shall not dismiss any case on grounds of technicality.
- 20.5.2** The Appeal Panel will decide as to whether the original penalty is in breach of one of the appeal criteria.
- 20.5.3** The Appeal Panel will determine the final and appropriate penalty.
- 20.5.4** The WAFC will communicate the decision of the Appeal Panel back to the club within a reasonable period after the decision has been made.

SECTION F: SUSPENSIONS

21. SUSPENSIONS

- 21.1** Any player, Official, Club Member or Spectator suspended by either a tribunal or prescribed penalty in a WAFC affiliated competition for a Law of the Game, will not be permitted to play, coach, or participate in any capacity, in any WAFC affiliated competition including schools, senior metropolitan community football or regional football, for the duration of the penalty unless otherwise stated by the WAFC.
- 21.2** Any player, Official, Club Member or Spectator suspended by either a tribunal or prescribed penalty in a WAFC affiliated competition for a Bylaw or Code of Conduct breach will only be permitted to play, coach, or participate in any capacity, in another WAFC affiliated competition including schools, senior metropolitan community football or regional football, for the duration of the penalty at the discretion of the other competition, in consultation with the WAFC.
- 21.3** Any player, Official, Club Member or Spectator reported or in receipt of a prescribed penalty notice, is not to play or act in any official capacity in a WAFC affiliated competition until such time as the charge has been dealt with.
- 21.4** Any player, Official, Club Member or Spectator who chooses to contest a Red Card, Report or Prescribed Penalty is deemed suspended until such time as the charge or report is dealt with to the satisfaction of the WAFC.
- 21.5** A player, Official, Club Member or Spectator found guilty of an offence who has been given a suspension, fine or any other sanction by the Community Football Tribunal, shall not be permitted to enter the Arena on Match Days while the penalty remains unserved.
- 21.6** Any player who is suspended throughout the season will be deemed ineligible for fairest and best awards.