



## Policy – Competition rules

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### 1 Document purpose

This document explains the Association's position with regard to the rules that apply to the junior football competitions as run by the Association.

### 2 What this policy applies to

This policy applies to all competitions, clubs, teams, players, officials, parents, spectators and all other persons engaged in junior football or observing a junior football match.

### 3 Policy

#### 3.1 The Competition Rules

The Competition Rules should create an environment to facilitate and maximise player development and enjoyment of Australian Football.

Before the start of a season, the Association should determine the set of Competition Rules that will apply for the season. With the Competition Rules determined for the season, the Association Executive may then produce and publish a Competition Rules document.

For the purposes of this policy, the Competition Rules may be defined in three parts: (a) the global rules; (b) variations to the global rules; and (c) the local rules.

#### 3.2 The global rules

The *global rules* that should apply as the default rules are:

- The Laws of Australian Football as reviewed annually and released by the AFL (Australian Football League).
- The Global Competition Bylaws for junior football as reviewed annually and released by the WAFC (WA Football Commission).
- The Association Executive is the management body for the competition, fulfilling the role of the Junior Competition Committee as defined in the Global Competition Bylaws. The Association Executive should appoint the Tribunal and persons to other roles as it deems necessary for the effective running of junior football competitions.

#### 3.3 Variations to the global rules

The Association may determine *variations to the global rules*, but these variations should be made after the following conditions have been met:

- It can be clearly demonstrated that: (a) a global rule is having or will have a significantly adverse impact on the local competition; or (b) it is impractical to implement a global rule in the local competition.

- The Association has consulted with the WAFC about the reasons for any proposed variation to the global rules and allowed the WAFC a reasonable opportunity to submit its support for the proposed variation or to present reasons why the global rule should not be varied.
- After giving consideration to the WAFC's submission, the Association determines for a variation to the global rule. Where the WAFC objects to the variation to the global rule, the determination should be by a two-third majority vote of the club delegates present at an Association meeting.

### 3.4 The local rules

The Association or Association Executive may determine *local rules* that will apply in addition to the global rules. The local rules should complement the global rules and should be made for the following reasons only:

- To set a global rule as it applies to the local competition. For example, the WAFC Global Competition Bylaws defines a range for the allowable time period for each quarter. As a local rule, the Association may set the time period, provided it is within the range of the Bylaws.
- To define further a global rule. For example, the WAFC Global Competition Bylaws define the size of the football that may be used for each grade of competition. The Association may further define the rule and detail the brand and type of football to use.
- To clarify the meaning and application of a global rule.
- To adopt a policy of the AFL, the WAFC or the Association, as a rule. For example, the AFL may have a policy relating to lightning safety. The Association may adopt that AFL policy to be applied as a Competition Rule.
- To assist with the administration and smooth running of the local competition.

### 3.5 Respect for and knowledge of the competition rules

Without the rules, there is no competition. Everybody involved with junior football should respect the rules that define the competition.

Proper knowledge and application of the competition rules is important to the development of junior footballers and their enjoyment of the game. While umpires have an obvious responsibility to learn and apply the competition rules, the responsibility is not limited to umpires. Just as importantly, coaches, officials and players have a responsibility to learn and play by the rules.

For a better appreciation of the game, all clubs should encourage their members to learn the rules. The Association should promote the competition rules to all involved with junior football.

### 3.6 Communication and education of the Competition Rules

The Competition Rules should be explained at a start of season information session to all clubs, coaches and team managers. A coach or team manager from each team should sign to acknowledge that the team has received a copy of the Competition Rules.

The Association should continually reinforce the Competition Rules to club delegates at Association meetings. Those club delegates should then communicate that information on to club members.

The Association Executive should ensure:

- (a) that the most current version of the Competition Rules is made available from the Association website within 48 hours of any variation to the Competition Rules; and

- (b) umpires are educated about the Competition Rules and how to deal with and report any issues relating to compliance with or breaches of the Competition Rules.

### **3.7 Application of the Competition Rules**

Play by the rules.

All clubs, players, coaches, officials, match officials and administrators are expected to promote and abide by the Competition Rules.

It is not acceptable for two coaches or any other persons to agree to vary from the Competition Rules on match day. For example, if a Competition Rule states a maximum number of players on the field from each team, it is not acceptable for coaches to agree to exceed that maximum. This is because, the Competition Rules have been determined in the best interest of player development and the competition. Also, by agreeing to vary from written laws, rules and policies of the sport as determined by the Association, the persons that agreed to the variation may increase their exposure to liability claims should an unexpected incident occur.

Any issues relating to the application of the Competition Rules should be reported to the Association Executive.

### **3.8 Interpretation of the Competition Rules**

Any issues relating to or doubts about the interpretation of the Competition Rules should be referred to the Association Executive.

The Association Executive may make rulings regarding interpretation of the local rules.

The Association Executive may also make rulings regarding interpretation of the global rules, but where there is any doubt, the Association Executive should first consult with the WAFC.

### **3.9 Reviewing the Competition Rules**

Proposals to vary the Competition Rules may be considered by the Association or Association Executive at any time.

Towards the end of a season, the Association should review the Competition Rules as applied to the current season and make recommendations for variations to the Competition Rules for the next season.

Any proposals to change mid-season the local rules of the Competition Rules should be determined by the Association for exceptional circumstances only. No variations to the global rules should be made mid-season.

## **4 Why this policy is required**

The Competition Rules are essential for ensuring compliance with the laws of the game and for the effective running of a fair football competition that promotes player development.

This policy promotes the endorsement of the rules from national and state bodies for Australian Football, namely the Australian Football League and the WA Football Commission.

While the Association is an autonomous body that can define its own rules, there are a number of reasons why the Association should conform to national and state rules and policies. The main reason is that the national and state bodies are the primary custodians of the game, as they

continually develop and refine rules and policies to suit the ever changing community values and global sporting environment. Those bodies commit expert people and resources to analyse and research the game and to continually develop and improve the game. The result of the research and development are the laws, rules and policies that are produced by those bodies. At the junior football level, the global rules may be regarded as best practice for the running of junior football competitions and for the development of junior footballers.

Another reason for conforming with national and state rules and polices is to ensure consistency with other junior football competitions, as players move to other regions and into other competitions.

## 5 Document record

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>By</b>
20-Aug-2013	1.0 DRAFT	Draft for comments	AS
15-Sep-2013	1.1 DRAFT	Minor modifications	AS