

RULES & REGULATIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lead Area:	WAFC Community Football
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SECTION 1: 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 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.

2. INTERPRETATION & DEFINITIONS

All Committees, Coaches, Players and Parents are to request interpretations, clarifications and explanations of the Competition Policies, Rules and Regulations via the Club President or Club Secretary.

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3. SUPPORTING UMPIRES OF JUNIOR FOOTBALL

Umpires play a key role in the successful delivery of Community Football. Coaches, officials, players, and parents play a vital role in developing the highest quality umpires.

- 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 2: COMPETITION GOVERNANCE

4. COMPETITIONS

- 4.1 The WAFC shall arrange inter-club football competitions in specific year groups for players registered with affiliated junior clubs.
- 4.2 The WAFC may divide the area within its jurisdiction into sub-districts. It is recommended that all players residing within an allocated area play for the aligned club. The WAFC may alter, vary, or add to the boundaries of its sub-districts as it sees fit.

5. SCRATCH MATCHES

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 All players must be registered through the WAFC approved registration system or fall within the four-week prospective members clause.
- 5.3 All scratch matches with official umpires are bound by the Laws of the Game, including penalties for reportable offences.

6. ALTERATION OF RULES & REGULATIONS

Should any situation arise which is not covered in these Rules & Regulations, then the WAFC Policies and Codes of Conduct shall apply.

- 6.1 The WAFC may elect to resolve any matter, which is not provided for in these Rules & Regulations and any such resolution shall immediately become an amendment to the Rules & Regulations and shall automatically be included herein.
- 6.2 Any variation (exemptions) to these Rules & Regulations must be approved by the WAFC Competition Specialist, prior to implementation.

SECTION 3: SEASON ADMINISTRATION

7. YEAR GROUPS

- 7.1 Any player who is repeating Year 12 at school is not eligible to play in the Year 11-12 competition and should be encouraged to join a senior community competition.
- 7.2 On application to the WAFC, a player may be eligible to play up a MAXIMUM of one year group only.
- 7.3 On application to the WAFC, a player may be eligible to play down a MAXIMUM of one year group only.
- 7.4 A player who is playing down due to their current school year group, must supply a letter from the school confirming that they are attending school in the year group in which they are playing.
- 7.5 All play down applications must be submitted via and with Club support and follow the below *Physical Development Criteria* or the *Disability Criteria* or clearly state the reason for the request.
- 7.6 The granting of any such request shall apply only to the current season and can be subject to review by the WAFC during the current season.

8. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

Players must apply to the WAFC for permission to play down a year group during the current season.

- 8.1 Approval will only be granted if the player submits written authority by a sports physician or doctor along with their application to play down a year group. The written authority should specify that the participant falls below the fifth percentile for height or weight.
- 8.2 A player granted permission to play down a year group will be eligible for the fairest and best votes for the grade in which they have received permission to play.
- 8.3 The granting of any such request shall apply to the current season only.

9. DISABILITY – PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL

A player with a disability that limits their ability to play, may apply to the WAFC for permission to play down one (or more) year groups during the current season.

- 9.1 Approval will only be granted if the player submits written authority by a sports physician or registered medical practitioner along with their application to play down a year group.
- 9.2 A player granted permission to play down a year group will be eligible for the fairest and best votes for the grade in which they have received permission to play.
- 9.3 The granting of any such request shall apply to the current season only.

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10. 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.

11. CLUB OFFICIALS

Each Club shall elect Club administrators and officials who will be responsible for the effective and efficient operation of the Club. These officials may include a President, Committee members, Delegates to the RDC and other required officials who will be elected as per each club's constitution.

- 11.1** Each Club shall elect or appoint a Registrar who shall be responsible for the registration of players for that Club and shall keep a record of the achievements of those players as may be required. The Club Registrar shall be responsible for managing any changes to the personal details of any players registered with that Club in accordance with the WAFC approved registration system.
- 11.2** All District and Club volunteers may be subject to a [Working with Children Check](#) as per legislative requirements.

12. REGISTRATION

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

- 12.1** Players must not alter their name or date of birth to register via the Registration System.
- 12.2** Players are not permitted to be registered and play in more than one Team, Club and/or District/Region which is playing in WAFC Junior Competitions.

SECTION 4a: RULES OF THE GAME - TRIBUNAL GUIDELINES

13. 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 4b: POLICIES & CODES OF CONDUCT PENALTIES**.

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.

14. 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

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

14.2 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.

14.3 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.

14.4 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)

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15. 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 2021 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.

15.1 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.

15.1.1 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

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

15.1.3 List of Low-Level Offences

- Attempt to Strike / Kick / Trip
- Careless Contact with an Umpire
- Disputing a Decision
- Instigator of a Melee *
- Engaging in a Melee *
- 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 or Obscene Language
- Wrestling
- Any Other Act of Low-Level Misconduct which is not a Classifiable Offence or Direct Tribunal Offence

*Penalties may be applied to Teams who engage in a melee at the discretion of the Junior Match Review Committee as outlined in **15.5.5**

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15.2 Classifiable Offences

15.2.1 List of Classifiable Offences

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.
- Engaging in rough conduct against an opponent which in the circumstance is unreasonable.
- Bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front-on.
- 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.

15.2.2 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

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15.2.3 As indicated in the table above, 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

15.2.4 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.

15.2.5 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.

15.2.6 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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15.3 Direct to Tribunal Offences

15.3.1 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.

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

15.4 STANDARD RANGE OF PENALTIES

Offence	First Offence	Second Offence
Striking	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Kicking	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Kneeing	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Stomping	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Charging	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Rough Conduct	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Forceful front on contact	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Headbutt or contact using head	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Eye-gouging/unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the eye region	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face	1-5 weeks	2-10 weeks
Scratching	1-5 weeks	2-10 weeks
Tripping	2-10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Intentional contact with an umpire	4 weeks – 2 years	Life Ban
Striking an umpire	2 years – 10 years	Life Ban
Spitting on or at an umpire	1 year – 5 years	Life Ban
Spitting on another person	2 – 10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks
Attempting to strike an umpire	1 year – 5 years	Life Ban
Behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an umpire	2 - 10 weeks	4 – 20 weeks

15.5 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 (Suspended)
2 nd Melee for the season	-4	\$500
3 rd or any further Melee for the season	-4	\$1000

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16. TRIBUNAL HEARING

All tribunal hearings will be heard via the WAFC Community Football Tribunal which operates as per the WAFC Community Football Tribunal Guidelines 2022. 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.

16.1 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.

16.2 All appeal lodgements must:

- Occur within 48 hours of notification of the Tribunal decision,
- Be accompanied by a \$250 non-refundable fee and
- Supply supporting evidence that articulates how the decision fits into one of the appeal criteria in **16.1**.

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.

16.3 The grounds for appeal must first be confirmed by a majority vote after review of 3 independent WAFC staff members, including no less than 1 member of the WAFC Integrity Unit. This determination is final.

16.4 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.

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SECTION 4b: POLICIES & CODES OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS

17. RULES & REGULATIONS, POLICIES & CODES OF CONDUCT

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

Penalties handed down for breaches of these Rules & Regulations, Policies and Codes of Conduct can only be applied to and served in competitions within the scope of these rules.

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

Should any dispute or objection arise as to the meaning or interpretation of any of these Rules & Regulations or Competition Policies, the WAFC shall settle such dispute or objection.

18.1 Clubs are entitled to appeal penalties and or decisions for any breach of the WAFC's Junior and Youth Football Rules & Regulations or Policies on the grounds that the penalty provided meets one of the following criteria:

- An error in the application of a rule has occurred.
- The decision of the Junior Match Review Committee is so unreasonable that no Junior Match Review Committee acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it.
- The sanction imposed by the Tribunal was manifestly excessive or inadequate.

The appeal will be heard by the relevant independent body as appointed by the WAFC in **18.3.3** and will be Chaired by a member of the WAFC Integrity Department.

18.2 Request to Appeal

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

18.2.2 A club shall submit a written communication addressed to the WAFC requesting to appeal a penalty within 48 hours of receiving notification of the penalty, accompanied by a non-refundable \$250 fee. Within the written request to appeal the club will outline on what basis the penalty meets the above appeal criteria.

18.3 Appeal Panel

18.3.1 The Chair of the Appeal Panel will determine whether the case meets the Appeal Criteria prior to the panel sitting and has the power to determine that a case should not be heard on the basis that it does not meet the appeal criteria.

18.3.2 The Appeal Panel will determine whether the penalty fits within one of the appeal criteria based on the evidence provided and any new additional evidence provided by the club.

18.3.3 The Appeal Panel will consist of no less than 3 people, consisting of the following:

* WAFC Integrity Department Member (Chairperson)

* 2 relevant WAFC Community Competition Staff or Community Football Tribunal Members

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

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18.4 Appeal Hearing

- 18.4.1 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.
- 18.4.2 If circumstances prevail whereby a hearing must be heard prior to the clubs next match, the WAFC will make a reasonable attempt for this to occur.
- 18.4.3 The Appeal Panel may use its full discretion to gather and consider any relevant evidence in making its determination.
- 18.4.4 A club attending an appeal hearing may be represented by an advocate. An advocate may not be a legal practitioner.
- 18.4.5 The club will have the opportunity to present its case to the Appeal Panel.

18.5 Appeal Decision

- 18.5.1 The Appeal Panel shall not dismiss any case on grounds of technicality.
- 18.5.2 The Appeal Panel will decide as to whether the original penalty is in breach of one of the appeal criteria.
- 18.5.3 The Appeal Panel will determine the final and appropriate penalty.
- 18.5.4 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 5: SUSPENSIONS

19. SUSPENSIONS

- 19.1 Any player, Official, Club Member or Spectator suspended by either a tribunal or prescribed penalty in a WAFC affiliated competition 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.
- 19.2 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.
- 19.3 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.
- 19.4 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.