



AFL OPEN BY LAWS



THE GAME IS OPEN
TO EVERYONE.



AFL Open: Inclusion

These By-Laws relating to the 2024 Toyota AFL Open have been formalised to provide official and binding rules for competing teams.

Governed by the AFL, the Toyota AFL Open provides footballers with an intellectual impairment the opportunity to participate in Australian Football at an elite level.

It is the responsibility of each competing team to ensure that all appointed officials and players are fully aware of the contents of these By-Laws to enable the competition to be conducted efficiently and in the true spirit of sportsmanship.

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1. DEFINITIONS

In these By-Laws:

- (a) **AFL** means Australian Football League (ACN 004 122 211).
- (b) **OPEN** means the 2024 Toyota AFL Open.
- (c) **OPEN POINTS** means points awarded in accordance with By-Law 13.
- (d) **DIVISIONAL SERIES** means the divisional series Matches specified in By-Law 12.
- (e) **FINALS** means the finals Matches specified in By-Law 12.
- (f) **LIGHTNING ROUND** means the lightning round matches specified in By-Law 12.
- (g) **MATCH** means a match played in the AFL Open, including Lightning Round, Divisional Series and Finals matches.
- (h) **PLAYER** means includes a player registered to play and/or participate in the AFL Open.
- (i) **REGION** means a region specified in By-Law 7.
- (j) **POLICY HANDBOOK** means the National Community Football Policy Handbook (available [here](#)).
- (k) **TEAM** means a team representing a Region participating in the AFL Open.

The definitions set out in Policy Handbook will otherwise apply.

2. EFFECT OF NATIONAL COMMUNITY FOOTBALL POLICY HANDBOOK

The Policy Handbook will apply to the AFL Open unless expressly stated otherwise. To the extent of any inconsistencies between the Policy Handbook and these By-Laws, and where the application of a specific section of the Policy Handbook is clearly unworkable when applied in conjunction with these By-Laws, these By-Laws will take priority.

3. NAMING RIGHTS

The AFL Open must be referred to as the 2024 Toyota AFL Open in all written communication (other than these By-Laws).

4. MANAGEMENT

The AFL Open is conducted by the AFL who may determine any matter related to the Open, unless the determination of such matter is otherwise specifically provided for in these By-Laws or the Policy Handbook.

5. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

[Sport Inclusion Australia](#) will administer the player eligibility process on behalf of the AFL for the AFL Open. To compete in the AFL Open a Player must be:

- Male;
- 16 years of age, as at day one of the AFL Open;
- Registered to play in a League affiliated in a Region; and
- Have an intellectual impairment as determined by Sport Inclusion Australia based on the Sport Inclusion Australia Athlete Registration and Primary Eligibility Application Guidance Notes.

Subject to By-Law 6 of these Rules, a player will be eligible to compete in the Open when Sport Inclusion Australia and the AFL are satisfied that a player meets all four elements of the above criteria.

6. TEMPORARY ELIGIBILITY

- (a) If a player does not meet one or more of the player eligibility criteria under By-Law 5 to the satisfaction of Sport Inclusion Australia or the AFL, that player may be granted temporary eligibility status by Sport Inclusion Australia on a case-by-case basis. An application for temporary eligibility must be submitted in writing to the AFL at least six weeks before the Open. If temporary eligibility status is granted by Sport Inclusion Australia, it is only valid for the year in which temporary eligibility status is granted, and the player must apply for eligibility to compete the following year.
- (b) For clarity, a Player with temporary eligibility is not eligible to be selected in the All-Australian team.
- (c) Please contact the AFL should you have any queries in relation to temporary eligibility.

7. TEAMS

A total of eight (8) Teams will participate in the AFL Open, representing the following Regions:

- New South Wales / Australian Capital Territory;
- Northern Territory;
- Queensland;
- South Australia;
- Tasmania;
- Victoria – Country;
- Victoria – Metro; and
- Western Australia.

8. SQUAD SIZE

Each Team may select a maximum of sixteen (16) Players to participate in the AFL Open. Each Team must always have twelve (12) Players on the playing field during each Match, with a maximum of four (4) Players on the bench, unless otherwise approved by the AFL in exceptional and compelling circumstances.

9. SQUAD SELECTION

- (a) To be eligible for a Team representing a Region a Player must be registered to play in a League affiliated in that Region.
- (b) Where a Team cannot meet the Team size requirements under By-Law 8, that Team may approach another Team to assist it to meet those size requirements provided the other Team has already met such requirements.

10. PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

All Players must comply with the code of conduct set out in Sections 9.1 and 9.2 of the [Policy Handbook](#). Failure to do so may result in removal from the Open or other disciplinary action under these By-Laws or the Policy Handbook.

11. COACHES AND OFFICIALS CODE OF CONDUCT

All Coaches and Football Officials must comply with the code of conduct set out in Sections 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 (for Coaches) of the [Policy Handbook](#). Failure to do so may result in removal from the Open or other disciplinary action under these By-Laws or the Policy Handbook.

12. AFL OPEN FORMAT

- (a) The AFL shall be responsible for determining the Open fixture and may amend the fixture from time to time at their absolute discretion.
- (b) Days One and Two of the Open will be fixtured as a lightning round, where game times will be managed in accordance with By-Law 18 and all Teams will play each other once (**LIGHTNING ROUND**).
- (c) At the conclusion of the Lightning round, teams will be split into two divisions determined by each Team's total Open Points in respect of the Lightning round (1st – 4th, Division 1 and 5th – 8th, Division 2). Each Team will then play each other Team in their division once (**DIVISIONAL SERIES**).
- (d) At the conclusion of the Divisional Series, the two teams with the highest amount of Championship Points in respect of the Divisional Series will playoff in their respective division Grand Finals, and 3rd and 4th placed Teams in each division will also playoff for third place in their respective divisions (**FINALS**). The Finals will include the following Matches:
 - Division 1:
 - 1st v 2nd (Grand Final);
 - 3rd v 4th (Third-Place Playoff).
 - Division 2:
 - 1st v 2nd (Grand Final);
 - 3rd v 4th (Third-Place Playoff).

13. OPEN POINTS

- (a) Open Points will be awarded for all Lightning Round and Divisional Series Matches as follows:
 - Win 4 Points
 - Draw 2 Points
 - Loss 0 Points
 - Forfeit To 4 Points
 - Forfeit Against 0 Points
- (b) If two (2) or more Teams finish on the same number of points after the Lightning Round or Divisional Series, the Team(s) with the higher percentage will finish higher on the ladder.

14. DRAWN MATCH

- (a) In the event of a drawn Match during the Lightning Round or Divisional Series, the draw will stand and Open Points for the Match will be allocated in accordance with By-Law 13(a).
- (b) In the event of a drawn Match during the Finals, Teams will take a 5-minute break following the final siren, before entering extra time, where the Team that scores first will be declared the winner.

15. AWARDS

- (a) The following trophies and awards shall be awarded for the Open:
 - Toyota AFL Open Cup (Perpetual) - Winner Division 1;
 - Toyota AFL Open Cup (Perpetual) - Winner Division 2;
 - Premiers Flag - Winner Division 1;
 - Premiers Flag - Winner Division 2;
 - Premiers Medals - Winner Division 1;
 - Premiers Medals - Winner Division 2;
 - Game Ball, Best on Ground – All Grand Finals and final playoff matches;
 - Best & Fairest Medal, from each team;
 - Spirit of the Open; and
 - All Australian Certificate & Jumper.
- (b) Best on Ground for all Finals Matches will be determined by the Umpires officiating the respective Finals Matches and awarded the Match football.
- (c) A Best and Fairest Medal for each Team will be determined by the Coach of each Team at the conclusion of the Open.
- (d) Spirit of the AFL Open will be determined by the AFL in consultation with all Teams.
- (e) All awards are to be judged against the AFL's values set out in Appendix 2.
- (f) The All-Australian team will comprise the best performing Players and Coach during the Open and will be determined by the AFL in consultation with the head coaches of all the Teams and having regard to the AFL's values set out in Appendix 2. Sixteen (16) Players and one coach will be selected as All-Australian.

16. LAW OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

Unless otherwise provided in these By-Laws, Matches will be played in accordance with the Laws of Australian Football.

17. FOOTBALL REQUIREMENTS

The Footballs used in each Match will be as follows: Leather Sherrin Size 5.

18. LENGTH AND TIMING OF MATCHES

- (a) All Matches will be played with no time on. Time on will only apply should a stretcher be called to the playing field.
- (b) The length of and breaks in Matches will be as follows:
 - Lightning Round: Two (2), seven (7) minute halves with four (4) minute half time;
 - Divisional Series: Four (4), ten (10) minute quarters with three (3) minute quarter and three-quarter time and six (6) minute half time;

- Grand Finals: Four (4), ten (10) minute quarters with three (3) minute quarter and three-quarter time and six (6) minute half time.
- (c) Umpires at their discretion may stop the clock (for example, for an injury or time wasting).
- (d) Timekeepers shall sound the siren (1 blast) one (1) minute prior to and at the due commencement time for each quarter.
- (e) Teams are not permitted to leave the playing field during any of the intervals.

19. **RULE ADAPPTIONS**

The Open will adhere to the Laws of Australian Football with the following adaptations and adjustments:

- (a) Out of Bounds-Last Disposal
 - The Team who last disposes of the football prior to ball going over the boundary line, will be paid a free kick against from where the ball crosses the boundary line.
 - In the situation where the ball is 'last touched', not disposed of, the field Umpire will move five (5) metres in from the boundary line and throw the ball up.
- (b) Bouncing the Ball
 - A Player in possession may bounce the ball a maximum of two (2) times and then must make a genuine attempt to dispose either by hand or by foot.
- (c) Starting Positions
 - Players are not required to adhere to the starting field positions as stipulated by the Laws of Australian Football.
- (d) Spirit of the Game
 - Should a Team reach a total margin of 40 points, in the Spirit of the AFL Open, we advocate that coaches rotate their team to allow the margin to stay at a respectful amount.

20. **WALKOVER/FORFEITS**

- (a) 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/conference.
- (b) If the average 'for' and 'against' cannot be taken (e.g. all games in the round were forfeited), the score line 30 - 0 will be recorded.

21. **FINALS ELIGIBILITY**

A Player must have played (taken the field) in at least half of their Team's fixtured Matches (Lightning Round and Divisional Series Matches) to be eligible to play in a Finals Match. The AFL may grant an exemption to Players injured during the Open with the provision of requested medical advice.

22. **UMPIRES**

For all Matches, a minimum of two field Umpires and two goal Umpires will be rostered by the AFL.

23. JEWELLERY

- (a) No jewellery is to be worn on the ground whilst playing. If an umpire notices a Player wearing jewellery the Player will be asked to leave the ground and may only come back on once the jewellery has been removed.
- (b) Should the jewellery not be able to be removed, the Player will be required to place tape over the top of it.

24. ORDER OFF RULES

Players may be ordered from the playing field by the field Umpire for breaching the Laws of Australian Football, Policy Handbook or these By-Laws.

25. YELLOW CARD

- (a) A Player shown a Yellow Card by a field Umpire must immediately leave the playing field and may return once seven (7) minutes (Lightning Round) or ten (10) minutes (Divisional Series and Finals) of playing time has elapsed since their removal. Players receiving a Yellow Card may be replaced.
- (b) If a Player commits a second Yellow Card offence, then the Umpire will show a Red Card.

26. RED CARD

- (a) A Player shown a Red Card by a field umpire must immediately leave the playing field and is not permitted to return to the playing field for the remainder of the Match. Players receiving a Red Card cannot be replaced for that Match.
- (b) Should a Player receive two yellow cards or a straight red card from the Umpire, the Player will receive an automatic one (1) Match suspension. The one (1) match suspension is to be served directly after the game in which the incident occurred. If the game in which the two Yellow Cards or the Red Card are received by a Player is a Finals Match, the one (1) match suspension will be served in the first game of the Open in the next year in which the Player participates. The Tribunal may increase any suspension should they deem the matter serious enough.

27. WHITE CARD

To limit umpire abuse and inappropriate behaviour among coaches and officials, a card system is in place, which is a three-phase system managed by the Field Umpire/s as follows:

- (a) Phase One – a warning (White card shown).
- (b) Phase Two - second warning, a free kick and 5m penalty for the opposing side (second White card shown).
- (c) Phase Three, the Head Coach will be reported and removed from the game. The opposing side will also receive a free kick and a 5m penalty (Red card shown).

The Head Coach of each team will be responsible for managing the behaviour of the team's other coaches and officials.

28. NOTICE OF REPORT

The head field Umpire may report a Player for breaching the Laws of Australian Football, Policy Handbook or these By-Laws. The head field umpire should make their report to the Match Manager at the completion of the Match in which the offence occurred.

29. TRIBUNAL

- (a) The Open will have set penalties in place should a Player act outside the Laws of Australian Football, Policy Handbook or these By-Laws. The set penalties are set out below.
- (b) At the AFL's request, the offending Player along with a team delegate must attend a tribunal hearing. The time and location of the tribunal hearing will be communicated to the Team manager from the relevant Player's Team. The tribunal may make any determination it deems appropriate having regard to the set penalties set out below.
- (c) Tribunal Members
- The Tribunal will be made up of no less than two (2) members representing the AFL.
 - The AFL may at their absolute discretion may appoint an independent person to sit on the Tribunal and that person will be deemed to be a member of the Tribunal.
- (d) Set Penalty: 1 match penalty
- Attempting to strike another person;
 - Attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg;
 - Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language;
 - Disputing a decision of an Umpire;
 - Using an obscene gesture;
 - Engaging in time wasting;
 - Engaging in an act of staging;
 - Engaging in a melee, except where the Player's sole intention is to remove a teammate from an incident;
 - Wrestling another person;
 - Interfering with a Player kicking for goal;
 - Intentionally shaking a goal or behind post when another Player is preparing to kick or is kicking for goal or after the Player has kicked for goal and the football is in transit;
 - Wearing prohibited jewellery and equipment, improper uniform or equipment;
 - Send off from the Match (2 Yellow Cards or 1 Red Card).
- (e) Set penalty: 2 match penalty
- Intentionally or carelessly striking another person;
 - Intentionally or carelessly charging another person;
 - Intentionally or carelessly engaging in rough conduct against an opponent which in the circumstances is unreasonable;
 - Intentionally or carelessly bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front-on when that Player has their head down over the football;
 - Intentionally or carelessly tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg;
 - Attempting to kick another person;
 - Intentionally or carelessly scratching another person;
 - Carelessly contacting an Umpire;
 - Instigating a melee;

- Pinching another person.
- (f) Mandatory tribunal hearing
- Intentionally or carelessly kicking another person;
 - Intentionally or carelessly kneeing another person;
 - Intentionally or carelessly head-butting an opponent or making contact to an opponent using the head;
 - Intentionally or carelessly eye-gouging an opponent or making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the eye region of an opponent;
 - Intentionally or carelessly making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of an opponent;
 - Intentionally or carelessly making unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an injured Player;
 - Intentionally or carelessly scratching another person;
 - Intentionally, recklessly or negligently contacting or striking an Umpire;
 - Attempting to contact or strike an Umpire or official;
 - Vilification of another Player, Umpire or official;
 - Spitting at or on an Umpire;
 - Spitting at or on another person;
 - Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an Umpire or official;
 - Behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an Umpire or official;
 - Failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by a field Umpire;
 - Any act of serious misconduct (e.g. king hitting, head butting, etc.).

30. COACHES AND OFFICIALS

- (a) All teams have the option of having the following Football Officials present at match day unless specified as required:
- Head Coach (required);
 - Assistant Coach;
 - Team Manager (required);
 - First Aider/Physio (required);
 - Runner x 2; and
 - Water Carrier x 4.
- (b) No coaches are permitted to step onto the playing field during play to provide instructions to their Players. Runners and water carriers are only permitted to step onto the playing field during play to carry out their role as a runner or a water carrier and must only do so at appropriate times.

31. FIRST AID REQUIREMENTS

- (a) The AFL will arrange a minimum of one accredited level 1 sports trainer, and 1 First Responder/Paramedic to oversee all Matches. The role of the AFL trainer is to act as the first point of contact for someone who may be injured or ill during a game. The competing Team's sports trainer will also be required to support the AFL trainer during the relevant Match.
- (b) All Players must bring their own strapping tape should they require strapping prior to Matches, which is to be completed by the Teams First Aider/Physio. Strapping tape will not be supplied.

32. UNIFORM

- (a) All Teams playing in the Open must have the Open logo printed on their playing uniform. For branding guidelines please refer to Appendix 1. Any team that does not comply with the branding guidelines in Appendix 1 may be penalised at the discretion of the AFL.
- (b) Trainers are required to wear Hi-Vis orange. Runners are required to wear Hi-Vis pink. Water carriers are required to wear Hi-Vis blue.
- (c) Player's wanting to wear SKINS Compression must be beige or the Player's skin colour. No other under garments which can be seen may be worn.
- (d) Players and Football Officials are to wear their Team's uniform to all functions/events/activities coordinated as part of the Open.

33. INJURIES

- (a) In the case of a serious injury the trainer can call for a stretcher to be brought onto the playing field to safely transport the injured Player off the playing field.
- (b) A Player who is removed from the playing field by a stretcher cannot return to the playing field in that Match.
- (c) Players who suffer cuts and bleeding can be ordered from the ground at the discretion of the field umpire and may only return once they have received appropriate treatment from their trainer.

34. CONCUSSION

Section 19 (Concussion) of the Policy Handbook will apply to the Open.

35. ALCOHOL POLICY

Alcohol consumption is strictly prohibited at the Open. It is strongly recommended that all Teams set clear guidelines on the expectation around alcohol consumption with both Players and Football Officials prior to attending the Open.

36. EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

Section 18 (Extreme Weather) of the [Policy Handbook](#) will apply to the Open.

37. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Section 12 (Social Media) of the [Policy Handbook](#) will apply to the Open.



AFL OPEN

INCLUSION

APPENDIX 2 – AFL VALUES

PLAY TO WIN

This player rose to every challenge and did what they say they would do – on and off the field.

PLAY FAIR

This player oozes respect, integrity, honesty, empathy and has a great work ethic – on and off the field.

PLAY WITH PASSION

This player loves what they do. Passion, energy, fun and perseverance is at the heart of their approach to this Open – on and off the field.

PLAY AS ONE TEAM

This player brings out the best in their team mates to achieve individual and shared success. They celebrate the wins and always have their team mates back – on and off the field

