

**2022**

**MERRIVALE  
FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB INC.  
CODE OF CONDUCT**



## **PURPOSE**

### **MERRIVALE FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB INC.**

The Merrivale Football & Netball Club (MFNC) represents MFNC Players participating in the Warrnambool District Football & Netball League (WDFNL) competition. The MFNC and its members are committed to promoting the positive image of WDFNL players and their professional and proper conduct. With these aims in mind, the MFNC has agreed to formulate this Code of Conduct for its players, coaches, team managers, officials and supporters.

## **PLAYERS**

Football and Netball are your games and you are its most important participant. All associated with this code wish to reinforce the values of sportsmanship, character development, individual and team skills, respect, fairness, development of friendships and so many other benefits associated with our game. Football and netball will largely be conducted within the environment you establish; you as a member have a special responsibility to project and protect the values of our game. You have an important part to play to ensure the game is played within a well administered and professional environment. You have a role to ensure our club continues to develop, improve and grow in all aspects by participating in club, training, social (both at the club and in the public arena) and fundraising events.

## **COACHES**

Coaches have responsibility for supporting, encouraging, training and directing players within the spirit of their respective games. Our code is one of sportsmanship, individual and team skills, and character development. Your part is crucial to the achievement of these aims. It is your responsibility to provide a safe and enjoyable environment in which our players can achieve their individual team objectives.

## **SUPPORTERS**

Football and Netball would not be possible without the willing commitment of many volunteer officials and supporters. We have the expectation that all of our players to participate with positive enthusiasm, encouraging at all times true sportsmanship and participation within the spirit of the game. Your support is an important element of the game and has a distinct influence on the way the game is played.

## **PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **BEHAVIOUR**

MFNC players must aspire to the highest standards of sportsmanship and professional conduct. MFNC players must conduct themselves in a manner so as to not bring Australian Rules Football, Netball, the WDFNL and other WDFNL players into disrepute. This applies to a player's behaviour which: Occurs during the course of any match, training session, club or MFNC function, camp or tour, including travelling to and from related commitments; OR

Involves public comment or comments made to the media; or involves criminal conduct which directly impacts in a material way upon the players ability to perform his/her duties as an Australian Rules footballer or netballer or impacts upon the reputation of the MFNC or the WDFNL in any way; or involves conduct deemed by his/her MFNC and the clubs leadership group (or senior players of the club if no such group exists) in accordance with the Team Rules of this code to have brought the WDFNL and/or the MFNC into disrepute.

### **PLAYING**

MFNC players must not wilfully engage or participate in any activity which may cause or aggravate any injury or illness and which prevents MFNC players from playing WDFNL football/netball to the best of the individual's ability.

### **ATTENDANCE & APPAREL**

MFNC players must (unless granted express permission otherwise or provide an explanation satisfactory to the MFNC) attend when selected, and attend punctually, all MFNC matches, club training and related events.

A MFNC player must wear appropriate apparel as directed by the committee during all WDFNL matches, MFNC training, WDFNL functions and MFNC functions when carrying out his/her obligations as a member.

### **Functions**

MFNC players must (unless granted express permission otherwise) attend three mandatory social events as advised during the year. During such functions, MFNC players must wear appropriate apparel. All patrons attending club functions will be expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner. All conditions within the club's liquor licence will be abided by and enforced.

## **Property**

MFNC players must respect the property and facilities of the WDFNL and MFNC and staff and those bodies and the property, facilities and staff of other providers (including hotel and bus operators) which an MFNC player may utilise during any authorised activities in which the MFNC player may be engaged. Where a MFNC player breaches this provision, he/she will be required to pay the relevant person or body the full cost of repairing or replacing the damage the player caused to the property and/or facility. They will apologise for their behaviour and accept the MFNC consequences.

### **At all times:**

- Participate because you enjoy it, not just to please other people.
- Play by the rules of the game.
- Never argue with an official.
- Conduct yourself in a responsible and respectful manner relating to language, temper and punctuality.
- Be a good sport. Recognise good play, whether by your team or your opponent's team.
- Be a patient and enthusiastic supporter of fellow players, do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of any player.
- Remember that the aims of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
- Co-operate with your coach/manager, team mates and opponents.
- Learn the Rules of the Game and use them to become a better player.
- Care and respect the uniform and equipment provided to you by the Club.
- Assist with support roles such as scoring, time keeping, canteen. Do your bit!
- Promote the Code of Conduct.
- Any bullying by use of social media will not be tolerated in any form and will incur appropriate consequences set down by the MFNC.
- Any inappropriate use of social media, i.e. Facebook, in reference to Merrivale or any other club in the WDFNL will not be tolerated and will incur appropriate consequences set down by the MFNC.

## **TEAM RULES**

### **Development of Team Rules**

The MFNC may, after consultation with its Football Department and the senior coaches of the MFNC, introduce team rules which are supplementary to this Code and do not replace or extend the general obligations on MFNC players as set out in this Code. Such team rules shall only deal with the detailed requirements of the Club specific to the general player responsibilities set out in the Behaviour section.

### **Notification of Team Rules and Club Policies**

When the MFNC seeks to introduce Team Rules or Club Policies it shall be obliged to outline such rules or policies to a meeting of players and provide a copy of the rules or policies to each player prior to such team rules coming into effect.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Minor Breaches**

Except where there are serious or persistent breaches, where a MFNC players conduct breaches a section of this code (including a team rule) the disciplinary action to be taken by the MFNC shall be determined by the player leadership group and the discipline sub-committee (to be approved by the MFNC committee, whose approval may not be unreasonably withheld), or where no player leadership group exists, by the MFNC Committee in consultation with senior players. Examples of conduct which should be dealt with under this provision include but are not limited to: being late for or failing to attend a training, rehabilitation or weight session, being late for a match, missing a function or promotional appearance, wearing incorrect apparel and other conduct of a similar nature or having similar effect. In determining the disciplinary action to be taken under the Code, the player leadership group and discipline sub-committee of the MFNC shall consider the following matters: The seriousness of the breach;

whether the offence has been repeated by the player and

whether fines or forfeiture shall be imposed. Where fines or forfeitures are imposed, the amount of the fine or forfeiture shall be determined case by case.

### **Serious or persistent breaches**

A serious breach of a section of the Code; persistent failures by a player to adhere to a section or sections of this Code or public conduct by a player that brings the MFNC and the WDFNL into disrepute.

The disciplinary action taken by MFNC shall be determined by the MFNC Committee and the discipline sub-committee, except in exceptional circumstances, such determination shall be made in consultation with the club's player leadership group or senior players where no player leadership group exists.

(b) in determining the disciplinary action to be taken under the Code, the MFNC Committee shall consider the following matters: the seriousness of the breach, the extent to which the MFNC player breach brings the MFNC or the WDFNL into disrepute, the player's role in the events that led to the breach and any mitigating circumstances (if any); whether the offence is part of a persistent course of conduct by the player; the income of the player, whether the player has received any other form of sanction for the conduct; and the appropriateness of alternative sanctions or omissions from WDFNL matches as alternatives to fines shall be determined case by case.

### **Forfeitures**

(a) The maximum allowable amount that the MFNC may withhold from amounts which are due to the relevant player for breach of this Code are specified in this Code.

(b) The amounts that may be forfeited by the MFNC player are not cumulative. (That is, a single act by a MFNC player may breach several clauses of this Code, but the forfeiture of monetary amounts must not be more than the highest single, applicable maximum).

(c) Where a MFNC player breaches this Code in a manner which amounts to non-performance of the obligations under his/her playing contract, the MFNC shall be entitled to withhold from any amount due to the player the amount applicable to the breach as provided in this Code.

(d) Where in any one year an amount/s is forfeited by a MFNC player under this Code, the Club and the player shall immediately prior to the end of the relevant year enter into a variation of payment agreement recording the reduction.

(e) The MFNC can, in its absolute discretion, suspend the imposition of a sanction to be imposed on a player for a breach of the Code, provided that the club gives written notice to the player of his breach of the Code, details of the intended sanction and the circumstances under which it might be imposed in the future.

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

(a) The Dispute Resolution Panel shall consist of the President of the MFNC (or other MFNC appointee), a delegate from the player leadership group, and a third party appointed by the mutual agreement of the MFNC, members of the Discipline

Sub-Committee and the Player Leadership Group.

(b) The Dispute Resolution Panel must conduct a fresh investigation of the alleged breach by the relevant player and form its own view about the appropriate disciplinary measure, if any, to be taken. Its decision must be made within 72 hours from the date when the relevant player first instituted his appeal and must be communicated in writing to the player.

(c) The decision of the Dispute Resolution Panel shall be final and binding on the relevant player.

(d) The time limits set out in this clause may be extended by agreement between the player and MFNC.

(d) For the avoidance of doubt, the intention of this clause and the Dispute Resolution Panel is to include a third party independent of the original decision that has been made in relation to a breach of the Code by a player.

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CODE AND OTHER DOCUMENTS.**

Where a MFNC player breaches the provisions of this Code, the MFNC can, if it decides to take any action, only act against the player under either the Code or the Players Contract but not both.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this clause, the MFNC shall be entitled to withhold any amount forfeited for breach of this code.

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

(a) Before seeking formal review as provided in section (b) below, the MFNC must undertake to fully investigate, consider and, if so requested by the relevant player, review its discretion to impose a disciplinary measure on a player for breach of this Code.

(b) If such informal review fails to satisfactorily resolve the players dispute the relevant player may formally appeal (within 72 hours from the date of the MFNC decision to impose a disciplinary measure) to a Dispute Resolution Panel.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF CODE MATTERS**

The MFNC and the MFNC players must use their best endeavours to ensure that any matters arising out of or relating to alleged conduct of a MFNC player in breach of this Code (including but not limited to details of any sanction imposed, unless otherwise mutually agreed between the MFNC and the player) shall remain confidential and are not disclosed to any third party unless expressly agreed to by the relevant Club and player concerned.

For the avoidance of doubt, all parties agree that the confidentiality intended to be protected by this provision does not preclude the MFNC or player announcing to a third party that there has been a breach of the Code and that it has been dealt with by the MFNC and the player and the manner by which it has been dealt with.

## **DEFINITIONS (MEANINGS)**

Unless the contrary intention appears, the following words have the meanings set out below:

Alternative Sanctions means requiring a MFNC player to do, any one or more of the following instead of a fine or forfeiture as prescribed by this Code:

- Attend a promotional event or Club activity;
- Provide a community service;
- Attend a football/netball clinic
- Run junior training sessions
- Specific performance of the activity, service or commitment not undertaken by the player; and/or
- Attend or perform any other similar event or activity as agreed between the MFNC player and the MFNC.

As a general rule, the sanction of an additional appearance at a promotional event or football/netball clinic should only apply where the player has missed such an activity.

Player Leadership Group means the group of MFNC players in the MFNC appointed by the club or elected within the club to provide leadership to the playing group within the Club and/or to be focal point for consultation on behalf of the playing group with the Club.



### **Racial and Religious Vilification**

MFNC players must refrain from making any comment that vilifies or tends to vilify persons on the basis of their race, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation or other related characteristics. Disciplinary action will take place on a case by case basis and dealt with by the disciplinary sub-committee and Player Leadership Group.

### **Substance Abuse**

This will not be tolerated at MFNC. All players will refrain from the taking, sharing and or selling illicit drugs and/or performance-enhancing substances. The club will adopt a zero tolerance of this behaviour. Disciplinary action will take place on a case by case basis and dealt with by the disciplinary sub-committee and Player Leadership Group.

### **Public Comment**

MFNC players must not make adverse public comments concerning WDFNL umpires or decisions made by WDFNL umpires during WDFNL matches. MFNC players must not make any public comment whatsoever concerning any aspect of a WDFNL Tribunal hearing, either before or after such hearing, even if the MFNC player is personally involved in such hearing. MFNC players will refrain from making derogatory comments on all forms of social media that dishonour the club in any way.

### **Respect and Responsibility**

The MFNC has a commitment to providing safe, supportive environment and a place that is free from any forms of harassment for everyone within football and the broader community. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action taken by the disciplinary sub-committee.

## **COACHES/TEAM MANAGER CODE OF CONDUCT**

- As a Coach/Team Manager, your actions and conduct set the example for your players, parents/guardians and spectators. It is the expectation that all coaches and team managers will set a good example at all times.
- Coaches/Team Managers must place the wellbeing and safety of each player above all other considerations including the development of performance. Players must not be physically or mentally pushed beyond their abilities.
- Always be prompt, courteous, respectful and fair when dealing with the League officials, opposition Coaches/Team Managers and Umpires. Confirm venues, times and dates etc. Read, understand and be aware of your responsibilities as directed by the League.
- Check that you have the necessary equipment, documentation and first aid equipment before you leave for the match or training
- Read the Rules of the game and assist your players in understanding them.
- Treat all players with respect at all times. Be honest, fair and consistent.
- Encourage players to respect one another and to expect respect for their worth as individuals regardless of their level of play.
- Encourage and facilitate players' independence and responsibility for their own behaviour, performance, decisions and actions.
- Involve the players in decisions that affect them.
- Ensure that appropriate coaching accreditation has been obtained.
- Promote the Code of Conduct.

## **UMPIRES CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Be consistent and courteous when making your decisions.
- Discourage unsportsmanlike behaviour and promote respect for all opponents.
- Emphasise the spirit of the game rather than the errors.
- Encourage and promote rule changes which will make participation more enjoyable.
- Obtain appropriate accreditation and keep up with any rule changes that may occur.
- Place the safety and welfare of the players above all else.
- Set the example by your behaviour and ensure that comments are positive and supportive.
- Give all players a fair go regardless of their gender, sex, ability, cultural background or religion.
- Be impartial and maintain integrity in your relationship with other Umpires, players and coaches.
- Promote this code of conduct.

## **SUPPORTERS/PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Remember that people play organised sport for their own enjoyment.
- Do not use profane language or harass, physically or verbally, players, managers, coaches, umpires or other individuals.
- Applaud all good play by your own team and the opposition.
- Show respect for your team's opponents
- Never ridicule or yell at a player for making a mistake during a game.
- Show respect to the Umpires' decision.
- Encourage players to always play according to the rules of the game.
- Focus on the players' efforts and performance.
- Teach your child that an honest effort is more important than victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
- Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a game.
- Remember that children learn by example. Applaud good play by your Team and by members of the opposition.
- Do not question the Umpires judgement or honesty.
- Recognise the value and importance of coaches who are all volunteers.
- Support the club and your child through assisting with activities such as scoring, time keeping, canteen duties and umpiring.
- Ensure your child plays to the Rules of the Game and not to argue with Umpires and other Officials
- Promote this Code of Conduct.



**Merrivale Football Netball Club Inc.**

PO Box 209, Warrnambool

**Email:** merrivalefnc@outlook.com

**Facebook:** Merrivale Football Netball Club

**Instagram:** merrivalefnc

Inc. No: A0002195L

Affiliated with Warrnambool & District Football Netball League

Updated and ratified by the 2022 MFNC Committee

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