

4. PAID PLAYERS

DEFINITION

Following the introduction of the WACFL paid Player Bylaws in 2017 a Paid Player Payment is categorised as:

- Football Match Payments;
- Approved Travel Payments;
- Approved Coaching Payments (for Playing Coaches);
- Approved Relocation Payments;
- After Match Best Player Awards;
- Fairest and Best Awards;

WACFL defines a paid player as any WACFL registered player that receives any payment for playing football or participating in a football club.

The only transfer of money, goods or services able to sit outside of the term “Player Payment” is post-match best player awards, approved travel payments, approved coaching payments, club meals and insurance upgrades for players.

For the point of the WACFL’s Paid Player Bylaws, all other transfers of money, goods or services will be considered player payments and therefore must be included in any match and player calculations.

31.1 No WACFL Team is to pay out a combined total of greater than \$3,000 in total player payments in any given match unless Bylaws 31.31(b), 31.31(c) and 31.31(d) can be applied, in which case the amount may increase by that applied amount.

31.2 No WACFL Club is to pay a player a ‘Sign on Fee’ or provide any subsidiary benefits (outside of employment, relocation costs and match fees) to any player. Any relocation costs must be provided to the League for tracking and approval. Insurance provided to players specifically adding protection around the playing of football is deemed to be outside of the WACFL Paid Player Bylaws and is allowed.

31.2.1 Clubs can make reimbursement to a player to for any medical gaps expenses associated with an injury sustained whilst playing football. Clubs are required to keep copies of the invoices (such as medicare statements) that clearly identify the insurance gap for which reimbursement payments are being made.

31.3 The maximum match payment a player can receive is \$500 per match. A maximum amount of \$150 per match is able to be paid to a Reserves grade player for any one match to help with travel costs. A player cannot receive a payment for more than one match on one weekend. A player who receives a payment for a reserves match is unable to play in a League match on that weekend. Reserves Payments should be noted on the Paid Player Spreadsheet.

31.3.1 Flights to and from matches are exempt from Paid Player Bylaws.

31.4 The only possible exceptions to Bylaw 31.3 are as follows:

- a) Each WACFL Club is allowed to pay one 'Marquee Player' up to \$1,000 per match provided the player meets the listed criteria (see Bylaw 31.8).
- b) Each WACFL Club is allowed to pay a 'one off' undisclosed match payment to a celebrity footballer who transfers in for one match to promote football. This payment will sit outside of the salary cap. This player must have played AFL and this payment must be approved by the League prior to him playing.
- c) A playing coach is allowed to receive up to \$1,000 per match. A maximum of \$500 of this amount can sit outside of the total match ceiling listed in Bylaw 31.1.
- d) A player can qualify to receive a travel fee (\$150 maximum) for matches in which the player travels greater than 500 km (return) from their place of residence to attend. This payment must be approved by the League prior to payment, it must be recorded on the WACFL's Paid Player Spreadsheet.
- e) A Marquee Player that is also a playing coach is allowed to receive up to \$1,500 per match, \$500 of which can sit outside of the total match ceiling as per Bylaw 31.31 (c).

31.5 Any WACFL Club paying individuals match payments relating to Country Football must ensure payments are legally compliant and all player payments must be recorded on the WACFL's Paid Player Spreadsheet for auditing purposes. For all WACFL Clubs paying players outside of Best Player Awards, the following paperwork must be supplied by the club directly to the WACFL where appropriate:

- 31.5.1** All Club Presidents must submit to the League (prior to the start of the season) a signed Club Paid Player Declaration as per the WACFL's Club Paid Player Declaration paperwork.
- 31.5.2** All proposed Marquee Player payments must be submitted to the WACFL for approval using the WACFL Marquee Player Approval form.
- 31.5.3** All proposed Playing Coach payments must be submitted to the WACFL for approval using the WACFL Playing Coach Approval form.
- 31.5.4** All proposed Travel payments must be submitted to the WACFL for approval using the WACFL Travel Payment Approval form.
- 31.5.5** All Clubs making player payments must submit a completed WACFL Paid Player Spreadsheet to the WACFL after each game.

31.6 No WACFL Club is to pay out greater than \$500 in total player prize money (or goods to the value of) for any given match. A player is unable to receive greater than \$100 in prize money (or goods or services to the value of) per match. All prizes must be recorded in the WACFL's Paid Player Spreadsheet. A maximum amount of \$1,000 can be paid out to a Club Best and Fairest winner, with a maximum of \$500 for a Runner Up and a maximum of three more descending (<\$500) amounts allowed. No other ex gratia payments should be provided to players during or at the completion of the football season.

31.7 For Marquee Players and Player Coaches receiving greater than \$500 in payments per match, the Club must ensure the following conditions are met:

- a) The Marquee Player or Player Coach must have a signed Standard Playing Declaration lodged with the WACFL prior to three business days before the player participates in a sanctioned match.
- b) Payment to a Marquee Player does not alter Bylaw 31.1.
- c) Application can be made for Coaches (that occasionally play) to fall outside of the salary cap provided they are not considered playing coaches, but occasionally play due to diminishing numbers. This application should be made through the WACFL and will be at the League's discretion.

31.8 For a player to qualify as a Marquee Player he must fill a minimum of one of the following criteria:

- a) Been on an AFL Club list (including Rookie List).
- b) Played a minimum of 50 State League (League grade) games.
- c) Have written approval from the WACFL based on elite performances in Country League and Representative achievements. This will be at the WACFL's discretion.

31.9 A League playing coach is the only player able to receive remuneration for coaching within the League team. A League Player is able to receive a maximum of \$100 per match (outside of the cap in 31.1) to assist with the coaching of any other team within that Club (capped at one player per team). This is subject to approval by the WACFL.

31.10 WACFL reserves the right to investigate any Ex-Gratia Payments (or services provided) made to a player, or his family, which it deems (or suspects) to have been made with the intention of circumventing the requirements of the Paid Player Bylaws and in exchange for the payment of playing in football matches for the Club. This includes payments made either by the Club or by a third party.

31.11 WACFL reserves the right to investigate any Club based Employment Payments made to a player, or his family, which it deems (or suspects) to be in exchange for the payment of playing in football matches for the Club rather than in exchange for the services rendered.

31.12 The WACFL Paid Player Bylaws are all encompassing across all Affiliated Country Leagues. The individualisation of these bylaws to suit a specific League will only be valid should the League have first obtained the WACFL's approval.

INVESTIGATIONS

WACFL believes the Paid Player Bylaws provide clarity around how much any player should be eligible to receive for playing in a WACFL match. Clubs that choose to make payment outside or around these limits will be deemed to have intentionally breached the Bylaws and are subject to penalty as a result.

31.13 WACFL reserves the right to investigate Club financial activity including the auditing of Club accounts, paid player paperwork and interviewing of Club officials and players regarding player remuneration. There is also an expectation that Leagues will provide paid player paperwork (such as approvals granted) should this be requested as part of any investigation. Any such penalties handed down by the WACFL will be binding across affiliated Leagues and Clubs. Players or officials unable to participate in audit interviews will be stood down from participating in matches until such time as they are made available.

31.14 Each WACFL Club that pays players must be able to provide to the WACFL within 231 hours of being requested:

- a) An up-to-date WACFL's Paid Player database.
- b) Standard Playing Declaration for Marquee Players and/or Playing Coaches paid greater than \$500 per match.
- c) Club financial statements including bank statements.
- d) Written approval granted by the League for any claims under these bylaws for Marquee Players, Celebrity Players, Second Tier Coaching Payments and approved travel payments.

31.15 Information provided to the Investigator at the conclusion of a season may lead to penalty for future seasons.

31.16 The WACFL Investigator may summon any WACFL affiliated Player, League or Club Official as witness to player payment investigations. Following the investigation process, individuals may be requested to complete a Statutory Declaration confirming the findings (at the WACFL's discretion).

31.17 Individuals found to have not cooperated or acted dishonestly or deceitfully with the WACFL Investigators are liable to be banned from playing or participating in a WACFL competition for such time as the WACFL sees fit, whilst Clubs are liable to financial sanctions and loss of match points either in the current or future seasons.

31.18 For the sake of the policing of these bylaws, the assumption made from the WACFL Investigator is that they are '*reasonably satisfied*' on the basis of the information (and evidence) presented that a breach has or has not been made.

INVESTIGATIONS/INTEGRITY OFFICER

31.19 The WACFL appointed staff member may at any time investigate (formally or informally) any matter that may undermine the integrity of any WACFL competition including but not limited to alleged breaches of the WACFL Paid Player Bylaws, Vilification and Player, Coach and Spectator Behaviour.

31.19.1 The WACFL appointed staff member shall have the authority to;

- a) Conduct investigations as he/she sees fit.
- b) Hear and determine matter of alleged breaches of the paid player bylaws.
- c) Hear all witnesses to the matter as he/she in their absolute discretion deems to be relevant and give such weight to the evidence he/she hears as he/she determines in their absolute discretion.
- d) Reopen any matter previously dealt with and determine accordingly.
- e) Issue a caution or impose penalties and or fines as he/she sees fit.
- f) Refer any matter to a tribunal or disciplinary committee.
- g) Compel any player or club official for interview.

31.19.2 Any decision of the WACFL appointed staff member may be subject to appeal in accordance with the WACFL Bylaws.

INVESTIGATIONS PROCESS

- 31.20** A Club that receives official notification, via email and telephone, that it is requested to partake in an investigation will be provided with detail of the requested documentation and appropriate timelines in which documentation should be delivered and the investigation will take place.
- 31.21** Upon review of the requested Club documentation, WACFL will request the Club to arrange a series of interviews with requested players and officials within a period of the following seven (7) days.
- 31.22** It is required that requested players and officials will make themselves available to attend such sessions within the seven (7) day period unless extenuating circumstances can be proven. WACFL reserves the right to suspend (indefinitely) any Player or Official unable to attend a Paid Player hearing within a reasonable timeframe. There is an requirement that Players and/or Officials will cooperate with the processes of the Investigation, including the answering of questions directed to them concerning alleged payments or actions.
- 31.23** If the WACFL Investigator believes there are sufficient grounds to suspect a breach of Paid Player Bylaws (following an investigation held in accordance with these rules), the WACFL Investigator shall make recommendation to the Executive Manager Country Football based on their findings.

PENALTIES

- 31.24** Non-complying Clubs, or Clubs which have not abided by the above Bylaws, will receive possible penalties such as loss of match points from games in which they were proven to be non-compliant and monetary fines up to \$5,000. WACFL players who have been found to be forthcoming and cooperative with the Paid Player Investigation may be entitled to immunity from penalty under these bylaws.

Clubs*: 1st Offence – Up to \$5,000 + Loss of Premiership Points
2nd Offence – Up to \$5,000 + Suspension from the League
Players: 1st Offence - Up to 10 Weeks Suspension
2nd Offence - Up to Deregistration

***Penalties Post Finals**

For Clubs that are unable to be penalised by a loss of match points in the immediate season,
such a club will be liable for the loss of future premiership points and or a Club suspension up to a period of 12 months.

APPEALS

- 31.25** Any Club aggrieved by a finding or penalty imposed under the Investigatory Process may appeal against such finding and/or penalty directly to the WACFL Executive Manager in accordance with WACFL Bylaw 11.1.