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# Central Murray FNL

# **FOOTBALL RULES**

Last Reviewed: March 2026

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# Central Murray Rules

The competition shall be conducted under the Australian Football League Laws of the Game, the National Community Football Policy Handbook and the Victorian Country Football League Rules.

These rules must be read in conjunction with;

- Laws of Australian Football
- Victorian Country Football League (AFL VIC Country) Rules & Regulations as published in the AFL VIC Country Handbook each year, or as amended by notification from the AFL Vic Country after the printing of the AFL Vic Country Handbook
- AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook

## 1. Laws of Australian Football

All games shall be played in strict accordance with the “Laws of Australian Football” and the “AFL Victoria Country Handbook” and the “AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook” as adopted by the AFL Vic Country, AFL Vic Country and modified by the League and set out in these By-Laws.

## 2. Consistency

Where any provision in the AFL Rules and National Community Football Policy Handbook are inconsistent with any provision contain in these laws, the provision in the AFL Rules and National Community Football Policy Handbook shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

## 3. Community Club Sustainability Program

To assist in achieving the objectives of the Community Club Sustainability Program, the Central Murray has adopted both the Player Point System and the Player Payment Rule as advised by AFL Victoria.

- The Player Point System as published by the AFL Community Club Sustainability Program sub-committee (CCSP Committee) shall be adopted by the Central Murray with the following adjustments:
- If a player transfers within the Central Murray league an additional two (2) point penalty will apply. (*This does not include Development Community Player*)
- Prior to the next season the points for each club will be circulated by the Board, on behalf of the AFL Central Victoria Region Council.

## 4. Registration of Players and Coaches

- Each club shall register with PlayHQ the given and family names of each player, with their place of residence, previous to the commencement of the first match that they play.
- Where a club plays a player outside the prescribed age group, premiership points in the games that player has played are to be taken away or in the event of the team having no premiership points a fine of \$200 per game in which the player participates to be imposed on the club, and the club and player dealt with as the Board sees fit.
- All Under 18, U15 and U12 players shall provide evidence of permission by one of his/her parents or guardians, prior to registration.
- All coaches must be accredited as per Part B Section 5 OF THE National Community Football Policy Handbook, via COACHAFL.

- This accreditation must be completed by April 30.
- Loss of premiership points and/or at the discretion of the board will apply for noncompliance after this date.

## 5. Club Penalties

- Penalties for non-compliance with the reasonable administrative expectations (*all paperwork completed and submitted online by no later than 9.00am Monday, all scores to be finalised in PlayHQ by 7:00pm Saturday*)
  - Repeat offences will incur a fine of \$200
- Penalty for playing ineligible (and)/or unregistered players and/or omitted players:
  - See AFL Rules and Regulations: Penalty for playing ineligible (and)/or unregistered players.
  - A club that plays a player under a false name, shall be fined \$500, shall lose the match and the points will be awarded to the opposition.
- A club that has a player, who is unintentionally omitted from a team sheet, shall be fined for every instance. Penalty: \$50.
- Team sheets are to include any player or club official intending to take part in the game or to be seated in or near (within 3 metres) the coach's box and inside the fence.
- If an official/spectator is not listed on the team sheet he/she should not be sitting inside the fence near the coach's box. Coaching staff and team officials are to be sighted well back from the boundary line behind the line drawn in front of the coach's box at least 3 metres from the boundary line.
  - There should be no more than ten (10) officials in the Coaches Box on any given game day – **this will be policed in finals.**
- Attendance at a Central Murray Leagues meeting of requested football coaches, club officials and umpire representatives prior to the commencement of the season is compulsory.
  - \$100 fine applies if there is no significant excuse provided for nonattendance.

## 6. Match Arrangements

- a) The League Operations Manager shall arrange the program of matches for the season. When a match arranged by the League Operations Manager between two affiliated clubs is fixed for any given date, no other associated club shall take part in a match without first obtaining the consent of the Board.
- b) Footballs (Seniors, Reserves, Under 18):
  - Two new Central Murray branded footballs are to be provided by the home Club in each senior match.
  - Two suitable Central Murray branded footballs in good order and condition are to be provided by the home Club for each Reserve and Under 18 matches.
  - In finals, Central Murray Leagues branded footballs will be provided by the League.
- c) The Central Umpires shall where able, submit the two footballs to the captain of the away team, who shall select the ball to be used; and
  - Unless the captains of each team otherwise agree, the football selected by the captain of the away team shall be the football used for the Match.
- d) Helmets: All 16 and under players in **any** grade, must wear approved protective helmets for all games.
- e) Balls (U15 & U12) Each home team will provide footballs in good condition for matches:
  - Mandatory size for Under 15 - Size 4 Leather Ball
  - Mandatory size for Under 12's - Size 3 Dimple or Synthetic Ball
  - These sizes will be supplied by the Leagues for play in the finals.
- f) The principles underpinning under 12s is to provide a fun, safe and positive experience rather than competition and winning. Consequently U12's will not play for premiership points. There will be no official ladder and individual best players, or goal scorers will not be documented.

- During the match, progress scores can be displayed, however, all teams must adhere to the mercy rule.
  - The Under 15 competition is to be played for premiership points.
- g) Finals for the Season will be a Final 8 in all official grades, determined by match points.

## 7. Modified Rules for Under 12's & Under 15 Competition

- a) Bouncing Ball Under 12's: A Player may bounce the ball only once (1), before disposing of it by hand or foot and not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player.
- The penalty will be a free kick to the opposition player closest to the incident.
- b) Bouncing Ball Under 15: A Player may bounce the ball 3 x times, before disposing of it by hand or foot and not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player.
- The penalty will be a free kick to the opposition player closest to the incident.
- c) Distance penalty: A player can be awarded 25 metre advancement towards his or her goals if after a mark or free kick the umpire is of the opinion an opposing player hinders that player. This could include acts such as overstepping the mark, wasting time, and using abusive language and behaviour.
- d) Out of Bounds: When the ball goes out of bounds from a kick, a kick shall be awarded to the nearest opponent. If in doubt, ball up 10 metres in from boundary. When the ball goes out of bounds off hands or body, a ball up will occur 10 metres from the boundary.
- e) Kicking off the Ground (Under U15 and Under 12): A player is not permitted to deliberately kick the ball off the ground.
- f) Staying in Position: The umpire shall send players back to their positions prior to any ball-up.
- g) Coaches: The team coach of any team in the Under 12's and Under U15's competitions is allowed on the playing field (in the wing area) to instruct and encourage their own players. The team coach shall not come within 15 metres of the play. The Umpire has the power to remove the coach from the playing field if the coach is abusive to the umpire or players.
- h) A team runner is allowed on the ground to deliver messages but cannot stay on the ground
- i) Encouragement of Players: The Umpire shall encourage players to move the ball along and to knock the ball out of packs. The Umpire should consider himself more of a field coach and adviser than as an umpire.
- j) The centre square rule in Under 12's and Under U15's shall be observed as far as practicable during home and away matches and strictly observed during Finals.
- k) The centre line rule will be observed: The centre square rule reads – not more than 4 players of either team shall enter the centre square until the ball touches the ground in the act of bouncing or is thrown up by the umpire.
- A runner or trainer would be deemed to be one of the 4 players if he is in the square at the bounce of the ball
- l) During the U15 finals in both leagues, the coach is not allowed on the ground.
- m) Umpires are requested to apply the order off rule as it applies to:
- Any player who disputes an umpire decision on the field during the match;
  - Any player who uses obscene language or abuses or interferes with an umpire or an official of the League executing his duties;
  - Any player who wilfully wastes time or is guilty of misconduct, said player shall be liable to disqualification or to be otherwise dealt with at the discretion of an Independent Tribunal.
  - The Central Umpire(s) may order a player from the field for 10 minutes playing time and shall advise an appropriate club official of the length of time involved for any of the above offences.
  - The player sent off, shall NOT be replaced by an interchange player. It shall be left to the discretion of the Umpire whether the player sent off is reported. For the second offence during a game, the player MUST be sent off for the duration of the game and MUST NOT be replaced and MUST be reported.

- The Central Umpire(s) are encouraged to report any breaches of the Code of Conduct by players, club officials or spectators.

## 8. Interleague Football

- a) Central Murray has a long tradition of participating in interleague football. This level of competition is an important part of defining our identity within the football community.
- b) Every club in the Central Murray will be given the opportunity to nominate players or have players nominate to try out for interleague.
  - All nominated and/or invited players are encouraged to try out and must attend a minimum of two (2) trials to be eligible for selection as well as being available for all scheduled games, unless at the discretion of the league.
- c) All Players who make the squads, will be required to pay a participant levy (*unless otherwise arranged*) that will be on charged to Clubs, in the event of sponsorship does not cover the cost in its entirety.
  - This fee must be paid prior to the official games being played, or the player will be classed as ineligible.

## 9. Order Off Rule

- a) Order-off rules are to operate for all grades.
  - Seniors, Reserves and Under 18 operate as per AFL Victoria Country Rule 11.0 & AFL Laws of Australian Football Rule 20.
- b) A Red card indicates the player or official is ordered off for the remainder of the match and can be replaced after 15 minutes of actual match time.
- c) A Yellow card indicates the player or official is ordered off for 15 minutes of actual match playing time and cannot be replaced within that time.
- d) It is the responsibility of the Interchange in the Central to ensure that players ordered from the ground under a yellow card, remain off for fifteen minutes of actual playing time and those ordered from the ground under a red card are not replaced for 15 minutes of actual playing time.
- e) The Interchange Steward must therefore:
  - Identify the umpire's signal (a yellow or red card), which indicates a player has been ordered off;
  - Acknowledge the umpire's decision;
  - Record the relevant amount of actual playing time from the moment the player crosses the interchange area in the space provided on the interchange sheets; and
  - Signal the conclusion of the fifteen minute penalty
  - The onus remains with the clubs to ensure that this procedure operates effectively.
- f) In the event of more than one player being off at any given time, the onus is on the Club to confer with the interchange stewards to determine which player is eligible to come on.
- g) Any player ordered off under a red card is not permitted to take any further part in the game.
- h) In the event a Club believes an opposition player has been replaced early, that Club must call a team count to verify the number of players on the ground and the score at that particular time.
  - The Umpire will record the result of the count on the Umpire's Match Report.
- i) Where a Team has more than the permitted number of players on the playing surface, the following shall apply:
  - A field umpire shall award a Free Kick to the captain or acting captain of the opposing team, which shall be taken at the Centre Circle or where play was stopped, whichever is the greater penalty against the offending team.
  - A fifty (50) metre penalty shall then be imposed from the position where the Free Kick was awarded; and
  - The Goal Umpires shall write the current scores as at the time of the Head Count on their Score Card

- The matter will be referred to the League to investigate and ultimately determine the outcome as they see fit - *note that the offending team does not lose all points scored in the Match up to the time of the count on match day.*

## 10. Reports Resulting from Match Review

- a) The designated authority of the Match Review Panel sits at the AFL Central Victoria Headquarters to remain independent and impartial to the Central Murray League.
- b) The Match Review Panel shall have the power to lay a report following the analysis of the official Central Murray League video footage.
- c) No member of the Match Review Panel can be called as a witness, nor attend any Tribunal cases where their recommendations are being heard.
- d) Where a club wishes to tender a Club or non-official video as evidence, the Club must notify the Leagues Manager no later than 9.00am on the scheduled day of the Tribunal hearing. The video must be accompanied by a signed declaration confirming that the footage provided is true and correct and has not been altered in any way (excluding slow motion). A fine of \$500 will apply if it is found that the video evidence has been tampered with.
  - The decision to approve or deny the video to be entered as evidence lays with the Tribunal Chairman.

## 11. Age of Umpires

In general, the minimum age for umpiring participants at any level is they are 13 years of age in the year they intend to umpire. The Central Murray League has a responsibility to its umpires, as well as the players who may be participating in a game where youth umpires are officiating. By establishing a minimum age limit and specific criteria for umpiring we are meeting our duty of care and OH&S obligations. It is important that youth umpires are not potentially placed in a situation where they could be involved in physical and verbal clashes between mature players.

- a) If an umpire is younger than the recommended age he or she must be assessed by the Central Murray League Manager and Director of Umpiring or their nominees over a two-week period.
- b) Where appropriate the assessment will determine whether the youth umpire is capable of umpiring at senior or junior level.
- c) This assessment will evaluate fitness and ability to meet the demands of the specific umpiring discipline.
- d) For Central, Goal & Boundary Umpires: The capacity to make and give decisions in a tense situation is paramount;
- e) For Boundary Umpires: The length and height of throw-ins is sufficient to allow the boundary umpire to quickly remove themselves from within the playing surface and avoid any potential conflict with players;

In all cases new youth umpires will be mentored and given feedback on a weekly basis.

## 12. Reportable Incidents

- a) Umpires shall be provided by the League the AFL Victoria Country Notice of Report;
- b) They shall enter particulars of any charge or charges they make against players, officials, spectators or Clubs. The Central Umpires are responsible for the management of the reporting process, in line with AFL Vic Country Rules and the National Community Football Policy Handbook.
- c) For any on-field incidents the report shall be completed immediately after the match and submitted in the Match Day envelope. A report shall be completed and if a player of each side is reported in relation to the same charge, then each copy shall be signed by the umpire or umpires making the charge.

- d) The field umpire shall take charge of a copy of all report sheets submitted to him/her at the completion of a match by boundary and/or goal umpires.
- e) As soon as practical after the completion of a match in which a player or club report has been made, the field umpire shall hand a copy of every report sheet to the appropriate official of the team of which the reported player is a member. For this purpose, each club shall be responsible for the attendance of an official at the umpires' room 15 minutes after the end of each match.
- f) In the event of no official attending, the field umpire shall be deemed to have complied with the duty imposed on him/her by this Rule.
- g) Umpires shall lodge, or cause to be lodged, the remaining copy of any report sheets they have completed with the home club secretary for inclusion in the Match Day envelope.
- h) Umpires are to ensure a copy of the report is texted or uploaded to JotForm for the League Manager on a Saturday following the game

## 13. Protests

- All clubs preferring protests, complaints, charges or disputes in connection with any League match shall forward particulars of the matter to the Leagues Manager no later than twelve noon on Tuesday following the match in respect of which such protest, complaint; charge or dispute is preferred, together with a fee of \$500.
  - o A portion of the fee may be returned if the protest, charge or dispute is considered not to have been frivolous.
- The Leagues Manager shall immediately on such protest, complaint, charge or dispute being lodged, will notify the Secretary of the protested club, who shall furnish a reply within 72 hours of receipt of such notice by him/her or will notify the Investigation Officer who will inform both clubs of the investigation procedures.
- The Leagues Manager shall thereupon after consultation with the Chairman of the Board, proceed to call a special meeting of the Board to deal with the protest, charge or dispute or call on the League's Investigation Officer to investigate the matter. Upon receipt of the Investigation Officer's report within 21 days, the Board will determine how the matter shall be dealt with.
- If any club, knowing that any player of an opposing club is ineligible to play, does not prior to the match notify the captain of the club with which such player intends to play, of the fact, a protest by such first mentioned club in respect of such player will not be entertained by the League.
- Any player knowing that he is ineligible to play, and who does not notify the captain of his own club shall be liable to disqualification or otherwise as the Board or Tribunal may think fit.
- Clubs preferring complaints against players, officials and umpires under the AFL VIC Rule for Unbecoming Conduct must follow the prescribed procedures as laid down in the relevant AFL VC Handbook.

## 14. Permits

- a) All regulations that apply to clearances as embodied in the Constitution of AFL Victoria Country shall apply to the Central Murray League.
- b) All applications for permits shall be in writing on prescribed forms and shall furnish such particulars as required on League permit forms, and the player desiring a permit shall, if so desired, appear before the Leagues Manager and furnish legal documents, such as birth certificates as the Operation Manager so demands.
- c) Any local area agreements are negotiated annually, and clubs will be notified prior to the commencement of any season of these agreements and their conditions.
- d) Student Permits are a permit arrangement that is only open to players who are full-time students.
  - i. 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.

- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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.
- v. Prior to any match played, the player shall obtain a Season Permit in PlayHQ. 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
- vi. The Student Permit form can be found on the Central Rivers website.

## 15. Match Conditions

- a) The non-playing coach of any team (see Modified Rules for U12's and U15's) is not allowed on the playing arena during the progress of the match except at the quarter intervals. During the progress of the match the non-playing coach, interchange players (other than in warming up) and other officials must be in the restricted area as marked by the coaches' box.
- b) The team captain of the day shall only be permitted to speak to the Field Umpire at the intervals during the progress of the match (other than if requesting the umpire for a count of players on the playing surface). Any breach of this rule shall be reported by the Umpire and provided to the League Manager and Central Rivers Board for determination. It may also be referred to the League Independent Tribunal.

## 16. Match Day Procedure

- a) Senior team lists must be lodged on PlayHQ by 9.00pm Thursday prior to each match with jumper numbers and positions confirmed. All other grades are to be lodged by 8.00pm Friday prior to each match.
- b) Team sheets are to include all players and their allocated numbers, all club officials intending to take part in the game.
- c) A completed team sheet shall be handed to the field umpire 30 minutes before the commencement of the match in the home and away season, 1 hour before the commencement of the match in the finals season.
- d) Team Sheets are to be signed by the Secretary, Team Manager or Team Captain of each team.
- e) Club personnel, parents or spectators not listed on the team sheet are not permitted to sit inside the fence near the coach's box. PENALTY: \$100 fine

## 17. Time of Starting all Matches

Clubs that are unable to meet the scheduled match times will be penalized, with repeated offences incurring a \$100 fine per round

- a) Timekeepers at the completion of the previous match shall sound the bell, siren or gong. All teams are to be on ground at the first siren of the new game, ready to start at the commencement time.

- b) All matches shall be four quarters. The controlling body may in an emergency reduce such time. Lengths of quarters, changeover times and warm up periods are listed in the Appendices.
- c) During the time allowed between the first and the second quarter's coaches, trainers, selection committee and runner shall be permitted to enter the playing arena.
- d) At half time the senior players and umpires may exit the ground, all others remain on the ground but the game MUST recommence not later than the designated time after the end of the second quarter; the time keepers to notify the field umpire by sounding the bell, siren or gong when that time has elapsed. The time between the third and fourth quarter's coaches, trainers, selection committee and runner shall be permitted to enter the playing area.

## 18. General Field Penalties

- On field Penalties for off field offences: A free kick is to be awarded against a player, official and/or spectators in proximity of a coach's box who uses abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards an umpire.
  - o In line with the National Community Football Policy Handbook, Appendix 1 (Reportable offences), outlines that any auditory offence directed at an umpire will result in a minimum sanction of a 1 match suspension.
- In all Grand Finals matches set penalties for reportable offences (both on-field and off-field) will be doubled as per 100% loading criteria in the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook That is, if the Leagues Manager accepts the club's submission for a set penalty, this penalty will be twice the penalty applied in the home and away games, as per the Classification Matrix in the NCFPH.

## 19. Forfeits

When forfeiting a match the following will occur.

- a) Any club giving a forfeit is to provide notice to the other club Secretary/President and the Leagues Manager by 6.00pm Friday.
- b) In the event of any side forfeiting and not providing notice to their opposition, or the Leagues Manager, the Board may deal with a club as it thinks fit and may fine the club up to \$200 for failure to meet its commitments.
- c) A team sheet may be lodged by the team receiving the forfeit and submitted with match day paperwork, this must be completed by 9:00am Monday following the scheduled match to be accepted
- d) If a team in the Reserves, U18's or U15's does not have 10 registered players available to play on match day, that team must forfeit the game. The teams may then agree to share players to play a match, but the score will not be recorded.

## 20. Home & Away Matches

- a) The football season shall commence and terminate respectively on such dates in each year as the Board may determine.
- b) Each club shall prior to the commencement of each season register its playing ground.
- c) Should any club on any of the days appointed for the playing of a match (except where such match has been cancelled prior to the date appointed for the match, by written consent of the secretaries of the competing clubs and the Leagues Manager) fail to put in an appearance for the purpose of playing the match, such Club shall lose the match and it shall count as a win to the other side. The other side will receive percentage under AFL Country Victoria regulations.
- d) In the event of severe inclement weather, the captains of the competing teams shall decide the fitness of the ground. In the event of their being unable to agree the field umpire/umpires shall decide.

- e) Should a match be commenced, such a match must not be stopped except on the account of inclement weather and in exceptional circumstances and by the consent of both captains, but in the event of the captains disagreeing, the field umpire shall be constituted the sole referee.
- f) As per 11.2 of the AFL Laws of the Game, if a match is stopped and is unable to continue within the time scheduled for the Match, for reasons beyond the control of either Team (including circumstances where it is unsafe for the Match to proceed), the following shall apply:
- Prior to Half time;
    - o The match shall be deemed to be drawn and the scores of the teams at the time the match was interrupted shall be used in calculating the percentage of each team.
  - Half time & beyond;
    - o The scores of the teams at the time the match was interrupted shall be deemed to be the final scores of the match.
  - The maximum amount of time a game can be stopped for is a 30-minute period, after this the above shall apply.
    - o However, if there is sufficient time to continue modified quarters to play out the game, and it provides both a fair and equitable solution and both teams can agree, this 30-minute period can be extended, but it is not to impede into the next game within reasons and/or cause further delays.
  - If a match is interrupted and cannot be restarted in a finals match the following shall occur;
    - o Prior to half time; the team who finished higher on the ladder at the end of the Home & Away season will be deemed to have one the match
    - o Half time & beyond; the scores of the teams at the time the match was interrupted shall be deemed the final scores of the match.
- g) Should any match be stopped or not commenced on account of inclement weather or exceptional circumstances, the game may be played on a date fixed by the Board.
- h) Lightning Rule AS1768-2007
- A Controlling Body must use best endeavours to comply with AS1768-2007, entitled The Lightning Protection Standard, published on 10 January 2007 (Lightning Standard).
  - While the Lightning Standard will not necessarily prevent damage or personal injury due to lightning, it will reduce the probability of such damage or injury occurring.
    - o 30/30 Safety Guideline
  - In the absence of specific information from a weather radar, lightning location system or specialised warning device then the relevant Controlling Body and Club(s) must refer to the 30/30 Safety Guideline.
  - The 30/30 Safety Guideline specifies that where lightning is considered to be a possible or actual threat to a Match or training session the following procedures and considerations apply:
    - o The observation of approaching storm clouds, the first flash of lightning or clap of thunder, no matter how far away should heighten lightning awareness.
    - o The level of risk depends on one's location (direction and distance) relative to the storm cell and the direction in which the storm system is traveling.
    - o A simple method of determining the distance to the storm cell is to measure the time elapsed from when the lightning flash is observed and when the associated clap of thunder is heard.
    - o Light travels faster than sound. Assuming that the light from the flash reaches the observer instantaneously, and knowing that sound takes approximately three (3) seconds to travel one (1) kilometre, the distance can be determined by using the following rule:
      - o *distance (in km) = time from observing the flash to hearing thunder (in 3 seconds)*. It is important to remember that lightning may be obscured by clouds so it must be assumed that when thunder is heard, lightning is in the vicinity.
      - o In such cases, careful judgment must be used to determine whether a threat exists.

- The accepted “safe” distance from lightning is greater than 10km. This means that as the time interval between observing the flash and hearing the thunder approaches 30 seconds, all those in exposed areas should be seeking or already inside safe shelters.
- A storm cell with lightning activity within 10km constitutes a threat.
- It is recommended that people wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder. This figure is based on the observation that the typical storm moves at about 40km/h. Thus, waiting 30 minutes allows the thunderstorm to be about 20km away, minimising the likelihood of a nearby lightning strike.
- It is important to emphasise that blue skies and lack of rainfall are not adequate reasons to breach the 30-minute minimum return-to-activity rule.
- i) A list of the names of players, in alphabetical order, their allotted numbers and their points and other required officials shall be handed to the field umpire before the commencement of the match, such list should be signed by the Team Manager or Secretary or Captain of the competing team. Clubs must also provide opposing teams with a copy at least 10 minutes prior to the stipulated starting time.

## 21. Late Starts (Home and Away Matches)

- a) Any Under 18 or Reserve grade match starting more than five minutes later than the starting time, timekeepers shall deduct evenly from the last two quarters that amount of time which will allow the following match to commence at the appointed time.
- b) If either club is not ready to commence the match within thirty minutes of each appointed time, the match shall be awarded to the opposing side, unless in each instance a satisfactory reason for the delay is given to the Board, which shall have the power to order that the match be played on a subsequent day or otherwise to finally decide the matter.
- c) If the umpire is late entering the arena, the teams should be on the ground at the same time as the umpire. Timekeepers should record on the timecards, the following times: warning siren time, team enters the arena and match commences.

## 22. Draws in the Finals – All Grades

- Where the result is tied at the end of the fourth quarter in finals matches the following will occur:
  - After a break of 5 minutes, extra time consisting of two 5-minute halves with time on will be played until a result is achieved;
  - No break is to be taken between halves nor is any coaching to be made;
  - Teams will continue to kick in the same direction as they did in the fourth quarter in the first five-minute extra half and then change direction for the second five-minute half;
  - This method will continue until a result is achieved.

## 23. Ineligible Players

Players participating in any junior or senior match deemed ineligible by the Leagues Manager shall be subject to the following penalties.

*To be read in conjunction with AFL Vic Country Handbook Rule.*

- Reversal of match points, if won
- Removal of points for scored in that game
- Junior match – fine up to \$250
- Senior match – fine up to \$500
- Further penalty if determined by the Board

## 24. Ground Encroachment

- a) Except for the quarter intervals, no persons other than runners, trainers, medical staff and water carriers may enter the playing field.
- b) No team officials or other persons may stand sufficiently close to the boundary line to impede or hamper the Boundary Umpires in the execution of their duties.
  - o Where there is less than 3 metres between the fence line and the boundary line, no spectators shall be allowed within the fence line during play.
- c) The officiating umpires are empowered to order off officials if they are not correctly attired or are deemed to be exceeding their duties.
- d) The officiating umpires are empowered to order off unauthorised person(s) or request a club official to remove that person(s).
- e) The non-playing coach of any team (Except U15's coach) is not allowed on the playing field during the progress of the match except at the quarter intervals.
- f) Coaches' Box: (where possible) A line 12 metres in length and one metre from the boundary line shall be marked parallel to the boundary line in front of each of the coaches' boxes. Coaches, runners, interchange players (other than those warming up) and other game officials must remain within this area when not on the playing surface.

## 25. Rookie of the Year

The Rookie of the Year award is presented to the top performing young footballer within the Central Murray football leagues. The details of the Award are contained in the nomination forms sent to Club in July.

## 26. Match Day Secretary

- a) Each club shall appoint a Match Day Secretary.
- b) Each Match Day Secretary must be registered on PlayHQ with their club prior to the start of the current season.
- c) The Match Day Secretary shall have a Working-with-Children Check and details must be recorded in the club WWCC Register prior to the start of the season.
  - o PENALTY: \$100 Fine

## 27. Team Officials

### Umpire Escorts & Interchange Stewards

In line with AFL Vic Country policy all Central Murray League clubs will provide umpire escorts by expanding the current duties of Interchange Stewards to include responsibility for completion of the following:

- All clubs are required to provide an adult umpire escort for all Senior matches their club is involved in during a season. It is also strongly encouraged they are provided for Colts & Reserves where possible. They will be required to be provided in all Finals Matches. The Umpire escort must wear the league approved identification, which identify the Club of each official. The Umpire escort shall be required to escort and assist the umpires at all breaks in play to ensure that any incidents are controlled in a reasonable manner.
- As well Clubs are to ensure that:
  - o The official is listed on the team sheet;
- The official is to remain neutral whilst performing this role. *This translates to non-barracking during the game, or calling out from the interchange position;*

- The official is able to assist the umpires if an incident arises;
- The official introduces himself to the umpires at the rooms prior to the game OR once he has obtained the vest from the official from the previous game, speaks to the umpires during the pre-game warm up;
- The official accompanies the umpires on and off the ground and stands with the umpires at all scheduled breaks in play;
- The official moves quickly to the umpires at the end of each quarter;
- The official does not give comment on the umpires' performance; nor seeks clarification on rule interpretations or specific incidents occurring during the match;
- The official in the event of an incident involving the umpires, remains with the umpires and ensure their safe departure from the ground;
- The official notes any issues which the umpires might want addressed by a club and passes it on to the Club president or secretary;
- Breaches of this by-law will be referred to the Leagues Manager for Investigation with any penalties to be determined by the independent tribunal.
- Interchange stewards are for Senior Matches only in the home & away season, but all grades in finals.

## Runners

For all grades of football, clubs are permitted a maximum of two (2) runners. Their role is to pass on instructions from the coach(s).

- Eligibility to act as runner
  - A person who is not a registered player or an official of any club, other than his home club, nor who is under disqualification or suspension by his home club or League, shall act as an official runner in any competition match
  - All runners shall be minimum 16 years of age;
  - All runners over 18 years of age shall have a Working-with-Children Check and details shall be recorded in the club WWCC Register prior to the start of the match;
  - No coach or assistant coach of a Central Murray League open age team shall act as a runner in a match in which a team of his club is participating;
  - No coach or assistant coach of a Central Murray League team shall act as a runner, trainer or water carrier in a match in which the team that he coaches is participating.
- Duties of Runners
  - Team runner (s) shall not have affixed to his or her person any communication device, which includes but is not limited to headsets, microphones or earpieces;
  - Where two (2) club runners are used, runners shall enter and exit the playing arena via the interchange area. Only one runner from each club is permitted on the playing surface at any given time. Failure to adhere to these restrictions prohibits the offending runner from entering the playing surface for the remainder of the game. Should a club use one (1) runner only, the runner may enter and exit the playing area from any point of the ground;
  - The sole duty of the runner shall be to confer with the player or players of his/her club and to immediately leave the playing arena.

### Runners' uniforms

- All runners are to wear Central Murray League approved uniforms. Runner tops must carry the club name and the word "Runner".
- Where a Club uses two Runners in the Senior, Reserves or Under 18's grade the uniforms must be numbered to distinguish the runners.
- Runners Uniforms are to be the same colour matching shorts and tops.
- Failure to wear the correct uniform will incur a penalty of \$100.

## Water Carriers

A maximum of four (4) water-carriers is permitted in any game;

- The minimum age for water carriers is they must be 12 in the year they officiate;
- No coach or assistant coach of a Central Murray League team shall act as a water carrier in any Central Murray League match;
- Water-carriers are to wear the Central Murray League approved uniforms and be correctly numbered and identified with their team affiliation.
- Black or blue shorts or tracksuit pants will accompany the shirts.
- Closed toe shoes must be worn, in the form of football boots or runners.
  - o Failure to wear the correct uniform will incur a penalty of \$100 fine
- Water-carriers may enter the arena at any time during the match or intervals but only to provide water to players and umpires and for no other purpose whatsoever and to immediately leave the playing arena once the drink has been delivered;
- Water carriers are not permitted to operate constantly from the Coaches box area but must be around the boundary area against the fence while not delivering water.

## Trainers

Each Club must have a minimum of one **approved** sports trainer present during the full course of each match in which a team is fielded by the Club;

- At least one accredited sports trainer per club must be registered as such with the Central Murray League and be present at each game.
  - o No accreditation shall be given unless the person has the following current qualifications: HLTAID011 (Provide First Aid) AND Sports Trainer Level 1.
- All other trainers must have a minimum of HLTAID011 (Provide First Aid)
- All trainers shall be minimum 16 years of age;
- The duty of a Trainer is to render medical assistance and convey water as required;
- No team shall be permitted to have more than a combined total of five (5) trainers and water carriers;
- No sports trainer shall enter the playing arena unless:
  - o The sports trainer is dressed in the Central Murray League approved uniform and in white/black trousers, dress or overalls;
  - o The sports trainer is required for medical treatment of an injured player, the replacement of damaged attire of a player or other like purpose or the first or third quarter intervals are in progress;
  - o No sports trainer shall communicate provoke or in any way interfere with the umpire or any player from the opposing Club during any match.
- Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prevent a trainer attending to assist an injured person

## Team Managers

All team managers shall be registered on PlayHQ;

- Team managers are required to have a Working-with-Children Check for Junior Teams and details shall be recorded in the club WWCC Register prior to the start of the season

## Club Umpires

- A club goal umpire shall be minimum 16 years of age;
- A club central umpire shall be minimum 18 years of age;

- Clubs shall supply umpires when requested to do so by the Leagues Manager or Umpire Manager;
- Club umpires shall be paid at the discretion of the club;
- Club umpires over the age of 18 years shall have a Working-with-Children Check and details shall be recorded in the club WWCC Register prior to the start of the season;
- Club Central, Boundary and Goal umpires shall wear League approved apparel as uniform;
- All club central umpires umpiring senior football matches shall have completed, as a minimum standard, AFL Umpire Introductory Course accreditation or have written permission from the Central Rivers Umpire Manager.
  - o PENALTY: \$100 Fine

## Officials in Finals

- Teams will be permitted to have a maximum of ten (10) officials in the Coaches Box during the final's series.
  - o *Example; Coach, Water & Trainers (5), Runner (2), Team Manager, Assistant Coach*
- Any officials exceeding the ten (10) must leave the coaches 'box.
- Any officials in the Coaches box, must be listed on the team sheet.

## 28. Ground Facilities

- Each Club is to provide a ground that in the opinion of the Central Rivers Board, is suitable for match play.
- Goal posts must be correctly padded in accordance with AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY Rules.
- The ground must be marked in accordance with the Laws of the Game unless impractical to do so.
  - o Variations are to be approved by the Central Rivers.
- A stretcher must be provided by the home Club and located in or near the coaches' box.
- A separate dressing room must be available for umpires.
  - o Penalties may apply for non-compliance

## 29. Extraordinary Circumstances

In the event of extreme circumstances occurring in any of the League's Rules, the Central Rivers Board of Management shall have the power to deal with any matters arising and impose any penalties as they see fit.

# Central Murray Specifications:

## Interchange stewards for Under 18, Reserves and Seniors

- The role of the Interchange Stewards/Umpire Escorts is documented above in "27. Team Officials".
- The expectation is that clubs familiarize their Interchange Stewards with their role.
- The Interchange Forms provided by the Central Murray League will be correctly followed and completed by an Interchange Steward from each club.
- At the start of every quarter each club's interchange players are to be noted on the Interchange sheet.
  - o Where no interchange players are available this is to be noted.
- Interchange stewards are required to sign both completed sheets at the conclusion of each match. (Two signatures on each sheet)

## Structure of Teams (Reserves, Under 18, U15 & U12)

- Teams must adhere to the Equalization Policy:

- i. Opposing teams must have even playing numbers at the commencement of the match, and at all times during the game. *(Other than injuries, warnings or send-offs).*
    - *ie. if one team has fewer players than the rules require then both teams must have the same number of players on the ground or court.*
  - ii. A club able to field more than the required (18) players **must** cooperate with this arrangement and **cannot** field more than their opposition – penalty for clubs refusing to cooperate will see them dealt with by the Central Rivers Board however the Board deem appropriate.
  - iii. Players may be loaned to even up player numbers and give more players game time with fewer players on the bench. If a club does not wish to loan players, then they **must** even up numbers on the field and cannot play with more. The team with excess players (above the required starting number) will form an extended bench.
  - iv. The team with less than the required (18) numbers cannot have players on the bench, unless by agreement with the opposing team.
  - v. All umpires in control of the match must be informed prior to the game commencing.
  - vi. Players shared between opposing teams are eligible for league votes and awards, as well as, being counted by their home team for finals eligibility.
  - vii. Loan players may switch back to their home team only at the end of each quarter.
  - viii. Agreements must be made between teams at **least** 15 minutes prior to the match. It is the responsibility of the team that require the Equalisation Rule to approach the opposition.
    - **Penalty for not adhering to the Equalisation Policy (U15 & U18 Specific):**
      - 1<sup>st</sup> Offence - \$1000 Fine
      - 2<sup>nd</sup> Offence – Stripped of 4 Premiership Points
      - 3<sup>rd</sup> Offence - \$2500 Fine & Stripped of 4 Premiership Points from Senior Team
      - 4<sup>th</sup> & Further Offences will be dealt with by the Central Rivers Board as they see fit.
- In the Reserve Grade; there shall be up to four (4) players on the interchange and a maximum of twenty-two (22) players permitted on the team sheet (this is assuming that eighteen (18) players take the field).
- If a team has nineteen (19) or less players on any given game day, they may enact the equalisation rule *(For the avoidance of doubt, this means a team with 22 players will have 6 on the interchange, and the team with 19 or less will have 16 on the field and however many left over players after the fact on the interchange)*
  - If this rule is enacted, then a maximum of 16 players are to take the field.
- **The equalisation rule does not apply in finals and the default number to take the field is 18.**
- A maximum of four (4) Under 18 players can be put onto the Reserves team sheet
  - Under 12's and Under 15's shall consist of 18 players on the field, unless by mutual agreement this number can be expanded to a maximum of 22. *(This is to cater for surplus players and some larger grounds)*
  - Players for Under 12 must be under the age of 12 on the first day of January in the year of play.
  - In all Junior grades, subject to National Community Football Policy Handbook, Part B, 3B: *No player shall play in a competition where they are more than three (3) years younger than the eligibility date of the oldest age group in which he/she wishes to play.*
    - If there is more than a three-year age gap between the oldest age of a competition and the players age as at December 31 the year prior to playing in that competition, an application to play up must be made to the Leagues' Manager.
    - *Example; 8-year-old playing in Under 12, 14 years old playing in Colts, 15-year-old playing in Seniors etc*

## Mercy Rule

Mercy Rule (U12's and U15's): Junior players lose interest in football when the margin between two teams on any one day is excessive. When the score differential between teams equals or exceeds 60 points prior to three-quarter time the Goal Umpires will inform the Field Umpire;

- The field umpire will signal the end of the game to the timekeepers who will blow the siren twice to signal the end of the game;
- The Field Umpire will instruct the Goal Umpires & scoreboard attendants to cease further scoring for the remainder of the match;
- The opposing coaches will have three minutes to even up the sides to the best of their ability, for the betterment of all players from both sides.
- When the Mercy Rule is applied, the match shall continue for the remainder of the allocated time of play. Clubs may continue to track individual goal kickers and the field umpires are to decide their best players irrespective of any team changes, however, any public scoring shall cease, and the official recorded result of the match shall be the score at the time of the invocation of the mercy rule.
- If Clubs do not reflect this on PlayHQ, on Monday following the game, the Central Murray League will update the scores to show the Mercy Rule was applied if there is a 60 point differential prior to 3 quarter time.
- When the mercy rule is invoked, both coaches MUST then do their best to mix the teams in a sportsmanlike manner to ensure an even contest.
  - o If this is not done, at the discretion of the Central Rivers Leagues Board;
  - o The premiership points may be forfeited; and/or the club fined; and/or the coaches brought before the Independent Tribunal and charged with a breach of the Code of Conduct.

## Premiership Conditions

- The Home and away competition shall consist of a fixture of matches as created by the Leagues Operations Manager. The proposed fixture and the draw will be made available to clubs in December of the preceding season.
- In all matches four points shall be counted for a win, and two points to each team for a draw. There shall be NO points allocated for a bye.
- A final eight system will operate for Finals.
- The Board shall have complete charge and control all arrangements at all grounds venues on which matches between affiliated clubs are played throughout the season.
- The monies paid at the gate for entry to home and away games shall be the property of the home club.
- The Board shall determine each year by the February Board meeting the levy to be paid by each club to meet the budgeted expenses of the League.
- The gate takings from the finals shall be collected by the Leagues and all expenses paid by the Leagues.
- Allocation of finals is the prerogative of the Board. An equitable rotation system has been implemented so that each club has the opportunity to host a minor final at their home ground.
  - o This rotation system is on the Leagues' website.
  - o The Board shall call for expressions of interest for the hosting of a particular final or Grand Final but reserves the right to determine the final allocations.
  - o All venues on which finals matches are played come under the control of the Board as from the final home and away games and all senior clubs in the finals shall have equal rights to the use of the ground at least one night per week by application to the Board.
- There shall be up to 4 interchange players in the Senior and Reserve, competitions making a total of 22 players on the team sheet. (This assumes that 18 players have taken the field)

- In the Under 18 competition up to 7 interchange players, as is needed, to complete the total of 25 players on the team sheet can be used. If a team wishes to promote an U15 player, then only 18 players and 4 interchange players to complete the 22 are allowed.
- In the Under 15 competition, in finals, up to 7 interchange players, as is needed, to complete the total of 25 players on the team sheet can be used.

## Finals Eligibility

- A player to be eligible to play for their club in any final must have played of least (4) four home and away games in the same season for their club;
  - o Reserves: To play in any Reserve Grade Final a player must have played at least four (4) home and away games in the Reserves, in that season;
  - o Reserves: Any player who plays more than 10 home and away games for their senior team shall not be eligible to play in any finals game with their Reserve team, unless the senior and reserve teams are playing on the same day or same weekend; For the avoidance of doubt, when both Reserves and Seniors are fielding teams in finals on the same weekend, free interchange applies, as long as the player in question has played four (4) club games they are eligible to play in either grade.
  - o They must not play more than one (1) finals game; Seniors OR Reserves; on any weekend.
- Definition of playing in a game: A player must be in attendance, in playing attire to take the field and be on the field in the club's designated interchange area for the duration of the match;
- Coates Talent League: For the purpose of Finals qualification and player eligibility, the Coates Talent League Under 18 competition shall be considered the equal of AFLVIC (Central Murray League) senior competition and Coates Talent League Under 18 matches shall be considered matches of the players senior AFLVIC (Central Murray League) team for the purpose of eligibility to play in AFL VIC finals as per AFL VIC regulations, *e.g. Fred Smith plays three (3) Coates Talent League Under 18 matches in the current season and one Central Murray League match for his club, and then he is eligible for Central Murray League finals as per Central Murray League Rules.*
- Playing more than one game on the weekend:
  - o If a player plays in an AFL/VFL/Coates Talent League game and a Central Murray game on the same weekend, the Central Murray game does not count for finals eligibility purposes;
  - o For the purposes of finals eligibility, if a player plays in two or more matches for his club on the same weekend (or round) the higher-level game will only be counted toward eligibility;
- During the finals, Junior players may participate in more than one game on the same day or same weekend.
- Under 18 players may also participate in a Colts game and a Senior OR Reserve final too on the same day or same weekend.
  - o They cannot play both Seniors and Reserves on the same day or same weekend.
- *Protests: In the event of a protest under this rule, the onus of proof shall be upon the player or club protesting.*
- *Fines: A club playing an ineligible player in a finals game will forfeit the match in the event of it scoring more points than the opposing team.*
- *In addition to the sanctions imposed by the Board, the Club will be subject to a fine at the Boards Discretion.*

## Best & Fairest Award

- The following player awards will be presented each season;
  - o Best & Fairest (All Grades except Under 12)
  - o Runner Up Best & Fairest (Under 15 & under only)

- Any player found guilty by the independent tribunal or having accepted an early guilty plea, on any charge shall be ineligible for the award of Central Murray League's Best & Fairest during the current season, except where the charge related to time wasting.
- In the event of a tie in the best and fairest voting in any section, two or more awards shall be made.
  - o Where the highest vote getter has been ruled ineligible, the second higher vote getter will be declared the winner.
- Where teams in a scheduled fixture (Reserves, under 18's, U15's) share players for the purpose of equalization, Best & Fairest votes and goals kicked for the opposition team will be counted toward the player's personal Best & Fairest and Goal Kicking awards.
- Any votes or goals gained by a player who is playing for an opposition club during a bye shall not have these votes or goals recorded.

## Home & Away Match Times

Central Murray Match Times One Ground template					
Grade	Seniors	Reserves	Under 18	U15	U12
Change-over time	2	2	2	2	2
First Siren Players on field	2:27:00 PM	12:47:00 PM	11:07:00 AM	9:50:00 AM	8:45:00 AM
Warm-up	3	2	2	2	2
Match Start Ball-up	2:30:00 PM	12:49:00 PM	11:09:00 AM	9:52:00 AM	8:47:00 AM
Match End	4:52:00 PM	2:25:00 PM	12:45:00 PM	11:05:00 AM	9:48:00 AM
Quarter Lengths inc. time on	28	20	20	15	12
¼ Time Break	3	3	3	3	3
Half Time Break	20	8	8	5	5
¾ Time Break	5	5	5	5	5
Time-On	Yes	No	No	No	No
Game Length HOURS	2	1	1	1	1
Game Length MINUTES	22	36	36	13	1
Central Murray Match Times Two ground template					
Grade	Seniors	Reserves	Under 18	U15	U12
Change-over time	2	2	2	2	2
First Siren Players on field	2:27:00 PM	12:47:00 PM	11:07:00 AM	9:50:00 AM	11:15:00 AM
Warm-up	3	2	2	2	2
Match Start Ball-up	2:30:00 PM	12:49:00 PM	11:09:00 AM	9:52:00 AM	11:18:00 AM
Match End	4:52:00 PM	2:25:00 PM	12:45:00 PM	11:05:00 AM	12:19:00 PM
Quarter Lengths inc. time on	28	20	20	15	12
¼ Time Break	3	3	3	3	3
Half Time Break	20	8	8	5	5
¾ Time Break	5	5	5	5	5
Time-On	Yes	No	No	No	No

<i>Game Length HOURS</i>	2	1	1	1	1
<i>Game Length MINUTES</i>	22	36	36	13	1

*The Seniors, Reserves, Under 18 & Under 15 will play on the Main Ground, U12's will play on the Second Oval.  
One Gound times will be used by mutual agreement between opposing clubs*