

2026

INTRODUCTION TO UMPIRING HANDBOOK



INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to support learning and development. It contains information, references, pictures, and activities relevant to the AFL umpiring disciplines of Field Umpiring, Boundary Umpiring and Goal Umpiring in School, Youth and Senior AFLQ Competitions.

References to the Rules and Regulations of the game of AFL have been made throughout this handbook. Rules and Regulations change on a regular basis. In the future, if you need to refer to a Rule or Regulation, you should make sure you are using the current version.

AFL QUEENSLAND UMPIRE DEPARTMENT STAFF

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Responsible for Umpiring Department staff leadership, Incident referrals/investigations, umpiring department strategy, umpire coach structure and support and major projects.

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Responsible for developing state based strategies for recruitment and retention, overseeing women & girls, school umpire programs, club based initiatives and the development of future strategy.

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Responsible for delivery and coordination of SEQ Youth and SEQ Junior competitions (umpires and umpire coaches), mentor program and women and girls.

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Responsible for umpiring payments (regional and SEQ), umpiring department finance, uniforms, communications, administration support and social media.

FIELD UMPIRE



ROLE OF THE FIELD UMPIRE

The field umpire (also known as a central umpire) is responsible for controlling general play and is positioned within the field of play. The field umpire is the only type of umpire permitted to award free kicks or initiate stoppages in play, and they execute ball ups to restart play.

Originally, only one field umpire was used; in 1976 a second field umpire was introduced in the Victorian Football League, in 1994 this was expanded to three field umpires in the AFL and in 2023 this was again expanded to four field umpires. Amateur, suburban, junior and semi-professional matches can be officiated by any number of one to four field umpires.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A FIELD UMPIRE

- Introduce yourself to the coaches and teams
- Flip the coin at the start of the game with the captains
- Umpire the game fairly with impartiality
- Ensure the safety of players
- Pay all free kicks according to the laws of the game
- Finish the game and return the football to the club house

WHAT SHOULD YOU BE WORKING ON

it is vital you understand the rules of the game as they change from year to year and change between competitions (current rules matrix for modified junior games can be found on page 10). Ensure that you are constantly developing your communication skills and fitness to ensure you are in the best place to manage and officiate the game.

TRAINING

Training for field umpires (youth and senior) is held at various venues throughout Queensland (SEQ and regionally). While training is not mandatory, umpires are strongly encouraged to attend regularly so they can practice their on field skills in a pressure free environment. Compulsory sessions will be held each month where all of the umpiring groups within the region will come together. If you would like more information regarding training details please reach out to Chloe or Nicola; their details can be found on page 2).

APPOINTMENT EXPECTATIONS

Umpires are appointed each week to their games (league umpires) through OfficialsHQ. It is important that your availability is updated at least 2 weeks in advance - especially if you know you are going to be away so that appointments can be made accurately. If you play for a team within any AFLQ competition it is important that you have these details entered into OfficialsHQ so that you can be appointed to games that don't clash with when you are playing.

When appointments are made in OfficialsHQ you need to accept or decline early in the week. This provides AFLQ staff with enough time to reappoint to games when umpires are unable to attend (declined appointments).

On game day you will need to arrive at the ground an hour before your appointment, this allows time for you to warm up and be ready regardless of traffic or unexpected events.

UMPIRING CHECKLIST

- Umpiring Uniform: Clean and folded or neatly on a hanger
- Running shoes or boots + a spare set of laces (White)
- Minimum of 2 whistles
- White umpiring hat
- Drink bottle (filled up)
- Umpiring Handbook
- Copy of the Laws of the Game (downloaded as a PDF on your phone)
- Notepad and Pen
- Yellow, Red and White Cards
- Coin for toss with captains
- Sunscreen



PRESENTATION: ON FIELD

Umpires are to wear their AFLQ supplied uniform:

Mandatory:

- Green On-Field Shirt
- Grey On-Field Shorts
- Green Socks (Pulled Up)
- Green Wrist Bands
- White On-Field Cap

WHAT TO EXPECT: MATCH DAY

it is important that you prepare appropriately for your game. You should be thinking about the following:

- Ensure that you are well rested; get a good nights sleep
- Ensure that you are well hydrated; this impacts both your physical and mental performance
- Ensure that you have fuelled appropriately the night before and morning of your game to ensure you have enough energy for your game or games

BEFORE YOUR GAME

When you first arrive at the ground you will need to introduce yourself to your fellow umpiring team. As you are responsible for player safety during the game it is important that you ensure you are happy with the field and goal posts (clear from rubbish, post pads in place, lines clearly marked), if this is not the case you must communicate this with the Ground Marshall.

You will be required to introduce yourself to both teams and coaches before the game. This is when you will check that all players fingernails are short and smooth, their boots don't have metal studs in them and all jewellery has been removed or taped over. This also provides you with an opportunity to reinforce any expectations you have for the game that day with the players and coaches to minimise any misunderstandings.

You will need to walk onto the field 15 minutes prior to your game starting (when you're umpiring a gala day this may not be possible however you should be out there as early as possible to keep the day moving). You are required to complete the toss with the captains 2 minutes prior to the game starting.

STARTING THE GAME

At the start of the game you will check that both teams are correctly positioned on the field following the 6/6/6 rule. Once teams are correctly positioned hold the ball above your head to signal to the timekeepers to sound the siren, blow your whistle and conduct the ball up. It is important that the rucks are able to contest the football so aim to throw the football twice the height of your rucks and straight as the rucks are not allowed to cross the centre line on the ground to contest the football. Once you have thrown the football into the air back out quickly 15-20m while keeping your eyes on the contest so you don't miss any free kicks that may need to be awarded. Remember the ball can be cleared quickly so be ready to change direction and stay side on to the contest as you move down the field.

DURING THE GAME

When umpiring you need to ensure you are in the correct position to judge whether the tackle is legal, the ball has been disposed of correctly and whether a mark has been taken so you can accurately pay any free kicks. Try to maintain a 15-20m control distance from the contest and a side angle; if you cannot see the football you should skirt the pack until you can see it and the players in the immediate vicinity.

When a mark is taken you should blow your whistle loud enough for everyone to hear it; this includes players, coaches, spectators, timekeepers and anyone else who is at the game. When you are blowing your whistle to award a free kick you may need to trigger in to the contest quickly to ensure the game stays under control (e.g. following a push, late tackle or fight). Using your soft skills for game management such as strong hand signals, clear free kick control and a loud voice to talk to the players and explain what is happening will allow you to maintain this control easier.

When a player takes a mark within range to have a shot on goal it is important that you set this up correctly. Run in and stand behind the player on the mark and line up the player who is taking the kick to the centre of the goal line directly over the mark. Back out at 90 degrees to the player on the mark so you can accurately distinguish whether they have moved and you need to pay a 50m penalty.

When a goal or behind is scored you must signal to the goal umpire using the relevant hand signal - if there is no goal umpire turn and signal clearly to the score bench/match manager. It is important you move into position quickly to maximise game time, this may mean setting up the player on the mark after a behind or running back to the centre after a goal has been scored. Following a goal it may be easier to ask one of the players to collect the football and kick it back to the middle for you to

complete the ball up to restart play. If you are setting up a kick out after a behind make sure that the player taking the kick is positioned correctly inside the goal square; if they set up incorrectly blow your whistle and call them back to set the kick correctly.

If there is an injured player on the field your priority needs to be player safety. If the ball is down the other end of the ground you can allow play to continue; however, as soon as the play is within 20m of the injured player you must immediately raise one hand above your head and blow your whistle to stop the game. If the trainer is attending to the injured player and calls for a stretcher you must stop play immediately regardless of where the football is. If you are holding time while a player who is bleeding exits the field with a trainer the replacement player can come on straight away and get into position, however you cannot restart play until the bleeding player is off the field.

ENDING THE QUARTER / STARTING THE GAME

When the siren sounds you immediately blow your whistle loud enough for everyone to hear it and raise your hands above your head. If a player takes a mark prior to the siren sounding and is within a reasonable kicking distance for a shot on goal they are permitted to take this kick. Run in and stand behind the player on the mark and line up the player who is taking the kick to the centre of the goal line directly over the mark. Back out at 90 degrees to the player on the mark so you can accurately distinguish whether they have moved and you need to pay a 50m penalty. You also need to watch whether the player taking the kick moves off their line; if this is the case they are not permitted to take their shot. If the siren sounds before the player takes the mark you need to collect the football and stop them from having a shot on goal.

UMPIRE ABUSE

There is a zero tolerance for umpire abuse in any situation. Umpire abuse may occur in many forms such as:

- Players continually not listening to you
- Players, coaches or spectators arguing about your decisions
- Any comment that is personal, targeted or crude

If this occurs during the game by a player you have a few options; you can award a free kick against that player, award a 50m penalty against the player, issue a yellow card or a red card. While this is the basic escalation process you have the ability to skip steps if the level of abuse warrants it. If the abuse is coming from a coach or someone within the coaches box you will follow the white card protocol (outlined further on page 11). If you issue a white card you need to communicate this with the Ground Marshall why it was issued at the break who will communicate this to the team manager.

RULES OF THE GAME



METHODS OF PLAYING THE BALL

There are only two legal methods of disposing the football in AFL; a handball or a kick. If any other method of disposal is used (such as a throw) a free kick should be awarded to the other team.

MARKING OF THE FOOTBALL

A player is considered to have taken a mark when they catch the football after it has been kicked at least 15m within the playing surface and has not made contact with the ground or any other player. If any of these conditions are not met you need to call 'Play On' loud enough for everyone to hear and use the correct signal.

MODIFIED RULES

MIXED UNDER 8 INTRODUCTORY	GIRLS UNDER 9 DEVELOPMENT	MIXED UNDER 9 & 10 DEVELOPMENT	GIRLS UNDER 11 DEVELOPMENT	MIXED UNDER 11 COMPETITION
<p>10 MINS</p> <p>GROUND SIZE 70m x 50m</p> <p>ZONES</p> <p>9-A-SIDE</p> <p>SCORING No scores, ladders or finals</p> <p>RESULTS No recording of best players or goal kickers. No individual player awards.</p>	<p>12 MINS</p> <p>GROUND SIZE 85 x 65m</p> <p>ZONES</p> <p>9-A-SIDE</p> <p>SCORING No scores, ladders or finals</p> <p>RESULTS No recording of best players or goal kickers. No individual player awards.</p>	<p>12 MINS</p> <p>GROUND SIZE 85 x 65m</p> <p>ZONES</p> <p>12-A-SIDE</p> <p>SCORING No scores, ladders or finals</p> <p>RESULTS No recording of best players or goal kickers. No individual player awards.</p>	<p>13 MINS</p> <p>GROUND SIZE 115 x 75m</p> <p>ZONES</p> <p>12-A-SIDE</p> <p>SCORING No scores, ladders or finals</p> <p>RESULTS No recording of best players or goal kickers. No individual player awards.</p>	<p>13 MINS</p> <p>GROUND SIZE 115 x 75m</p> <p>ZONES</p> <p>12-A-SIDE</p> <p>SCORING Controlling Bodies Decision</p> <p>RESULTS Controlling Bodies Decision</p>
<p>✗ No tackling or holding of an opponent.</p> <p>✗ No smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands (fending off), bumping or barging another player.</p> <p>✗ No pushing, (fending off), bumping or barging another player.</p> <p>✗ No shepherding.</p>	<p>✗ Holding of an opponent.</p> <p>✗ No smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands (fending off), bumping or barging another player.</p> <p>✗ No pushing, (fending off), bumping or barging another player.</p> <p>✗ No shepherding.</p>	<p>✗ Holding of an opponent.</p> <p>✗ No smothering, stealing the ball or knocking the ball from an opponent's hands (fending off), bumping or barging another player.</p> <p>✗ No pushing, (fending off), bumping or barging another player.</p> <p>✗ No shepherding.</p>	<p>✓ Full tackling and bumping</p> <p>✓ Fending off, smothering, or barging</p> <p>✓ Stealing the ball</p>	<p>✓ Full tackling and bumping</p> <p>✓ Fending off, smothering, or barging</p> <p>✓ Stealing the ball</p>
<p>BOUNCING THE BALL 1 max No bouncing permitted</p> <p>KICKING OFF GROUND Not permitted</p> <p>PLAYER ROTATION Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).</p> <p>MARKING Any distance, reasonable attempt</p> <p>MERCY RULE</p> <p>COACH ON GROUND</p>	<p>MODIFIED TACKLING</p> <p>BOUNCING THE BALL 1 max</p> <p>KICKING OFF GROUND Not permitted</p> <p>PLAYER ROTATION Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).</p> <p>MARKING Any distance, reasonable attempt</p> <p>MERCY RULE</p> <p>COACH ON GROUND</p>	<p>MODIFIED TACKLING</p> <p>BOUNCING THE BALL 1 max</p> <p>KICKING OFF GROUND Not permitted</p> <p>PLAYER ROTATION Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).</p> <p>MARKING Any distance, reasonable attempt</p> <p>MERCY RULE</p> <p>COACH ON SIDELINES</p>	<p>BOUNCING THE BALL 1 max</p> <p>KICKING OFF GROUND Not permitted</p> <p>PLAYER ROTATION Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).</p> <p>MARKING 10m, direct catch</p> <p>MERCY RULE</p> <p>COACH ON SIDELINES</p>	<p>BOUNCING THE BALL 1 max</p> <p>KICKING OFF GROUND Not permitted</p> <p>PLAYER ROTATION Every player must play a minimum of 50-75% game time with the controlling body determining the exact % of game time per player (excluding injured players).</p> <p>MARKING 10m, direct catch</p> <p>MERCY RULE</p> <p>COACH ON SIDELINES</p>

HOLDING THE BALL

A player who is in possession of the football is provided an opportunity to dispose of it legally before rewarding an opponent for a legal tackle.

Prior opportunity can include:

- Being balanced and steady
- Having an opportunity to handball or kick the football but choosing not to
- Playing on from a free kick or mark
- Ducking the head into a tackling player
- Driving the head through a stationary tackler
- Fending off or evading a tackle
- Shrugging a tackle that starts legal

In modified competitions prior opportunity may also change slightly: once the player has been tagged or 'tackled' they should be allowed 4 steps or approximately 4 seconds to dispose of the football (verbally encourage them during this time). If this doesn't happen, award a free kick to the opposing team and remind the player that next time if they are tackled they have to dispose of the football.

It is important to note when adjudicating holding the ball that the tackle must be legal. Protecting the ball player is paramount; therefore, regardless of whether there as been a prior option if the tackle is not legal (high contact, push in the back, trip etc) you need to penalise the illegal tackle.

It is important that you familiarise yourself with the below decision making matrix so that you can be sure of your thought process when you are field umpiring during the season.

DECISION MAKING MATRIX

Prior Opportunity			No Prior Opportunity			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced and Steady • Evade • Fend • Shrug • Play on from a mark or free kick • Prior Option not taken - goes to handball or kick and doesn't • Duck • Drive 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Prior Opportunity to dispose of the football • Tackled Immediately without Prior Opportunity 			
TACKLED LEGALLY						
Successful Disposal After Tackle	No Successful Disposal After Tackle	Tackle Dislodges Football	Player Elects to Drop Football	Player Makes a Genuine Attempt to Handball or Kick (Swings Hand or Foot - Does NOT need to make contact)	Player is Tackled and is Able to but does NOT make a Genuine Attempt	Player is Tackled and is NOT able to make a Genuine Attempt
PLAY ON	FREE KICK	PLAY ON	FREE KICK	PLAY ON	FREE KICK	BALL UP

LEGAL VS ILLEGAL TACKLE

A legal tackle can be made from in front of, behind or to the side of the player with the football. The tackler must grab the player with the ball below the shoulders but above the knees. If the tackle is made above the shoulder you need to blow your whistle and award a free kick for high contact using the correct hand signal; if the tackle is made below the knees you need to blow your whistle and award a free kick for tripping using the correct hand signal.

A tackle is considered dangerous when the level of force is more than what is normally expected in a given situation, uses excessive rotation or a slinging motion, pins the arms, lifts the legs or has two actions leaving the head and/or body in a vulnerable position. When this occurs you need to blow your whistle and award a free kick using the correct hand signal and trigger into the contest to prevent any reaction from the players. You should also consider escalating this to a yellow or red card if required.

PUSH IN THE BACK

A player whose sole objective is to gain possession of the football is provided every opportunity to do so; therefore, is important as the umpire to protect the ball player, and it is the tacklers responsibility to ensure that the tackle is legal.

While the tackle can be made from behind the player the tackler is not allowed to land on the back of the player who has been tackled. An easy cue to help with recognising this is to ask yourself whether you can see the number of the player who has been tackled; if not, you need to blow your whistle and award a free kick for a push in the back using the correct hand signal.

A player is also not permitted to push the ball carrier in the back while they are in the motion of picking up the ball, running in possession of the ball, taking a mark or after they have disposed of the football.

BALL UP SITUATIONS

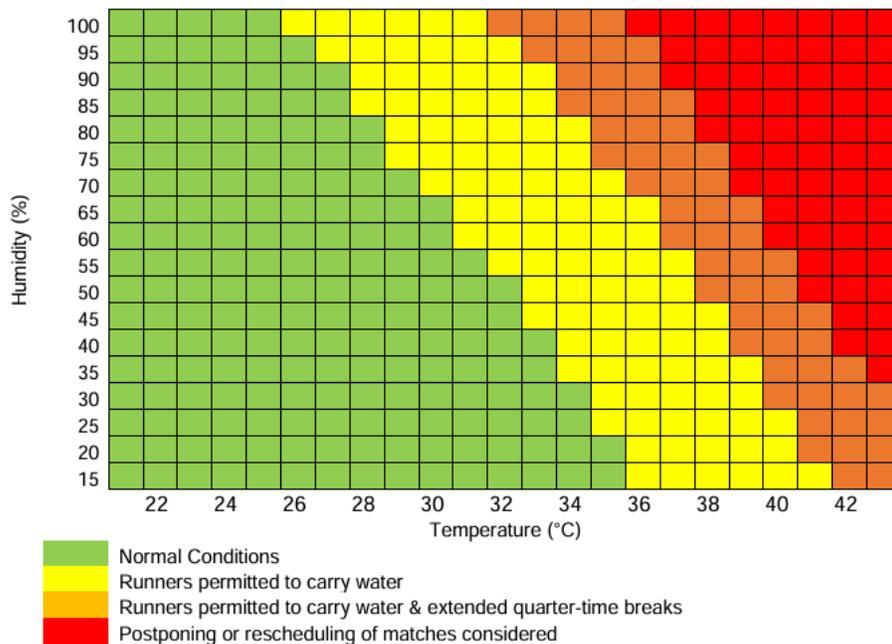
A ball up is used to restart play after the ball becomes stuck underneath a pack or when the ball goes out of bounds. You must blow your whistle and use the correct hand signal to indicate that you will be doing a ball up where the ball became stuck. If you are conducting the ball up after the ball goes out of bounds you need to bring the ball 10m inside the boundary in line with where it crossed the line. In both instances you need to ask each team to nominate a ruck; no player other than the nominated ruck is permitted to contest the ball until it has hit the ground or been touched by one of the rucks. If an additional player is involved in the ruck you need to pay a free kick against the offending team for a ruck infringement (not the nominated ruck).

YOUTH SPECIFIC RULES

There are a specific set of individualised rules for AFL Queensland Youth Competitions that apply from the under 11 age group until and inclusive of the under 17 age group. The first unique policy is that no water carriers should be allowed on the field of play during the match. This includes the runner being unable to carry water out to the players during the game. The only time this can be changed is if the AFL Queensland heat policy has been implemented (shown below), before starting the game if you believe the heat policy should be in effect talk to the AFL Queensland Umpire Staff or the Competition Manager however it may be communicated prior to the game.

Youth competitions also employ the last disposal rule over the ENTIRE ground. Therefore, if the ball travels out of the field of play via handball or kick it is to be a free kick to the opposing team from where the ball crossed the boundary line.

Finally, the youth competitions have a “60 Point Rule”. If a team leads by 60+ points at any stage of the game, after a goal the opposing / losing team will be granted a free kick from the middle of the ground taken by the ruck. Each position player must remain in the 6/6/6 position until the ball is kicked or the ruck plays on with the football to resume play.



CARDS

AFL Queensland Umpiring



PLAYER IS SENT OFF

For any reportable incident where a set penalty will be offered or players to cool off

Player is off for 15 minutes

CAN BE REPLACED IMMEDIATELY

- Player is sent off for a near reportable offence
- Player must leave the field of play for 15 minutes of match time
 - Player can be replaced straight away
 - Player can re-join the game after 15 minutes of match time
- Used as a match management tool to lessen the chance of a player committing a reportable offence
- Examples include: late tackles, provoking behaviour, failing to follow an umpires instructions, umpire abuse

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PLAYER IS SENT OFF

For any serious incident that will result in direct tribunal referral

Player cannot return to play

CAN BE REPLACED AFTER 15 MINUTES

- Player is reported and sent off for the game
- Player must leave the field of play and not return. Player is not allowed inside the fenced area and/or the field - this includes the breaks
 - Player can only be replaced after 15 minutes
- Examples include: striking (head or groin), kicking, excessive force in a tackle (players head is put in danger), continuous or vilifying abuse towards an umpire or another player

AFL Queensland Umpiring



COACHES BOX WARNING CARD

1st Warning – No freekick
2nd Warning – 50m freekick
3rd Warning – Coach reported, ejected, freekick & 50m penalty

- Applied for constant inappropriate behaviour displayed by coaches, assistants, managers, runners, bench players and anyone else in the vicinity of the coaches box.
- When an umpire issues a white card they must advise the Ground Marshall (GM) at the next break why the card was issued - the GM will then pass this on to the offending team.
- If abuse is directed towards the umpire while they are issuing the white card award an additional 50m penalty (total of 100m) to the nearest player of the non-offending team

LIST OF REPORTABLE OFFENCES

<u>Rule</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
19.2.2 (a)	(i) striking another person
	(ii) kicking, (iii) kneeling, or (iv) stomping another person
	(v) charging another person
	(vi) engaging in unreasonable rough conduct
	(vii) bumping or forceful contact to an opponent front on
	(viii) head-butting an opponent
	(ix) eye-gouging or making contact to the eye region
	(x) making unnecessary contact to the face
	(xi) making unnecessary contact with an injured player
	(xii) scratching or 19.2.2 (t) pinching another person
	(xiii) tripping whether by hand, arm, foot, or leg
19.2.2 (b)	intentionally making contact with an umpire
19.2.2	(c) Attempting to or (d) Carelessly making contact with an umpire
19.2.2 (e)	spitting at or on an umpire
19.2.2 (f)	spitting at or on another person
19.2.2 (g)	attempting to strike another person
19.2.2 (h)	attempting to kick another person
19.2.2 (i)	attempting to trip by hand, arm, foot, or leg
19.2.2 (j)	using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language
19.2.2 (k)	using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language to an umpire
19.2.2 (l)	behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner to an umpire
19.2.2	(m) disputing a decision or (x) an order of an umpire ie: failing to leave playing surface
19.2.2 (n)	use of an obscene gesture
19.2.2 (o)	engaging in time wasting
19.2.2 (p)	engaging in an act of staging
19.2.2 (q)	engaging in a melee (except where sole intention is to remove a teammate)
19.2.2 (r)	instigating a melee
19.2.2 (s)	wrestling another person
19.2.2 (u)	interfering with a player kicking for goal
19.2.2 (w)	intentionally shaking a goal or behind post
19.2.2 (y)	wearing boots, jewellery and equipment under law 9
19.2.2 (z)	engaging in any other act of misconduct

GRADING MATRIX

Table 2 – Classification Table

Conduct	Impact	Contact	Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea	
Intentional	Severe	High/Groin/Chest	5+ Matches (Tribunal)	N/A	
		Body	4+ Matches (Tribunal)	N/A	
	High	High/Groin/Chest	4 Matches	3 Matches	
		Body	3 Matches	2 Matches	
	Medium	High/Groin/Chest	3 Matches	2 Matches	
		Body	2 Matches	1 Match	
	Low	High/Groin/Chest	2 Matches	1 Match	
		Body	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand	
	Careless	Severe	High/Groin/Chest	4+ Matches (Tribunal)	N/A
			Body	3+ Matches (Tribunal)	N/A
High		High/Groin/Chest	3 Matches	2 Matches	
		Body	2 Matches	1 Match	
Medium		High/Groin/Chest	2 Matches	1 Match	
		Body	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand	
Low		High/Groin/Chest	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand	
		Body	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand	

HAND SIGNALS



Walking onto Field



Starting Quarter
Holding Ball up for Siren



Starting Quarter
Blowing Whistle



High Contact



Push in the Back



Trip



Holding



Play on

HAND SIGNALS



Mark



Kicking in Danger



Holding the Ball (1)



Holding the Ball (2)



All Clear: Goal



All Clear: Behind



End of Quarter (1)



End of Quarter (2)

HAND SIGNALS



Blood Rule



Incorrect Disposal: Throw



Stand



Indicating a Free



Run Too Far



My Ball



Dangerous Tackle (1)



Dangerous Tackle (2)

HAND SIGNALS



Advantage (1)



Advantage (2)



Insufficient Intent



Last Touch (Youth Football Only)



Throw In



Two Umpire Handover: Mine



Two Umpire Handover: Tap Through



Two Umpire Handover: Yours

BOUNDARY UMPIRE



ROLE OF THE BOUNDARY UMPIRE

The boundary umpire is the sole judge of when the ball is out of bounds and accurately apply the laws of boundary umpiring with impartiality.

If the ball completely crosses the boundary line on the full the boundary umpire is responsible for indicating where the player on the mark needs to stand (where the ball crossed the line). If the ball crosses the line after making contact with the field or a player (above the knee) the boundary umpire is responsible for throwing the ball back into play. However, if between the arcs in senior football the boundary umpire has to be aware of if the ball goes out via handball or kick and if so indicate a lasso last disposal free kick and indicate where the player on the mark needs to stand.

After a goal has been scored the boundary umpire is responsible for collecting the football and returning it to the field umpire who will be waiting in the middle of the ground. As the field umpire is conducting the bounce or the ball up to restart play, the boundary umpire is responsible for monitoring the edge of the centre square to make sure no players leave their 6/6/6 zone early.

BALL OUT OF BOUNDS

The call is considered out of bounds when ALL of the ball completely crosses ALL of the boundary line. If the player holding the football is out of bounds but they are holding the ball out so that it remains within the boundary line it is considered still in play.

As a boundary umpire you should always allow the player the benefit of the doubt if you are not confident in your decision and pay the lesser option (ie. if you are not confident which team last made contact with the ball for an Out on the Full decision you should signal Out of Bounds and throw the ball back in).

OUT ON THE FULL

The ball is considered to be Out on the Full (OOF) when it leaves the field of play without bouncing, after making contact with a player below the knee (generally a kick).

Out On the Full is signalled with the whistle, however the second arm is brought up at the same time, in the same position: bent in half at the elbow, elbow aligned with the shoulder. Once the whistle blast is finished, both arms are extended out to their full extent, so that shoulders, elbows, and hands are all aligned. This is held until the Field Umpire acknowledges the call by blowing their own whistle and indicating that the opposing team will take the kick. The Boundary Umpire will then indicate to the Field Umpire the position along the boundary line that the ball left the field of play, by crouching slightly and extending an arm to show the location. After confirming with the Field Umpire, they have seen the location to set the mark, the Boundary Umpire will back away from the player taking the kick, in the direction of the kick. If a Ruck punches the ball out on the full, from either a Ball Up or a Throw In, this is signalled Out on the Full.

Note: if the player exits the field of play and the Boundary Umpire is on the behind side of the player, they should remain there until the player has taken the kick. Boundary Umpires should never run through the mark or interfere with the player's movements when taking a kick.

OUT OF BOUNDS

The ball is considered to be Out of Bounds (OOB) once it has bounced entirely over the line as a result of contact with any part of a players body. Out of Bounds is indicated with a long blow of the whistle with one arm raised straight up in the air until the field umpire confirms that there will be a boundary throw in to restart play. It is important as a boundary umpire to turn towards the controlling field umpire when signalling your decisions. Once the field umpire has signalled a throw in the boundary umpire is then able to complete their run to retrieve the ball before returning to the location along the boundary where the ball went out of bounds.

If a player takes a mark near the boundary or an Out on the Full kick has been awarded and takes the kick from outside the boundary; if the ball never re-enters the field of play the boundary umpire will call Out of Bounds and conduct the throw in from where the kick was originally taken. If a player takes a mark near the boundary, or if an Out on the Full kick has been awarded, and the player makes two discrete changes of direction from outside the field of play, or if they run past the mark for at least four (4) steps outside the field of play, then the Boundary Umpire will make an Out of Bounds call and make the Throw In from where the player was taking the kick.

OUT OF BOUNDS: TOUCHED

If the ball leaves the field of play without bouncing, as result of contact with a player below the knee but is touched by any part of another player's body above the knee, this is signalled as Out of Bounds – Touched. This includes a player that attempts a mark inside the boundary but does not have control of the ball before the ball crosses completely over the boundary line.

The signal is made the same as Out of Bounds, however, once the non-whistle arm is raised vertical, the whistle hand is brought up to touch the back of the non-whistle hand three or more times, in an exaggerated tapping motion. As with Out of Bounds, the Boundary Umpire will wait for the Field Umpire to call for a Throw In before finishing their run to retrieve the ball and moving back into position for the Throw In.

OUT OF BOUNDS: ABOVE THE KNEE

If the ball leaves the field of play without bouncing, as a result of contact with a player's leg, but it is not obvious to the players and Field Umpires whether the contact was made above or below the knee of the player, the Boundary Umpire will signal Out of Bounds – Above the Knee if the contact with the ball was made above the knee. (Of course, if the contact with the ball was made below the knee, this is the normal Out On the Full!).

The normal Out of Bounds signal is made, and after holding the Out of Bounds signal for a few seconds, one of the Boundary Umpires legs is raised so the knee is at hip height and the leg is bent at the knee. The Boundary Umpire will then tap the knee three times with their non-whistle hand. As with Out of Bounds, once the Field Umpire has confirmed the Throw In, the Boundary Umpire will retrieve the ball and position themselves for a Throw In.

OUT OF BOUNDS: LAST DISPOSAL

If the ball leaves the field of play off a clear disposal (Handball or Kick). The boundary umpire is to signal the "Lasso" free kick with a loud whistle and a signal that is close to swinging a rope above your head. The boundary umpire will then signal to the field umpire and the player on the mark where to stand before running backwards in the direction the ball is to be kicked the same as if it was out on the full.



BALL HITS BEHIND POST ON THE FULL

If the ball hits the Behind Post as a result of contact with a player below the knee, this is signalled as Out on the Full. In addition to signalling Out on the Full, after receiving confirmation from the Field Umpire of the decision, the Boundary Umpire will run in to stand next to the Behind Post (if not already there), face into the field, and tap the Behind Post three times with a straight arm above the Boundary Umpire's head.

If the Boundary Umpire is more than 15m away from the Behind Post, the Goal Umpire will generally assist the Boundary Umpire by tapping the Behind Post on behalf of the Boundary Umpire, which allows the Boundary Umpire to back away along the boundary line in preparation for the kick.

BALL HITS BEHIND POST NOT ON THE FULL

If the ball hits the Behind Post after bouncing on the field or making contact with a player above the knee, this is signalled as Out of Bounds. In addition to signalling Out of Bounds, after receiving confirmation from the Field Umpire of the decision, the Boundary Umpire will run in to stand next to the Behind Post (if not already there), face into the field, and tap the Behind Post three times with a straight arm above the Boundary Umpire's head.

If the Boundary Umpire is more than 15m away from the Behind Post, the Goal Umpire will generally assist the Boundary Umpire by tapping the Behind Post on behalf of the Boundary Umpire, which allows the Boundary Umpire to prepare for the throw in.

CENTRE SQUARE INFRINGEMENT

The only other time a boundary umpire will use their whistle to make a signal is during the start or restart of play for a centre bounce or ball up. There are two parts to restarting play, the first is to allow the players time to set up in their correct positions:

- Six (6) players from each team in both 50m arcs, at least one (1) from each team in the goal square
- Six (6) players around the centre square, one (1) from each team along each wing side, and the remaining four (4) around/inside the Centre Circle
- For Women's competitions, the numbers inside each of the 50m arcs are reduced to five (5) from each team, at least one (1) from each team inside the Goal Square.

Boundary Umpires can assist teams to position themselves correctly by warning them if they are short any players or have too many players inside the 50m arc the Boundary umpire is controlling at the start of play. Players should be in their correct positions by the time the controlling Field Umpire is ready to make the bounce or ball up. If players are still getting into position when the controlling Field Umpire is ready to make the bounce or ball up, the Boundary Umpire does not blow their whistle, but can alert their closest Field Umpire verbally of any incorrect player numbers. It is up to the Field Umpires to issue any warnings or penalties relating to the "6-6-6" rule.

However, if the players are in their correct positions at the time that the controlling Field Umpire makes the bounce or ball up and one or more players break correct position before the ball has left the Field Umpire's hand, then the Boundary Umpire can blow their whistle and call the infringement against the offending team. They should raise one arm to point towards the attacking goal of the disadvantaged team and clearly call that "Team A has broken position early, Team B has been disadvantaged".

Note: that this call should only be made when one team is clearly disadvantaged by the offending team “breaking” position early. This means that the offending player should be a significant distance (at least 4 steps) in front of the disadvantaged player, or alternatively, the disadvantaged player should have been pushed significantly out of position by the offending player.

If the offending player is only a step or two in front of the other and there is no significant advantage, the call does not need to be made.



THROWS

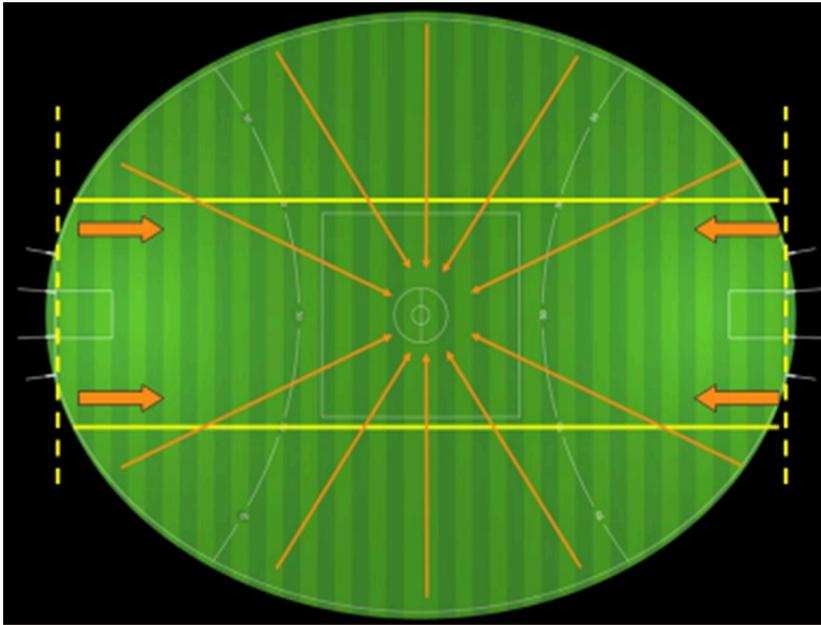
The Throw In should be executed to be neutral towards both teams. This means that, generally, the Throw In is directed to the Centre Circle of the field, and the Boundary Umpire has their back turned to play so they cannot direct the throw towards one Ruck in preference to the other.

DIRECTION OF THROW INS

Throw Ins are always directed towards the Centre Circle in the middle of the playing field. Where the Rucks set up to receive the Throw In from the Boundary line is irrelevant to the Boundary Umpire, and the Field Umpires should be directing the Rucks to the correct position if they are not setting up correctly.

The only exception to throwing to the Centre Circle is when the Throw In is to be made within ten (10) metres of the Behind Post. In this case, the Throw In is directed perpendicular from the line extended between the Behind Posts, or, alternatively, parallel to a line joining the Behind Posts at either end of the playing field. This is to ensure that the attacking team does not have an advantage from the Throw In landing right in front of their goal.

If the Throw In is to be made close transition zone from perpendicular to towards the Centre Circle, then the Boundary Umpire should move inside or outside the perpendicular zone to clearly indicate which is the appropriate direction to be throwing and to avoid confusion in the Rucks.



THROW IN SPECIFICATIONS

A Boundary Umpire will stand on the Boundary line to make the Throw In. The Throw In should be made so that the ball lands on the Rucks 18 metres inside the field of play. If the Boundary Umpire cannot comfortably make this distance, they can come inside the Boundary line as much distance as required so their Throw In will land at the 18m mark. For example, if a Boundary Umpire can throw 12m, they will come inside the Boundary line by six (6) metres, throw 12m and the ball will land at 18m. Throws should not exceed 20m in length.

Many Women's competitions require the Boundary Umpire to make the Throw In from ten (10) metres inside the Boundary line, which means that the ball will land 28 metres (10m + 18m) inside the Boundary line. Please confirm with your coach if your local Women's competition has adopted the 10m Throw In rule.

The Throw In is also required to make a parabolic arc shape from Umpire's hand to Rucks' hands. This means that the ball should travel at least eight (8) metres vertically into the air or hang in the air for at least four (4) seconds before landing at the Rucks.

THROW IN TECHNIQUE

The throwing arm is extended straight, in front of the Umpire's body, at an angle comfortable to the umpire. The Boundary Umpire will go into a squat position – this is where the power for the Throw In is generated, from the legs and glutes. The throwing arm is lowered as much as practical between the legs to allow a slinging action to occur as the Umpire explodes back to a standing/jumping position. The Boundary Umpire should concentrate on jumping vertically as high as possible, to generate power and height in the throw.

The arm should only reach release point at the top of the standing/jumping movement, to maximise the power at the point of release. Synchronising the arm sling and the standing/jumping movement will take practice. The ball is released at about 45° from horizontal above the Boundary Umpire's head – again, finding the release point that best suits the Boundary umpire will take practice. The aim is to release the ball so that it creates the desired arc and does not come out too flat.

To finish the Throw In, the hand should flick the ball out at the release point. This is done by flicking the hand back towards the arm just before releasing the ball. This will cause the ball to rotate quickly backwards, simulating a kick and generating some “grip” on the air to increase the height/distance of the Throw In.

COMMUNICATION WITH GOAL UMPIRES

If the ball passes between the Goal and the Behind Post, and completely over the goal line, the Boundary umpire will hold their outside arm extended diagonally out from their side while facing the Goal Umpire and yelling “Yours.” This tells the Goal Umpire that the ball is theirs to make the decision on. The second occasion that a Boundary umpire will communicate with the Goal umpire is when the Boundary Umpire is required to make a call about the ball being out in close proximity to the Goals, or when the Goal Umpire assists the Boundary umpire with an Out signal.

If the Boundary Umpire is standing at, or close to, the Behind Post, before making their Out signal, they will first look to the Goal Umpire, tap their hip three times with their outside arm, then yell “Mine,” to let the Goal Umpire know it is the Boundary Umpire's call to make. They then whistle and make the appropriate signals, including tapping the Behind Post if required.

If the Boundary Umpire is still moving into position near the Behind Post and the Goal Umpire has the same or better vision of the Out signal, they will assist the Boundary Umpire by raising their outside arm directly up (to assist with an Out of Bounds signal) or by raising their outside arm to horizontal from the shoulder (to assist with an Out on the Full signal). To acknowledge the Goal Umpire's assist, the Boundary Umpire may tap their hip with their outside arm (and yell “Mine” if within range), or even simply nod, before using their whistle and making the appropriate Out signal to the Field Umpire.

When a Boundary Umpire moves into position on the Behind Post, they should tell the Goal Umpire by yelling “Post” or some other mutually agreed upon word. This allows the Goal Umpire to adjust their positioning, accordingly, knowing that there is a Boundary Umpire to assist with Behind calls.

When leaving the Behind Post because play is moving away from the Goal Square without any score being made, the Boundary umpire should alert the Goal Umpire by yelling “Leaving” or some other mutually agreed upon word.

HAND SIGNALS



Out of Bounds



Out on the Full (1)



Out on the Full (2)



Set Shot: Behind



Hitting the Post



Indicating the Mark

GOAL UMPIRE



ROLE OF THE GOAL UMPIRE

The role of the Goal Umpire is to be the final judge on all scores and records all scores in a match. Goal Umpires work in conjunction with boundary and Field Umpires to ensure the match is managed smoothly and have a complex task in ensuring that times are kept, scores are recorded accurately, and that they are always in the best position to make any scoring decision. Goal Umpires, like Boundary Umpires, may assist the Field Umpire in reporting any player they deem to have committed an offence.

QUALITIES OF A GOAL UMPIRE

- **Trustworthy** – a person who is honest and impartial to ensure all aspects of the game involving scores is above reproach.
- **Responsible** – a person who has integrity and takes his role in football seriously.
- **Competent, Knowledgeable and Fit** – a person who is well equipped both physically and mentally to perform the role of a goal umpire.

GOAL UMPIRES EQUIPMENT

- Goal Umpire Handbook
- AFLQ Umpiring Uniform (Green On Field Shirt, Green Hat, Black Pants (for AFLQ and SEQ Games, black pants are considered to be proper uniform – only if both umpires have been issued/purchased grey pants eg VFL, AFLW, High Performance Group Umpires, than these can be worn if preferred), Black Boots & Socks
- Watch (With timer and stopwatch)
- 4 Flags
- Scorecards + Pen/Pencil

JUDGING THE SCORE

For a score to be registered the whole of the ball must have crossed the line or hit the goal post and the goal umpire must wait for an 'all clear' signal from the field umpire before signalling the score

A goal is scored

- If the ball completely crosses the goal line after being kicked (below the knee) by an attacking player and does not touch any player or a goal post.

A behind is scored

- When the ball goes over the top of a goal post or hits a goal post or the padding or any other attachment to the goal post. When the ball completely crosses the behind line after being kicked by any player from either team.
- When the ball completely crosses, if punched, touched or carried by any player from either team across any scoring line
- When a defender disposes of the ball from beyond the scoring line and fails to bring the ball over the same goal or behind line originally crossed.

ASSISTING THE BOUNDARY UMPIRES

The ball is out of bounds if it hits the behind post after having been touched, punched or bounces prior to hitting the post. The ball is out of bounds on the full if the ball after being kicked by any player from either team and then hits the behind post on the full or goes over the top of the behind post.

POSITIONING

To make the best possible position as a Goal Umpire, you need to ensure:

- Stay involved in the game and not to be distracted in any way. This requires concentration and the ability to read the play
- Do not lean on the fences as this inhibits making the correct position
- Positioning is critical to ensure you have the best view of the ball at all times
- Stay out of the way of players and the football

For the Goal Umpire to correctly determine whether the football in flight, well above touching and contesting height, has gone through the goals or over the top of the goal post, or through the behinds. The Goal Umpire's positioning needs to be directly under the flight of the ball. This will give the Goal Umpire a good view of the ball and will be able to tell if the ball grazes or passes over the post. If a ball passes over the behind line on such occasions this will require the Goal Umpire to run across to a position under the flight of the ball rather than adjudicate from the goal area.

Goal Umpires should be positioned astride the scoring line for a ball which is likely to be kicked/touched/contested on or near the line.

- A ball kicked at goal which is being contested on or near the scoring line.
- The ball is bouncing along the ground towards the goal line.
- Player running at goal and will kick from close range.
- The ball is being contested close to the scoring line.
- A ball dropping in flight. a dropping or bouncing ball that is likely to stop or bounce on its point right above the scoring line.



Astride the Line



Under the Flight
of the Ball

RECORDING AND CHECKING THE SCORES

On the occasion a goal is scored, note the score on the score card immediately after waving the two flags and holding the score card chest high in order to be aware of what is happening in front of you. This can be done whilst encouraging players back into the goal square for the restart of play. After a behind is scored note the score after the ball is brought back into play and it is obvious that play will not immediately return near your scoring area (at least two kicks away or a stoppage has occurred).

In the situations that goal umpires can't agree on the score for whatever reason, umpires need to use all resources to determine the score at the end of a quarter or the final score. If after discussion the goal umpires are unable to agree on the scores, then they should confer with the time keepers who also record the scores. The goal umpire with the same score as the scoreboard or time keepers is more likely to have the correct score.

END OF 1ST AND 3RD QUARTER

- At the end of the 1st and 3rd quarters, both goal umpires will collect ALL 4 of their flags (and spare ball if appropriate) stand in the middle of the goal line with their flags in their right hand, then extend out to their side so that their partner can see and then both umpires will walk to the meeting point and meet at the same time.
- Both umpires will meet between the centre circles and the wing side of the centre square closest to the umpire's room.
- Both umpires turn their back on the scoreboard, confirm scorecards, then turn confirm the scoreboard. Then the goal umpire who during is the closest to the scoreboard will wave off the score.
- Once this has been completed both are to join the rest of the team in the centre circles.
- If the scoreboard is incorrect, both umpires are to run over to the scoreboard/score person who may not be at the scoreboard (eg electronic scoreboard), without leaving the field of play and ask the attendant to correct. When scoreboard is correct, then wave off and then walk to the centre circles.
- For the start of the 2nd and 4th quarters, both goal umpires will walk back to their goal lines for the re-commencement of play.

END OF 2ND AND 4TH QUARTER

- At the end of the 2nd and 4th quarters, both goal umpires will collect ALL 4 of their flags (and spare ball if appropriate) stand in the middle of the goal line with their flags in their right hand, then extend out to their side so that their partner can see and then both umpires will jog to the meeting point and meet at the same time.
- Both umpires will meet between the centre circles and the wing side of the centre square closest to the umpire's room.
- Both umpires turn their back on the scoreboard, confirm scorecards, then turn confirm the scoreboard. Then the goal umpire who during that quarter is the closest to the scoreboard will wave off the score.
- If the scoreboard is incorrect, both umpires are to run over to the scoreboard/score person (eg electronic scoreboard), without leaving the field of play and ask the attendant to correct. When scoreboard is correct, then wave off and jog off the field of play to the umpires' rooms.

HAND SIGNALS



Goal



Behind (1)



Behind (2)



Behind: Above the Knee



Behind: Post



Behind: Touched

HAND SIGNALS



Out of Bounds



Out on the Full



**INTERESTED IN
BECOMING AN
UMPIRE?**

REGISTER NOW!



AFLQ UMPIRING DEPARTMENT

AFL Queensland Administration & Training Centre
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