



**AFL VICTORIA COMMUNITY AFFILIATE
REGULATIONS**

NOVEMBER 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

AFL Victoria provide these regulations to assist Affiliates in the development of the game. The regulations and policies are to be read in conjunction with any AFL Victoria Affiliation Agreement.

1.2 Application

These regulations apply to all Affiliates of AFL Victoria and their affiliated leagues and clubs and are to be read in conjunction with the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook and AFL Victoria Country Rules. Specifically, in relation to player, club or team movements, the introduction of new clubs or teams and the introduction or amendment of any underage competitions these regulations govern the said process.

1.3 Variation

AFL Victoria may, from time to time, alter these regulations at its absolute discretion.

2. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

A list of definitions and interpretations relevant to these regulations are listed in Section 1 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.

In addition, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

Affiliate - means any league, association, or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of matches which is affiliated with AFL Victoria

Country Region - The hierarchical authority including but not limited to a Commission or Council, that:

- has designated governance responsibilities for the direction of football in a geographical location and
- is affiliated with AFL Victoria.

Metropolitan League - an organisation that is affiliated with AFL Victoria and conducting football competitions in Metropolitan Victoria.

Destination Affiliate - the league to which a player, team or club seeks to transfer to.

Source Affiliate - the league from which a player, team or club seeks to transfer from.

3. PLAYER, CLUB AND TEAM TRANSFER REGULATIONS

3.1 Appeals

AFL Victoria will make determinations in relation to appeals that arise involving more than one Affiliate, and any decision of AFL Victoria shall be binding.

3.2 Conflicting Regulations

No Affiliate shall have in place rules or regulations that conflict with these regulations. In the event of such rules or regulations being inconsistent, in conflict with or designed to circumvent these AFL Victoria regulations, then AFL Victoria regulations shall bind Affiliates.

3.3 Player Registration, Transfer and Appeal Process

All player registrations and transfers shall be administered consistent with Section 3 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.

- a) Where a Player disputes a transfer refusal, that Player and/or their Destination Club must use best endeavors to resolve the dispute with the Source Club.
- b) Where a dispute cannot be resolved under Section 3.5(d) of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook, a Player and their Destination Club may appeal the transfer refusal by the Source Club provided that;
 - i) An appeal involving a Club from an Affiliate Country Region and a club from a Metropolitan League, or clubs from two different Metropolitan Leagues, will be heard by the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel in accordance with Section 26 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.
 - ii) An appeal of a player transfer objection must be lodged with AFL Victoria no later than 5.00pm on the day following the relevant decision of a Club, League or Affiliate, following:
 - A. A duly completed Notice of Appeal; and
 - B. Payment of a fixed fee as determined by AFL Victoria (which will be dealt with in accordance with Sections 26.4(d) and 26.4(e) of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.
 - iii) At the hearing of an appeal, each party may be represented by an advocate provided that such advocate is not a person who is legally qualified, unless approved by the Chairman of the Appeals Panel.
 - iv) An appeal involving a Source Club and a Destination Club that are both affiliated with the same Metropolitan League will be heard by that Metropolitan League in accordance with that Leagues Appeal Process.
 - v) An appeal involving a Source Club and a Destination Club that are both affiliated with a Country Region will be heard in accordance with Clause 8 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules.

3.4 Coates Talent League / VFL / VFLW Players

The following Regulations relate to the movement of players between the Affiliate and the VFL, VFLW and Coates Talent League competitions.

3.4.1 Interchange Permit

Players desiring registration with the VFL, VFLW or Coates Talent League competitions shall complete the appropriate Interchange Permit as required under the Interchange Agreement, approved under Section 3.7 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.

Upon lodgement of the permit with the AFL, the applicant may be provided a permit to play by the relevant competition manager.

3.4.2 Interchange from Community Club

The player retains registration with the community club and, in accordance with the VFL, VFLW and Coates Talent League Interchange Agreements, the VFL, VFLW and Coates Talent League may permit players to return to their Community Interchange Club when their services are not required by those leagues and their affiliated clubs.

A Player that is subject to an Interchange Permit with a VFL, VFLW or Coates Talent League Club may not participate with their community club without the approval of

their VFL, VFLW or Coates Talent League Club, and may be deemed an ineligible player by that Community League should the required approval from their VFL, VFLW or Coates Talent League Club not be obtained.

3.5 State Interchange agreements and Permit arrangements

Permits detailed in this section must be applied for by the Destination Club completing all required details contained in the Permit application form available at <https://play.afl/learning-resources/victoria>.

3.5.1 Under Age Compassionate Permit:

Where a player eligible to play in an underage junior affiliated competition (as defined by the destination League or Region) is in a situation where the parents have separated and have special custody arrangements, such players may be eligible to apply for a permit to play at a second or alternate club which is more than 100km away from their primary registered club upon approval of both affiliate League Operations Departments and the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department.

A player eligible under this permit may only participate in one game per weekend and may be eligible for finals providing they have qualified under the local provisions however they may only play in one finals series per weekend.

The verification and approval of a permit under this clause will rest with both affiliate League Operations Departments and the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department after lodgement of the Compassionate Permit Form, available on AFL PLAY Victoria's website, and proof of separation and residence of both parents as requested.

Prior to any match played, the player shall obtain a Season Permit in Play HQ. Compassionate Permits under this clause must be applied for and approved prior to July 1st in each year and is only applicable for that current year.

3.5.2 Student Living Away from Home Permit:

This permit arrangement is only open to players who are full-time students. A player residing away from their usual place of abode while attending a Secondary/TAFE College, Institution or University on a full time and continuous basis and playing in any affiliated competition may, during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations approved by both affiliate League Operations Departments and AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, receive a permit to play with the club with which the player was last registered with before being transferred to their current club.

If required by either affiliate League Operations Departments or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, the player shall supply documentary evidence of their attendance at the said College, Institute, or University.

A player eligible under this permit may only participate in one game per weekend and may be eligible for finals providing they have qualified under the local provisions however they may only play in one finals series per weekend. Any finals matches must also be during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations approved by both affiliate League Operations Departments and AFL Victoria Football Operations Department.

Prior to any match played, the player shall obtain a Season Permit in Play HQ. Permits under this clause must be applied for and approved prior to July 1st in each year and is only applicable for that current year.

4. ADMISSION AND TRANSFER OF CLUBS AND TEAMS

4.1 General

- a) AFL Victoria shall make such determinations and decisions in respect to Affiliates failing to comply with these Regulations as it deems fit, and the decision of AFL Victoria shall be final and binding on all Affiliates.
- b) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, as detailed in Clause 3 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules, Country Regions will manage the process for a Club or Team transfer, including an Appeal process, where that transfer relates to a Club or Team transferring within the same Country Region with any such process administered consistent with this Section 4 of these Regulations.
- c) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, as detailed in Clause 3 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules, Country Regions will manage the process for the establishment of a New Club or New Team, including an Appeal process with any such process administered consistent with this Section 4 of these Regulations.
- d) Affiliates shall apply to AFL Victoria having already ensured all approval processes and requirements and financial obligations relevant to all Clubs, Leagues and Regions (as applicable) have been met.

4.2 Establishment of New Clubs

- a) Affiliates intending to accept a New Club must notify AFL Victoria, consistent with Section 4.1 (as applicable for County Regions), of its intention to accept the new club not before 1st August and by no later than 5.00pm 1st December. In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive the new club deadline of 5.00pm 1st December at their discretion.
- b) Notwithstanding Regulation 4.2 (a) above, Affiliates intending to accept a new club shall notify AFL Victoria in writing of its intention to accept a new club no later than 5.00pm on the day after the affiliate confirms its intention to accept such club. The new club may not participate in any league match until AFL Victoria approval has been granted.
- c) AFL Victoria may seek detail from other Affiliates that may be impacted by the establishment of the new club, who may appeal the decision of an Affiliate to accept a new club.
- d) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Section 6.1 of these regulations.

4.3 Transfer of Existing or Amalgamated Clubs

- a) A Destination Affiliate considering to accept the transfer of an existing or amalgamated club from another Affiliate shall notify AFL Victoria, consistent with Section 4.1, and the Source Affiliate in writing, by no later than 5.00pm on 31st October. The Destination affiliate will inform and liaise with the Source affiliate regarding any possible transfer.
- b) A Destination Affiliate intending to accept the transfer of an existing or amalgamated club from another Affiliate shall notify AFL Victoria of its intention to

accept such a transfer in writing, not before 1st August and by no later than 5.00pm on 31st October.

- c) In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive these club transfer deadlines at their discretion.
- d) Where a Source Affiliate wishes to appeal against a decision of the Destination Affiliate to intend to accept such a transfer under Section 4.3 (b) of this regulation, written notification is to be provided to AFL Victoria and the Destination Affiliate by no later than 5.00pm on the day following receiving advice from AFL Victoria of such intended transfer.
- e) Where a club or clubs seek to transfer from one Affiliate to another Affiliate, such transfer must be approved by AFL Victoria. In making such determination AFL Victoria will take into account, without limitation,
 - i) The geographic nature of Leagues
 - ii) League viability
 - iii) Community development; and
 - iv) Future growth of the Leagues concerned.
- f) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Clause 6.1 of these regulations.

4.4 Establishment of New Teams

- a) Any Affiliate intending to accept a newly established team, must advise AFL Victoria, consistent with Section 4.1 (as applicable for County Regions), not before 1st August and by no later than 5.00pm on 31st March.
- b) In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive the new Teams deadline of 5.00pm on 31st March at their discretion.
- c) Where all teams of a Club are currently Affiliated with the one League or Country Region, exemption may be granted by AFL Victoria on application to the requirements under this Section.
- d) Where another Affiliate appeals the intended establishment of the new team or teams under Section 4.4(a) of this Regulation, that Affiliate is to provide written notification to AFL Victoria by no later than 5.00pm on the day following receiving written advice from AFL Victoria.
- e) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Clause 6.1 of these regulations.

4.5 Transfer of Existing or Amalgamated Teams

- a) Any Affiliate intending to accept the transfer of an existing or amalgamated team from another Affiliate shall notify AFL Victoria consistent with Section 4, not before 1st August and by no later than 5.00pm on 31st October. The Destination affiliate will inform and liaise with the Source affiliate regarding any possible transfer,
- b) In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive the team transfer deadline of 31st October at their discretion.

- c) Where a Source Affiliate appeals a decision of the Destination Affiliate to intend to accept such a transfer under Section 4.5(a) of this Regulation, written notification is to be provided to AFL Victoria and the Destination Affiliate by no later than 5.00pm on the day following receiving written advice from AFL Victoria of such intended transfer.
- d) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Clause 6.1 of these regulations.

5. INTRODUCTION OR AMENDMENT OF ANY UNDERAGE COMPETITION

- a) AFL Victoria shall make such determinations and decisions in respect to Affiliates failing to comply with these Regulations as it deems fit, and the decision of AFL Victoria shall be final and binding on all Affiliates.
- b) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, consistent with Clause 3 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules, Country Regions will manage the process for any amendment to age groups or introduction of new age groups in competitions, including an Appeal process with any such process administered consistent with Section 6 of these AFL Victoria Community Affiliate regulations. .
- c) Affiliates must apply to AFL Victoria to amend or introduce new age groups in competitions. Applications must be received in writing by AFL Victoria not before 1st August and no later than 5.00pm on 31st October.
- d) In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive the age group deadline of 5.00pm 31st October at their discretion.
- e) Where another Affiliate appeals the intended amendment to an existing age group qualification or introduction of new age group in competitions under Section 5(c) of this regulation, that Affiliate is to provide written notification to AFL Victoria by no later than 5.00pm on the day following receiving advice from AFL Victoria.
- f) AFL Victoria must approve any introduction of new or amendment of existing age group qualification for any competition for an Affiliate, following consultation and subject to any appeals being received from Affiliates.
- g) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Clause 6.1 of these regulations.

6. APPEALS PROCESS

6.1 Appeals under Regulations 4 or 5

- a) Where an Affiliate appeals the:
 - i) Establishment of a new team
 - ii) Transfer of an existing team
 - iii) Establishment of a new club
 - iv) Transfer of a new club or
 - v) Introduction or Amendment of any Underage Competition ,

the Head of AFL Victoria or nominee shall appoint three (3) members to the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel.

- b) Parties to the appeal process will be requested to provide AFL Victoria with a written submission which may contain:
 - i) Any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the applications and the appeal; and
 - ii) Any other matters that they desire to be considered by the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel.
- c) AFL Victoria shall, distribute the written submissions to the other parties concerned in the hearing, and provide all parties the opportunity to provide final submissions.
- d) Following provision of final submissions, the Appeal Panel make seek further detail from any party to the appeal and this further detail must be provided in writing and within the timeframe specified by the Appeal Panel
- e) The AFL Victoria Appeal Panel:
 - i) Shall consider and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner
 - ii) Is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit
 - iii) May regulate the proceedings before it in such manner as it thinks fit
 - iv) Shall decide in relation to the appeal as soon as practicable
 - v) Shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decision

6.2 Additional AFL Victoria Appeals

- a) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, appeals will be heard consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.
- b) For the avoidance of doubt, a party to a decision (as determined by AFL Victoria)
 - Made under clause 11.3 of the AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy
 - Made under clause 13 of a Metropolitan League or Region Commission's Player Payments Rules
 - Made under Section 23.3 (c) of the AFL National Community Policy Handbook; or
 - Any matter referred by the Head of AFL Victoria,

may Appeal to the Appeal Panel in respect of such a decision on one or more of the following grounds:

- i) Section 26.1(b)(i)(A) the decision was an error of law that had a material impact on the decision.
- ii) Section 26.1(b)(i)(B) the decision was so unreasonable that no Controlling Body or Tribunal acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it.
- iii) Section 26.1(b)(i)(D) the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive or inadequate.

- c) Any appeal relevant to an Age Dispensation decision under Section 4 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook will be heard by the relevant Metropolitan League or Country Region consistent with their own Appeal Process.
- d) The Head of AFL Victoria or nominee may from time to time convene an AFL Victoria Appeals Panel, comprising a Chairperson and a further two (2) persons to hear and determine the matter.
- e) At the discretion of AFL Victoria, each party may, within the time specified by the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel, lodge with AFL Victoria written submissions which may contain:
 - i) Any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the appeal; and
 - ii) Any other matters that they desire to be taken into account by the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel in determining the appeal.
- f) AFL Victoria may as soon as practical, distribute the written submissions to the other parties concerned in the appeal and provide all parties the opportunity to provide final submissions.
- g) Following provision of final submissions, the Appeal Panel make seek further detail from any party to the appeal and this further detail must be provided in writing and within the timeframe specified by the Appeal Panel .
- h) The AFL Victoria Appeals Panel:
 - i) Is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts record but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit;
 - ii) May confirm, reverse or modify the decision being appealed and make such decisions in such manner as it thinks fit; and
 - iii) Shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decision.

6.3 AFL Victoria Appeal Panel Nominations

Nominations from Affiliates for appointments to the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel are to be received by the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager at any time in a given year.

AFL Victoria is to determine the appointment of members to the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel. The decision of AFL Victoria regarding appointments shall be final.

7. AFL VICTORIA POLICIES

Each Affiliate shall adopt policies as detailed in the:

- i) AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook
- ii) AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy
- iii) Metropolitan Leagues or Country Regions Player Payment Rules and Guidelines
- iv) AFL Victoria Country Rules as applicable to affiliated Country Regions and Leagues

AFL Victoria will provide the current AFL Victoria policies via <https://play.afl/learning-resources/victoria>.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTING PROCEDURE

8.1 Annual Report

Within 7 days of an Affiliates Annual General Meeting, the Affiliate shall provide its Annual Report (including audited and detailed Financial Statements) to AFL Victoria.

8.2 Financial Year

Unless otherwise approved, the financial year of AFL Victoria and all Affiliates shall be 1st November to 31st October.

9. SPONSORSHIP

9.1 Sponsors

Where AFL Victoria has entered into a sponsorship arrangement on behalf of its Affiliates, the Affiliate shall support those sponsors in accordance with the contractual arrangements.

9.2 Protected Sponsors

From time to time AFL Victoria will nominate sponsors deemed to be “protected sponsors” notwithstanding they may not be involved with Affiliates.

The Affiliate acknowledges and agrees that:

- i) the AFL Victoria protected sponsors provide in part the financial resources to AFL Victoria to enable it to financially support the development of Australian Football; and
- ii) in order to maximise the financial benefits for AFL Victoria from such sponsorship, it will only enter into its own sponsorship arrangements with a person or business whose goods, services or operations compete with the goods or services supplied by or the operations of the AFL Victoria Protected Sponsors if it has first advised AFL Victoria of its intention to enter into such arrangement. AFL Victoria will provide advice to the Affiliate regarding implications of entering into such arrangement.

Protected sponsors will only be nominated after AFL Victoria makes every endeavour to ensure that such protected sponsors will not conflict with Affiliate arrangements.

9.3 Notice

AFL Victoria will give reasonable notice to Affiliates of protected and other sponsors.

10. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AFL VICTORIA AND AFFILIATES

10.1 Affiliate Input

Prior to formulating any AFL Victoria policy, input will be sought from Affiliates.

10.2 Affiliate Contact Details

Each Affiliate must provide to AFL Victoria appropriate identity and contact details of its President and CEO/General Manager and changes must be notified to AFL Victoria within 10 days of such changes taking place.

11. REGULATION AND POLICY AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS

11.1 Regulation and Policy Review

AFL Victoria will from time to time review its policies and regulations and will provide Affiliates with an opportunity to provide input into any updates of AFL Victoria rules, regulations and policies.

11.2 Affiliate Submissions

Affiliates may make submissions to AFL Victoria in respect to current and/or potential future rules, regulations and policies.

Any written submissions for AFL Victoria's consideration are to be forwarded to the Football Operations Manager of AFL Victoria by no later than 1st October in each year.