



EASTERN FOOTBALL NETBALL LEAGUE INCORPORATED

BY-LAWS ADDENDUM – COVID-19 FRAMEWORK

(Last amended 17th February 2022)



1. Introduction

This Addendum outlines changes to certain aspects of the EFNL By-Laws, introduced because of the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the State Government restrictions imposed on Community Football. This Addendum will apply for the duration of the 2022 EFNL season. To the extent of any inconsistency between the EFNL By-Laws and this Addendum, this Addendum will prevail. All clubs must abide by the AFL Victoria Return to Play Protocols.

2. Purpose

The aim of these changes is to accommodate the restrictions and protocols of a season whilst ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all EFNL Member Clubs, staff, officials, umpires, players, parents, volunteers, and spectators by acting in accordance with all State Government, Local Council, AFL Victoria and League restrictions and guidelines.



COVID-19 BY-LAWS

Governing Principals

- i. The health and safety of the community remains the highest priority
- ii. Balanced competition is important, however the opportunity to participate whenever possible is of higher priority
- iii. Where possible the H&A and Finals shall be completed within traditional timeframes
- iv. Equality in the draw be of lesser importance than opportunity to participate whenever possible
- v. That a minor premiership be awarded as determined by the EFNL Board if applicable
- vi. A Finals Series be played with a minimum of 1 week (1 v 2) and up to a traditional final's series of 4 weeks
- vii. Should any scenario occur which is not covered within these By Laws then the matter shall be referred to the EFNL Board to determine at their absolute discretion

By Laws are subject to changes in the Federal or State Government COVID-19 Restrictions and AFL Victoria Protocols. Changes may trigger the application of these COVID-19 By Laws or the addition of new By Laws as circumstances change.

COVID-19 Specific Rules & Guidance

1. Vaccination Policy

Refer to the Victorian Government website [How we live: Information for Victorians | Coronavirus Victoria](#) and getting active.

Vaccination requirements do not currently apply to people involved in community sport (e.g., a local footy match) or people using swimming pools for essential medical care like hydrotherapy.

If the space is being operated only for the purpose of community sport, participants, spectators, and workers (including volunteers), are excluded from the vaccination requirement.

2. Positive COVID-19 TEST

Should a Player/Official receive a positive COVID Test Result, they must immediately follow Victorian Health Authorities directions.

The Player/Official must advise the Club immediately of the positive COVID-19 result and the Club needs to assess the potential extent of exposure to its players and officials and notify the League. Notifications for individual exposures can be emailed to covid@efnl.org.au, any exposures which have the potential to impact fixtures should be phoned through to the League office.



Based on the extent of exposure, should the number of players in COVID-19 isolation affect their ability to field teams the relevant By Laws shall be enacted.

The Public Health Authority shall advise on an individual's ability to return to training or playing.

3. Fixture Management – COVID-19

Junior Football/Veterans

- Should an entire round of matches be abandoned, no points or percentage shall be awarded to any team.
- The season shall recommence with the next scheduled round.
- The league may at its discretion replace a round in the second half of the fixture to ensure all teams play at least once during the season (subject to grading and an even fixture)
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence
- The Board may at its discretion add or remove fixtured home and away matches.

Senior Men/Reserves/U19's/Senior Women

- Should an entire round of matches be abandoned before all teams have played once in a competition, the first round where teams meet for a second time will be replaced with the abandoned round if those teams have not played once.
- For example, if Round 3 is abandoned in Division 1, the Round 10 match will be removed and the Round 3 match will be played in its place.
- Once all clubs have played once any further abandoned rounds will be removed from the fixture and the competition will move to the next scheduled round.
- Clubs may play a team twice in a short space of time; however, it maintains the fixture and causes the least disruption. Home and Away splits for clubs may be distorted but this would be unavoidable.
- Please note that in Premier Men's and Division Four where fixtures are uneven, this principle will be applied wherever possible unless a better option is available to the League (i.e., remove a round where teams play three times in Division Four).

4. Minimum Player Numbers

Impact of a COVID-19 interruption to open age (inc Under 19's) Team Player availability

- Should players be unavailable to play any game as scheduled by the league due to COVID-19 isolation requirements, senior matches shall take precedent for player numbers. Where a club fields two sides in an age group (u19's) the forfeit should take place in the lower grade.

Senior Men's games will be played provided that:

- Senior teams can field a minimum of twenty players (18 on-field and two on the bench)



- Should a team not be able to field twenty players, the game shall be cancelled (no points or percentage allocated), and match ratio will be applied to the competition.
- Teams may have unequal numbers on the bench for instance a team may play with twenty-two players v 20 players with 4 and 2 on the bench.

Women's/Reserves/Under 19s and Junior games will be played provided that:

- Teams can field a minimum of 14 (13 in applicable competitions) players.
- Should a team not be able to field 14 (13) players at the start of the game, the game shall be cancelled (no points or percentage allocated), and match ratio will be applied to the competition.
- Teams are encouraged to share players to meet the minimum requirement to enable a match to take place.

The League may at its absolute discretion amend the minimum player requirements to support the completion of matches.

5. *Impact of a COVID-19 interruption on a Single Round, Match or Matches, Consecutive Rounds or Multiple Rounds:*

- No points or percentage shall be awarded to any team for any abandoned Rounds or matches.
- The season shall recommence at the next scheduled round
- The home and away season shall continue until the original finals date.
- Individual games shall not be rescheduled.
- Some clubs may have less home matches than other clubs due to abandoned or removed rounds.

6. *Impact of COVID-19 interruption on the Allowable Player Payment Rule:*

Should a round be abandoned, then the Allowable Player Payment Limits shall immediately be calculated on a pro rata of games played.

7. *Impact of COVID-19 interruption on the Player Points System:*

Player Point System and categories are not affected by any COVID interruptions.

8. *Return to Play following a COVID-19 interrupted Round:*

- If 1-3 consecutive Rounds have been abandoned, then the season may recommence at the next scheduled round at the discretion of the league.



- If 4-6 consecutive Rounds have been abandoned, then the season shall recommence at the next scheduled round following a minimum of 7-day training period at the discretion of the league.
- If more than six consecutive Rounds have been abandoned, then the season shall recommence at the next scheduled round following a minimum 14-day training period at the discretion of the League.
- Should the recommencement following any period of abandonment occur during the scheduled Finals Series, then the Finals shall be adjusted at the direction of the EFNL Board.

9. *Suspension in a COVID-19 interrupted Season:*

All suspensions must be served in accordance with the EFNL By Laws and suspensions apply to games played.

10. *Impact of COVID-19 on Umpire Availability:*

- Should umpires be unavailable to be appointed to matches as scheduled due to COVID-19 isolation requirements, Senior matches (Men's and Women's) shall be a higher priority than Reserves.
- Should umpires be unavailable to be appointed to Senior matches as scheduled by the league/umpire association due to COVID-19 isolation requirements, Field umpires will be appointed as priority, Goal umpires will be appointed as second priority, Boundary umpires appointed as third priority:
- Should an umpire group not be able to appoint Field umpires to all Senior matches, or where only partial umpire panels are appointed (e.g., Field umpires only) or Boundary or Goal umpires are unavailable to officiate a match, the competing Teams may appoint an umpire(s) to officiate in those roles.
- Where a match is not appointed any league/association Field umpires, each club will supply one field umpire each.

Last Possession Rule:

- Should no boundary umpires be appointed or club volunteers, the field umpires will implement last possession rules.

11. *Promotion and Relegation in a COVID-19 interrupted Season:*

If any competition loses games/rounds due to COVID-19 the EFNL Board will make any decisions in relation to Promotion/Relegation at their discretion. Clubs should move forward on the basis that promotion and relegation will take place.



12. Final's qualification in a COVID-19 Interrupted Season

Should COVID-19 impact a season the EFNL Board may determine finals qualifications game requirements for players at their absolute discretion at any stage during the season.

13. Finals in a COVID-19 interrupted Season

- The Board may at its discretion add, remove, or reschedule any finals including the Grand Final to complete the season.
- If a finals series cannot be completed the League Board at its discretion may issue a Minor Premiers Cup or a Premiership Cup to the team that finished on top at the end of the Home and Away subject to a minimum number of matches being completed.

14. Year of Service in a COVID-19 interrupted Season

- Should COVID-19 interrupt the season the League will work with AFL Victoria regarding the minimum matches required to achieve a year of service deduction and the HOME player definition in Juniors.

15. All Matters Not Covered by League and COVID-19 By Laws:

Should any scenario occur which is not specifically covered within these By Laws then the matter shall be referred to the EFNL Board to determine at their absolute discretion



EFNL By Law Amendments COVID-19 (if required by AFL Vic Protocols)

4.3 To Participate in Finals Matches- (Applies to home and away matches only)

Final's qualification in a COVID-19 Interrupted Season

Should COVID-19 impact a season the EFNL board may determine finals qualifications game requirements for players at their absolute discretion at any stage during the season.

5.9 FOOTBALLS

The home club shall put in place protocols to ensure match balls are sanitised prior to the commencement of a game at ¼ time, ½ time ¾ time and post the game if required by AFL VIC protocols.

Club boundary and League appointed umpires and/or players should retrieve the ball after a goal or when the ball crossed the boundary line or leaves the playing surface. Clubs shall use their best endeavours to limit the handling of match day balls.

The home team umpire escort shall be responsible for ball sanitising at ¼ time, ½ time and ¾ time. The team manager shall be responsible for sanitising the balls pre- and post-game.

7. LADDERS

7.1 Point Allocation and Match Ratio Calculations

Any match or entire round which is cancelled as a direct result of player unavailability due to COVID 19 quarantine requirements will be deemed abandoned and neither team will receive any match points. The League may at its discretion reschedule or remove the round.

7.4 Forfeit Calculations

Any match which is cancelled as a direct result of player unavailability due to COVID 19 quarantine requirements will not include the game in the records of its players. No ladder points will be allocated to either team.

Forfeits

Any forfeits should only occur in the lower rated team, for example in the Reserves for a Senior club or a second team in the same age group unless the GM FO provides prior approval. Clubs must push players up to fill sides in the higher rated team to ensure matches can be completed.

7.5 Non-Completion of Matches – COVID 19

If any match or matches or entire round or rounds is cancelled due to COVID 19, the game will be abandoned and no points will be allocated to either team. Match ratio will be applied to the ladder for that competition for the remainder of the season.

The Board may at its discretion add or remove fixtured home and away matches and adjust the finals



series as it deems appropriate considering missed rounds for all competitions. The priority will be ensuring all teams play each other at least once during the season.

8. FINALS

8.1 Arrangements

The final series of matches will be developed at the discretion of the Board and published prior to the start of each season.

The Board may at its discretion add, remove, or reschedule any finals including the Grand Final to complete the season.

In the unlikely event that a competition finals series cannot commence or be completed, the Board will determine if a Premiership Cup will be awarded and the criteria to be used (for example the team that finishes top of ladder at end of season may be determined the Premier).

8.2 The Board

The Board may at its discretion change the times and places of any finals matches pre or during the finals to meet Public Health requirements and ensure League financial viability.

8.7 Allocation of Rooms and Warm Up Areas

Juniors

Only the participants required to play a match (players and team officials) will be able to access change rooms before a game, during the game (half time, toilet usage and injured players) and post the game for a limited period. At all other times density quotas masks apply as per the AFL Vic protocols.

Unless adverse weather conditions teams should remain on the ground at half time to limit the use of change rooms. Toilets will be accessible, and rooms can be used for treating injured players as per AFL Vic protocols.

Seniors

Only the participants required to play a match (players and team officials) will be able to access change rooms before a game, during the game and post the game for a limited period of time. At all other times density quotas and masks apply as per AFL Vic Protocols.

No parents or spectators are permitted in the change rooms for any Junior or Senior matches.

Junior Umpires

Junior umpires will be able to access change rooms before a game, at half time and post the game. Umpires should come the game dressed ready to umpire and limit the time in umpire rooms.



Senior Umpires

Senior Umpires will be able to access change rooms, before, during and post the game for a limited period in accordance with AFL Victoria Protocols.

No other persons shall enter the umpire rooms.

14. CONDUCT OF MATCHES

14.1 Timing of Matches

The Board at its sole discretion may change the start time, duration, and break times of any matches to meet AFL VIC protocols.

14.3 Runners

Runners are permitted on the ground to interchange, move a player from one position to another or to deliver a message. Runners must remain off the ground at all other times.

14.4 Trainers

All clubs must appoint a COVID-19 Safety Officer who has completed by the Australian Government COVID-19 training (Infectious Disease).

All Team trainers and COVID-19 Safety Officers must complete the Australian Government COVID-19 course and provide a copy of their certificate to the League.

The League also encourages all coaches, team officials and parents to complete the Australian Government COVID-19 training.

14.5 Drink Carriers

Juniors

No Drink carriers are permitted in any junior matches. Players should leave their water bottles at the bench.

All players must have their own water bottle which is clearly identifiable.

Seniors

A maximum of two drink carriers are permitted to enter the ground when a goal is scored by either team. The drink carriers should meet players at a central point on the ground. Drink carriers must leave the ground immediately once the umpire is ready to commence play.

All players must have their own water bottle which is clearly identifiable.



14.6 Timekeepers

Timekeepers where possible will socially distance and wipe down any benches or equipment after use if required by AFL VIC protocols.

14.8 Interchange

Any player or official who is on the bench during a match must wherever possible adhere to the 1.5 metre social distancing rule if required by AFL Vic protocols

39. MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS BETWEEN TEAMS AND AGE GROUPS

39.1 (a) Under 10 to 18

The Junior Manager may at his or her discretion provide a club with an exemption upon receipt of a written submission to increase the minimum matches.

(b) MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS WITHIN AGE GROUPS

Under 11 to 16

Where a club fields more than one (1) team in the same age grade, a player is permitted to move between teams. However:

- (i) Once a player has played five (5) matches in the higher graded team, that player may not move to the lower graded team for the remainder of the season.
- (ii) Players in the lower rated team are free to move to the higher rated team during home and away matches.
- (iii) The first team a player plays five games is the only team that player is eligible to represent in the final's series.
- (iv) Where a bye is fixtured in the higher graded team, no player is permitted to move to the lower graded team during the week of the bye.
- (v) If a club with multiple teams in one age group forfeits a match, the forfeit can only occur in the lower rated team.