



Handbook 2019

As at 1 May 2019

The Handbook relating to the Victorian Wheelchair Football Leagues (VWFL) has been formalised in order that competing clubs have official and binding referrals.

It is the responsibility of each competing club to ensure that all appointed officials and players are fully aware of the contents of this Handbook to enable the competition to be conducted efficiently and in the true spirit of sportsmanship.

Contents

1. Purpose.....	4
2. Naming rights.....	4
3. VWFL Management.....	4
4. Player Eligibility.....	4
5. Registration.....	5
6. Insurance.....	5
7. League Format.....	5
8. Partnerships.....	5
9. Team Captains.....	6
10. Match Manager.....	6
11. Playing field.....	6
12. Playing numbers.....	7
13. Football Requirements.....	7
14. Length of Games.....	7
15. Intervals.....	7
16. Zones.....	8
17. Identifying players.....	8
18. Competition Points.....	8
19. Drawn Match.....	8
20. Rules of VWFL.....	9
21. Specific Rules.....	9
i. Disposal.....	9
ii. Ball Up.....	9
iii. Too Far.....	9
iv. Holding the Ball.....	9
v. Holding.....	9
vi. Charging/Bumping.....	10
vii. Ball Transition.....	10

viii.	Scoring zones	10
ix.	Shepherding.....	10
x.	Wheelchair Obstruction	10
xi.	Out of Bounds.....	10
xii.	Marking	10
xiii.	5 Metre Penalty.....	10
xiv.	Playing on from a behind	11
xv.	In Danger	11
xvi.	Mercy Rule	11
22.	Walkover/Forfeits	11
23.	Umpires.....	11
24.	Team Sheets.....	11
25.	Finals Eligibility	12
26.	Jewellery	12
27.	Order Off Rules.....	12
28.	Tribunal	12
i.	Tribunal Time & Location	13
30.	First Aid Requirements	13
31.	Injuries.....	14
32.	Uniform.....	14
33.	Alcohol Policy.....	14
34.	Social Media Policy	14
	Appendix 1 – Social Media Policy.....	15

1. Purpose

Governed by AFL Victoria, the Victorian Wheelchair Football League exists to provide an organised regular competition for the sport of AFL Wheelchair in Victoria, demonstrating what's possible for people with a disability and that AFL can be everyone's game.

2. Naming rights

The competition is to be referred to as the *Robert Rose Foundation* Victorian Wheelchair Football League (VWFL). In all written/printed communication this format must be identical.

3. VWFL Management

On behalf of the competing teams/clubs, the VWFL is conducted under the control of AFL Victoria who shall have the power to determine any matter not specifically provided for in this Handbook.

4. Player Eligibility

4.1. The Victorian Wheelchair Football League (VWFL) is designed to provide people with a physical disability and/or impairment the opportunity to play a competitive form of AFL. The sport is all-inclusive for people all ages, gender and ability, including the participation of athletes without disability.

4.2. There are restrictions regarding the number of athletes without a physical disability and/or impairment on court, and within a squad, to ensure opportunities are prioritised for people with a physical disability and/or impairment.

- Each squad may have two able-bodied participants
- Only one able-bodied participant may be on court at a time

4.3. To be classified within the context of the VWFL as a person with a physical disability and/or impairment, please refer to the following guidelines based on the Australia Paralympic Committee classification for athletes with a physical impairment.

Athletes must have at least one of the following impairments:

- Limb loss or limb deficiency
- Hypertonia, Ataxia, Athetosis or Dystonia
- Short Stature
- Muscle weakness
- Joint movement restrictions
- Limb length differences
- Spinal cord injuries

4.4. Players who do not meet the above criteria but believe they should not be considered a 'player without a physical disability and/or impairment' within the context of the VWFL can apply to AFL Victoria for an exemption.

- 4.5. AFL Victoria can grant an exemption at their absolute discretion. An exemption would have implications affecting the number of athletes without a physical disability and/or impairment on court, or within the squad.
- Where an exemption has been granted by the AFL Victoria, all clubs are to be notified of the exemption.
 - The AFL Victoria withholds the right to revoke the exemption at any time upon review of the player and their performance.
- 4.6. Players under the age of eighteen (18) are required to have permission from their parents and/or caregivers before they are granted permission to participate in the VWFL.

5. Registration

- a. All players must be registered with AFL Victoria before taking the field and appear on the online database, registered to their nominated team.
- b. Players can be registered at any time during the season.
- c. New registrations must be received by AFL Victoria before 12pm on the Friday preceding that round of matches. NOT on match days
- d. All players must be a member of DSR before taking the field

6. Insurance

- a. All players, umpires, officials and volunteers registered within the *Robert Rose Foundation* Victorian Wheelchair Football League are covered under the AFL National Risk Protection Programme, through JLT Insurance, receiving Bronze cover.
- b. For more information on insurance including how to make a claim, please visit the VWFL website.

7. League Format

AFL Victoria shall be responsible to determine the fixture of matches. Any changes to start times will be made known to clubs no later than **5 days** prior to the match.

8. Partnerships

The Robert Rose Foundation is the major naming rights partner for the league for the 2018 VWFL season.

Disability Sport & Recreation (DSR) will support the growth and development of the sport of AFL Wheelchair in Victoria through assisting AFL Clubs deliver community engagement and participation initiatives within the community.

YMCA Victoria and the Boroondara Sports Complex have made access to the facility available

Five AFL Clubs have come on board to support the VWFL. The clubs will play a key role in branding their teams, and promotion of the league and the clubs involvement.

9. Team Captains

AFL Clubs, in consultation with AFL Victoria and DSR will appoint team captains to support their designated team.

Team Captain duties are:

- Be the first point of contact for your players/team;
- Be the representative and spokesperson for your team;
- Ensure adequate communication channels are in place between you and your players/team;
- Attend team selection meetings with all other team captains, to ensure even teams are selected (once a year);
- Attend team captain meetings with AFL Vic and DSR (max 4 per year);
- Should one of your players appeal the tribunals verdict, attend the tribunal hearing with the reported player; and
- Ensure your players/team play within the spirit of our league.

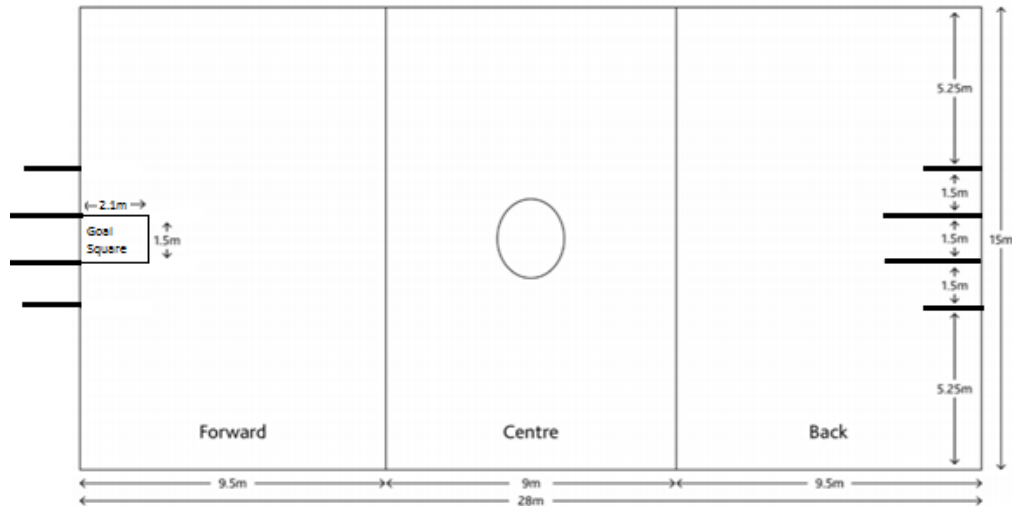
10. Match Manager

AFL Victoria will appoint a Match Manager to every game, who's responsibilities are:

- Venue set up/pack up;
 - Court marking of goal square (refer to Playing Field for specs)
 - Removal of court markings
 - Promotional signage
 - Goal posts (refer to Playing Field for specs)
 - Equipment (footballs, colour bands placed on scorer's bench)
- Scoring and Time Keeper;
- Collecting MVP votes from umpires at the conclusion of the game;
- Entering of results, goal kickers and votes into Footyweb
- Forward all match paper work onto AFL Victoria, a maximum of 24 hours after the completion of the round.

11. Playing field

Games will be played on a netball court, as per the specs in the below diagram.



12. Playing numbers

Where possible, a game should be played 5 players v 5 players, which is the maximum numbers of players on the court at one time.

The minimum to constitute a game is 3 v 3. Teams unable to meet these numbers will result in a forfeit.

Regardless how many players each team has on match day, each team is required to play with equal numbers against one another, irrespective of players skill ability. Eg. 4 v 4. 5 v 5. Team captains should meet prior to the start of the game to discuss their player numbers. There are no restrictions to how many players can be on the bench.

Should team captains be unable to agree on starting numbers, the umpire will determine the starting number.

13. Football Requirements

It is the responsibility of AFL Victoria to provide a game ball for all games. The appropriate ball for the VWFL is a Synthetic Sherrin – Size 5.

14. Length of Games

All matches shall consist of four (4), 10 minute quarters with **NO TIME ON***.

The timekeeper will start the clock as per the umpire's instructions. *The only time the clock may be stopped during the course of the game is in the fourth quarter, when a player falls from their chair, and the umpire calls time off.

15. Intervals

¼ time = 2 minutes

½ time = 5 minutes

¾ time = 2 minutes

16. Zones

There are designated zones (forward, centre and defence) which dictate where assigned players can play. All games are to play 5 v 5 if numbers allow it, however refer to adjustments below if numbers are less:

5 v 5

- 2 x Forwards. Can only move in the Forward or Centre zones
 - Only the designated forwards can score
- 2 x Defenders can only move in the Centre and Back zones
- 1 x Centre can move in all zones

4 v 4

- 1 x Forwards. Can only move in the Forward or Centre zones
 - Designated forward and centre can score
- 2 x Defenders can only move in the Centre and Back zones
- 1 x Centre can move in all zones
 - Designated forward and centre can score

3 v 3

- 1 x Forwards. Can only move in the Forward or Centre zones
 - Designated forward and centre can score
- 1 x Defenders can only move in the Centre and Back zones
- 1 x Centre can move in all zones
 - Designated forward and centre can score

17. Identifying players

To identify which players are a forward, centre or defender, each player will wear a coloured band or similar as approved by the VWFL, to assist in distinguishing between the different playing positions.

18. Competition Points

- Win – 4 Points
- Draw – 2 Points
- Loss – 0 Points
- Forfeit To – 4 Points
- Forfeit Against – 0 Points

19. Drawn Match

In the event of a drawn game during the home and away season, the draw will stand as is and points from the match will be shared.

There shall be no drawn matches in the Finals series. In the event of scores being level at the elapsed time, after a two minutes break, each team will be given five (5) minutes at each end with no time on. Teams will continue to kick to the same end as they were in the last quarter. At the end of the first five (5) minute period there will be

a two minute break and teams will swap ends. In the event of scores still being level at the end of the extra time, the siren will not sound until one team scores. The siren will sound immediately following the score.

20. Rules of VWFL

The VWFL will conduct all football competitions under the rules outlined in 'The Laws of Australian Football' unless otherwise stated throughout this handbook. The Laws of Australian Football are available here - <http://www.afl.com.au/laws>

21. Specific Rules

i. **Disposal**

A handpass is equivalent to a kick, and a single handed underarm throw is equivalent to a handpass in AFL Wheelchair. The players arm when throwing the ball must remain under shoulder height for the disposal to be legal. There is no kicking in AFL Wheelchair. A double handed chest pass is classed as an illegal disposal.

ii. **Ball Up**

At a centre ball up, both centre players must contest the ruck. Each team is permitted to have one additional team member in the centre zone. Should a team have more than one additional team member in the centre zone, a free kick will be awarded against the offending team.

If a player falls out of the chair during play, the umpire will immediately suspend play if there is any chance of danger to the fallen player. If not, the umpire will withhold their whistles until the particular play in progress has been completed. If a player falls out of the chair to gain possession of the ball or by falling keeps opponents from gaining possession of the ball, the ball is awarded to the opposing team.

iii. **Too Far**

A player may stay in possession of the ball for a maximum of 3 pushes/change of direction of the wheelchair or covered 10 meters before bouncing the ball.

Players have the option of bouncing the ball the traditional way or by touching the ball on top of the wheel of their wheelchair.

iv. **Holding the Ball**

Tackling is prohibited. The equivalent to a tackle is a touch with one hand. A player has two seconds or one push to warrant prior opportunity, before holding the ball can be awarded.

v. **Holding**

A player must not hold, with any part of their chair (by force) or body that will impede any player moving in any direction.

vi. **Charging/Bumping**

A player cannot charge or bump a stationary player in a reckless manner and must avoid contact where possible when travelling at speed/with momentum. At no time can a player bump another player in the back of the chair.

vii. **Ball Transition**

The football can be passed from the defensive zone into the forward zone, without a player taking position of the football in the centre zone.

viii. **Scoring zones**

Scoring can only take place within the forward and centre thirds, by the designated forwards.

ix. **Shepherding**

A player can shepherd the ball carrier, where contact can be made with the defending player. However, the shepherding player must not bring the defending player to a complete stop otherwise it will be classed as 'holding'. The shepherding player must also not hold the chair of the defending player, as this too will be classed as 'holding'.

Should the shepherding player shepherd in a reckless manner, a free kick will be awarded.

x. **Wheelchair Obstruction**

A player must not rise from the seat of their wheelchair and if possible both feet should be placed on the footplate or below the chair. If a player is deemed to use movements to their advantage to gain possession or dispose of the ball a free kick may be awarded to the opposing team.

xi. **Out of Bounds**

The 'last touched rule' will be in effect during VWFL games.

For the ball to be deemed out of bounds, the ball must completely cross the line. A player's wheelchair being out of bounds will not characterise the ball being out of bounds. Should the player manage to keep the ball in the field of play, even though their wheelchair is out of bounds, this will be deemed 'play on'.

Should the umpire be unable to decide who the ball came off last, the umpire will move two (2) metres in from the boundary line and throw the ball up.

xii. **Marking**

A mark is to be paid to a player who marks the ball from a handpass provided that handpass has travelled at least three (3) metres and has not been touched in transit.

xiii. **5 Metre Penalty**

A 5-metre penalty may be applied on top of a free kick at the umpire's discretion.

xiv. **Playing on from a behind**

Following the score of a point, the player may roll out of their defensive goal square to signal to the umpire they have played on.

xv. **In Danger**

A player second to the contest, has a duty of care to protect the hands and head of the player first to the contest. Should any player second to the contest fail to approach the contest with safety, a free kick will be awarded against.

xvi. **Mercy Rule**

Should a team reach a margin of 50 points, the Mercy Rule is activated. Meaning, if the leading team scores a point, the trailing team will take the kick out from the half back line.

If the leading team scores a goal, the trailing team will take possession of the ball in the centre circle, not requiring a ball up to restart play.

If the trailing team brings the margin back under 50 points, the Mercy Rule is deactivated, and play will revert to normal.

22. Walkover/Forfeits

In the case of there being a walkover or forfeit, the non-forfeiting team will receive four competition points. Teams involved will further receive the average 'for' and 'against' scored, for that round, in their division.

In the event where the average 'for' and 'against' cannot be taken (eg, all games in the division were forfeited), the score line 30 - 0 will be recorded.

23. Umpires

- a) AFL Victoria in conjunction with the VWFL Umpiring Coordinator will appoint two (2) field umpires for all VWFL fixtured games. In the case that AFL Victoria is unable to appoint an umpire or the umpire does not attend, team captains will be notified accordingly.
- b) Where AFL Victoria has not supplied umpire's uniforms, umpires shall wear their League's official uniform.
- c) The field umpires will also act as the goal umpires for all games.

24. Team Sheets

Team Captains must check the team sheets prior to the game. It is compulsory that player jumper numbers are listed on the team sheet.

At the completion of the match, the all appropriate paper work will be collected by the designated Match Manager.

25. Finals Eligibility

A player must have played (taken the field) in at least half of the games, plus one game, of the season before being eligible to play in the finals. Eg – 10 round season, players must have played in 6 rounds.

AFL Victoria may grant an exemption to players injured during the season with the provision of medical advice.

26. Jewellery

No Jewellery is to be worn on the field whilst playing. If an umpire notices a player wearing jewellery the player will be asked to leave the field and may only come back on once the jewellery has been removed.

27. Order Off Rules

Players may be ordered from the field by the field umpire and may be reported. Players can be ordered from the field for breaching the 'AFL Laws of Australian Football' / VWFL Rules and By-Laws.

Yellow Card

A player being shown a Yellow card must immediately leave the ground, the player may come back on the ground once **Ten (10) minutes of PLAYING TIME** has passed. Players receiving a Yellow card **CAN** be replaced.

Reasons an umpire may give a Yellow card can include, but are not limited to;

- ~ Swearing
- ~ Abusing umpire
- ~ Abusing Opposition
- ~ Losing Temper

Second Yellow Card

If a player commits a second Yellow card offence then the umpire will show a Red card and the below rules will apply.

Red Card

A player being shown a Red card must immediately leave the ground and is not permitted to return to the field for the remainder of the game. Players receiving a Red card **CANNOT** be replaced.

Reasons an umpire may give a Red card can include, but are not limited to;

- ~ Spitting
- ~ Striking
- ~ Wrestling

28. Tribunal

A tribunal will be convened if deemed necessary by the Tribunal members. The tribunal may be convened if;

- a) An official report is lodged by the field umpire after the match in which the incident took place
- b) A formal letter of complaint from one of the AFL Clubs is sent to AFL Victoria no later than Two (2) business days after the incident occurring
- c) A report is lodged by the Match Manager

i. Tribunal Time & Location

- a) Tribunal will be held on Wednesday night immediately following the match in which the incident occurred. When this is not possible, AFL Victoria will advise all parties of the date of the tribunal ensuring that all parties have 48 hours' notice.
- b) The VWFL Tribunal will take place at AFL House, 140 Harbour Esplanade, Docklands, and will commence at 6pm unless otherwise specified by AFL Victoria.

29. VWFL Draft

- a. Teams will be selected by the AFL Club in consultation with the Team Captain following the Draft Combine through a draft.
 - i. To be eligible for the Draft a player must:
 - 1. Have participated in a previous season of the VWFL
 - 2. Have attended one of the pre-season events of that year (Open Skills Session or Draft Combine)
 - ii. Priority selection refers to players from the previous year, being selected prior to the Draft.

b. DRAFT PROCESS

- i. **STEP 1: BEFORE THE DRAFT**
 - 1. Captains will decide their two priority selections (players who played on that team during the previous year), and approach them prior to the Draft Combine to confirm their participation
 - 2. Players offered priority selection have the option to decline the invitation and go back into the draft pool, where they will be available for all teams to select with an available pick.
 - 3. All available players will be ranked prior to the Draft on a Draft Board to ensure there is clarity regarding the players, their background and experience
- ii. **STEP 2: THE DRAFT**
 - 1. Captains will confirm their two priority selections in order of preference from that club's 2018 squad
 - 2. The remaining players will be picked via the reverse ladder position of the previous season.

PLEASE NOTE: The Draft process may change in future years due to additional teams in the competition.

30. First Aid Requirements

It is AFL Victoria's responsibility to arrange a minimum accreditation level of a Level 1 Sports Trainer on match day. The role of the First Aider is to only act as the first point of contact for someone who may be injured or ill. The First Aider should not have another role on match day. Eg. Coach, runner, canteen etc.

31. Injuries

Players who suffer cuts and bleeding will be ordered from the ground at the discretion of the umpire and may only return once they have received appropriate treatment from their trainer.

In the case that a player is ordered from the ground for a blood rule they can be replaced.

32. Uniform

All clubs/teams playing within the VWFL must have the league logo printed on their playing uniform. For branding guidelines please refer to Appendix 2.

Players wanting to wear compression garments must be of black colour. Players have the option of wearing shorts or pants, however they must be black in colour, or part of their team's approved uniform.

33. Alcohol Policy

No alcohol consumption will be tolerated at any VWFL matches.

34. Social Media Policy

All players and officials in the VWFL agree to uphold the VWFL social media policy which can be found in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – Social Media Policy

Social Media is a rapidly expanding form of communication. The Victorian Wheelchair Football League (VWFL) realises that participation in Social Media by Club Officials and players will continue to increase. If you chose to participate in any form of Social Media the league expects you to adhere to the standards set out in this Policy when referencing your association with the league, any of the clubs or any affiliated individual.

Social Media includes but is not limited to:

- Discussion Forums such as BigFooty;
- Any form of Blogging or Microblogging on websites such as Twitter;
- Social Networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace;
- Video and Photo sharing websites such as YouTube and Instagram.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all Victorian Wheelchair Football League volunteers, and Affiliated Club Officials, Players, Staff, and Volunteers who participate in any form of Social Media.

YOUR CONDUCT IN SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

While all individuals are welcome to participate in Social Media, it is expected that everyone who participates in online commentary in relation to activities involving the VWFL and its Stakeholders shall respect and adhere to the following simple but important guidelines. These guidelines are in place to assist in achieving our overall goal, that is, to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects the reputation of the League and the individuals within it, and of course follows the letter and spirit of the law:

- Be transparent and state that you are affiliated with the VWFL. Your honesty will be noted in the Social Media environment. If you are writing about matters relating to the VWFL or a competitor, use your real name, identify that your affiliation, and be clear about your role.
- Never represent yourself, the VWFL or your affiliated Club in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true and not misleading; all claims must be substantiated.
- Post meaningful, respectful comments — in other words, no spam and no remarks that are off topic or offensive.
- Use common sense and common courtesy: for example, it's best to ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the VWFL.
- Stick to your area of expertise and do feel free to provide unique, individual perspectives on non-confidential activities.
- When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.
- Think globally, what you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully; you should be respectful of religions, races, individuals, cultures and abilities.

CONSEQUENCE OF BREACH

Any breach of the above guidelines may result in disciplinary action against the offending party, at the discretion of the Victorian Wheelchair Football League Tribunal.