



AFL OPEN BY LAWS



THE GAME IS OPEN
TO EVERYONE.



AFL Open: Wheelchair

These By-Laws relating to the 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 a physical disability 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. General

1.1. Definitions

In these By-Laws:

- (a) **AFL** means Australian Football League (ACN 004 122 211).
- (b) **AFL Wheelchair** means the game akin to Australian Football played in wheelchairs.
- (c) **Attacking Team** describes the Team who is currently in possession of the football during a Match.
- (d) **Back Zone** means the Zone provided as 'Back' within the diagram provided at clause 15.2 of these By Laws.
- (e) **Behind Line** means the line at the boundary between the two behind and goal post.
- (f) **By-Laws** means this document.
- (g) **Card** means a card used by an Umpire to communicate a penalty or warning to a Player or Official during a Match.
- (h) **Centre Zone** means the Zone provided as 'Centre' within the diagram provided at clause 15.2 of these By Laws.
- (i) **Class** means one of the classes provided within the table at clause 6.
- (j) **Classified** refers to the process of determining which Class a Player belongs.
- (k) **Coach** means a head coach, assistant coach, volunteer coach or any other person holding, or seeking to hold, coaching responsibilities at a Club who is Accredited (or required to be Accredited) in accordance with section 4 of the Policy Handbook.
- (l) **Defenders** means Players permitted in the Centre and Back Zones to assist their Team when they are not in possession of the football.
- (m) **Defending Team** describes the Team who is not currently in possession of the football during a Match.
- (n) **Field Umpire** means a person who is Accredited (or required to be Accredited) to oversee the Australian Football rules (as they apply to AFL Wheelchair) with respect to conduct on the Playing Surface during a Match.
- (o) **Finals** means the Matches following the Lightning Round and fixtured according to the success of the Teams within the Lightning Round, as per clause 11.
- (p) **First Aider** means the person appointed to provide first aid duties during a Match.
- (q) **Forward Zone** means the Zone provided as 'Forward' within the diagram provided at clause 15.2 of these By Laws.
- (r) **Forwards** means Players permitted in the Forward and Centre Zones to assist their Team when they are in possession of the football.
- (s) **Goal Line** means the line at the boundary between the two goal posts.
- (t) **Goal Umpire** means a person who is Accredited (or required to be Accredited) to oversee Australian Football rules (as they apply to AFL Wheelchair) with respect to goals and behinds during a Match.
- (u) **Grand Final** means the Match between the two (2) most successful Teams within the Competition in each division following Finals.
- (v) **Handball** means the act of holding the football in one hand and disposing of it by hitting it with a clenched fist with the other. Within these By-Laws, any reference to a 'kick' is to a Handball.

- (w) **Head Coach** means the lead with respect to a Team.
- (x) **Kick** when referenced in these By-Laws means a Handball.
- (y) **Laws of Australian Football** means the rules governing the play of Australian Football (available [here](#)).
- (z) **Lightning Round** means the lightning carnival Matches specified in By-Law 11
- (aa) **Match** means the contest of AFL Wheelchair played between two Teams.
- (bb) **Match Manager** means a person appointed by AFL to oversee Matches at that venue.
- (cc) **Official** means an Umpire, Coach, First Aider, team manager, Water Carrier, or any other person tasked with an officiating role relating to a Match.
- (dd) **Open** means the Toyota AFL Open.
- (ee) **Open Points** means points awarded in accordance with By-Law 12.
- (ff) **Organisation** means an organisation specified in By-Law 7.
- (gg) **Player** means includes a player registered to play and/or participate in the AFL Open.
- (hh) **PlayHQ** means the AFL's online competition management system, designed to assist with the management of competitions and membership data.
- (ii) **Playing Surface** means the actual court.
- (jj) **Point Allocation** means the process of allocating points to a player in line with their Classification, as provided for at clause 6 of these By-Laws.
- (kk) **Policy Handbook** means the *National Community Football Policy Handbook* (available [here](#)).
- (ll) **Protected Area** means the area described at clause 15.33 in which an opposition Player may not enter following a Player being awarded a mark or free kick.
- (mm) **Red Card** means a Card that is red in colour and that is issued by an Umpire to a Player or Official in response to conduct outlined at clause 17.2 of these By-Laws, requiring the Player or Official to leave the Playing Surface for the remainder of the Match.
- (nn) **Region** means a region specified in By-Law 7.
- (oo) **Ruck** means the designated Player from each Team who engages in the initial contest of the football following a bounce, ball up or boundary throw in.
- (pp) **Team** means a team representing a Region or Organisation participating in the Open.
- (qq) **Team List** means the list of Players and Officials submitted via PlayHQ for any given Match.
- (rr) **Team Manager** means a person appointed to support the Players and Officials for a specific Team.
- (ss) **Team Point Ceiling** has the definition provided at clause 6.
- (tt) **Tribunal** means a tribunal established by AFL in accordance with section 17.4 of the National Handbook.
- (uu) **Umpire** includes a Field or Goal Umpire.
- (vv) **Water Carrier** means a person who delivers water to Players during a Match.
- (ww) **White Card** means a Card that is white in colour and that is issued by an Umpire to a Coach pursuant to clause 17.3 of these By-Laws.
- (xx) **Yellow Card** means a Card that is yellow in colour and that is issued by an Umpire to a Player or Official in response to conduct outlined at clause 17.1 of these By-Laws, requiring the Player or Official to leave the Playing Surface for a set number of minutes as provided for at clause 17.1.
- (yy) **Zones** means the areas specified at clause 15.2 of these By-Laws.

The definitions set out in Policy Handbook will otherwise apply.

1.2 Amendment

AFL may from time to time amend these By-Laws as it, in its absolute discretion, deems fit.

2. Application

- (a) The Policy Handbook will apply to the AFL Open, unless expressly stated within these By-Laws otherwise.
- (b) 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 by all associated parties as the *Toyota AFL Open* in all written communication (other than these By-Laws).

4. Management

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

5. Player Eligibility

To compete in the Open, the following eligibility and classification provisions will apply:

- (a) A Player must be 16 years old as at the commencement date of the Open unless otherwise approved by the AFL in exceptional and compelling circumstances.
- (b) Player must be registered within PlayHQ for their state/territory team.
- (c) Players must be classified by the National Chief Classifier prior to the commencement of the AFL Open. If a player has been given a provisional classification, they must have classification finalised on the first day of play by on site classifier.

6. Classification and Point Allocation

- (a) The AFL Open caters for players with varying levels of disability as well as non-disabled players. To address this, prior to the Competition commencing all Players must be classified as per clause 6(c).
- (b) Each class is attributable to a number of points- this will be a Player's 'Point Allocation' (subject to any deduction pursuant to clause 6(d)).
- (c) There are four (4) eligible Classes to compete in the Toyota AFL Open, with each Class being based on a Player's level of impairment and how it affects the way they perform key actions in AFL Wheelchair - namely wheelchair movement, handballing, passing, marking, catching and reacting to contact. The table below provides a brief description of each Class, alongside one Australian Football skill example. An AFL Wheelchair Classification Manual is available online.

Note: The Classes have been developed over 40 years of research in wheelchair basketball and modified to fit the context of AFL Wheelchair.

Trunk Function	AFL Wheelchair Example – Handball
Class 1 – 1 Point	
<p>Generally, the Player sits back into their backrest. They have little or no control of their trunk when they lean forward and no control when they lean sideways. They have no active rotation of the trunk.</p> <p>When unbalanced, they use their arms on their wheelchair or knees to return upright.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Typically leans back into the backrest to counterbalance when handballing. ● A handball is accompanied by a backward movement of the head and shoulders to maintain an upright position. ● Lack of trunk rotation limits the ability to generate power in the handball. ● Often overbalances during follow-through, requiring arm support to remain upright.
Class 2 – 2 Points	
<p>The Player has active control of their upper trunk but not the lower trunk. They can actively rotate their upper trunk without using their hands on the chair. They have partial controlled movement when they lean forward. They have no controlled sideways trunk movements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A handball is performed with minimal loss of stability, but the lower trunk is not used to gain power. ● Able to lean the upper trunk forward for handballing, but more often remains on the backrest, particularly for longer-range handballs. ● Can rotate the upper trunk towards the intended handball recipient if the backrest supports the lower trunk.
Class 3 – 3 Points	
<p>The Player has complete trunk control to rotate and lean forward from the backrest. They have no controlled sideways trunk movements and use their hands on their wheelchair or knees to return upright when reaching out into this area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A handball is performed with no loss of stability using forward motion of the trunk to gain maximum power and momentum. ● Can rotate their full trunk towards the intended handball recipient unsupported by the backrest

Class 4 – 4 Points	
<p>The Player has complete trunk control to rotate and lean forward from the backrest. They have complete sideways trunk movement to at least one side.</p> <p>These players' impairments could include lower limb injuries or PTSD from ADF duty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Able to handball forward without support from the wheelchair. ● Can rotate their full trunk towards the intended handball recipient unsupported by the backrest. ● Able to actively move their trunk to at least one side to handball and return to an upright position without losing stability.

d) Players who are:

(i) female; or

(ii) under 18 years of age;

Will receive a one (1) point concession to their Point Allocation. A Player can only use one deduction point (i.e. if the Player is female and under 18, they will only receive a one (1) point concession) This is to ensure there is a focus on the development of Players within these targeted groups.

Where classification intersects with the Gender Diversity Policy teams will liaise with Chief Classifier and AFL to determine individual process where required.

e) The sum of the Points Allocations of all Players on a Playing surface must never exceed:

a. Seventeen (16) points for Category A teams

b. Twenty (20) points for Category B teams

- Category A teams – 16 team point ceiling – NSW/ACT, QLD, TAS, WA, SA, VIC & NT
- Category B teams – 20 team point ceiling – RSL

This will be referred to as the **Team Point Ceiling**

7. Teams

- (a) Prior to each Match, a Team must list five (5) to ten (10) Players on their Team List. Teams must receive written approval from AFL to list more than ten (10) players on their Team List.
- (b) Teams must always have five (5) Players, elected from the Team List, on the Playing Surface at any one time (unless otherwise approved by AFL based on exceptional and compelling circumstances).
- (c) Players on the Playing Surface must be allocated a position and will wear wristbands to represent that position. The positions and wristbands are as follows:
 - (i) two Forwards – blue wristbands;
 - (ii) two Defenders – red wristbands; and
 - (iii) one Centre – yellow wristband.
- (d) A total of eight (8) Teams will participate in the Open, representing the following Regions and Organisations:

Regions

- (i) New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory;
- (ii) Northern Territory;
- (iii) Queensland;
- (iv) South Australia;
- (v) Tasmania;
- (vi) Victoria
- (vii) Western Australia;

Organisations

- (i) Returned and Service League of Australia (RSL) Active

8. Squad Selection

- (a) To be eligible for a Team representing a state or territory, a Player must:
 - i. be registered to play in a League affiliated in that state or territory; or
 - ii. if not registered, permanently reside in that state or territory.
- (b) To be eligible for Team representing an Organisation, a Player must be a registered member of that Organisation.
- (c) Where a Team cannot meet the Team size requirements under By-Law 7(b), the relevant Team may select Players that do not meet the eligibility requirements for that Team from a pool of players nominated by the AFL. Selection under this By-Law 8(c) will be administered by the AFL in a draft format based on the ladder positions of last years' Open.
- (d) States/Territories will be required to select players from their region as the first approach to selecting their squad. State/Territories will not be eligible to nominate to obtain players from the draft if the intent is primarily to access higher quality players than what is available locally. The draft is for teams who are unable to fill their team with local players.
- (e) No Player will be allowed to play for multiple teams whilst the Open is in progress.

9. Player 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.

10. Coaches and Officials

10.1 Staffing Requirements

(a) All Teams must have appointed the following Officials on match day, unless specified otherwise. All appointed Officials must be listed on the PlayHQ team sheet:

- i. Head Coach (required to have completed All Play coaching modules);
- ii. Assistant Coach (required to have completed All Play coaching modules);
- iii. Team Manager;
- iv. First Aider/Trainer;
- v. Water Carrier x 2.

(b) The following rules apply with respect to Officials on the Playing Surface:

- i. No Coaches/Team Managers are permitted onto the Playing Surface during play;
- ii. Water Carriers are only permitted onto the Playing Surface after a goal has been scored and must exit the Playing Surface prior to a ball up to start play. Should a water carrier be on the Playing Surface when the ball is thrown up, a free kick is to be awarded against their Team.

10.2. 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.

11. AFL Open Formant

(a) The AFL shall be responsible for determining the AFL Open fixture and may amend the fixture from time to time at their absolute discretion.

- (b) Days One and Two of the Championships will be fixtured as a lightning round where game times will be managed in accordance with By-Law 15.4 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).
- (d) At the conclusion of the Lightning Round for Division 1, according to the ladder 1st and 4th will playoff in Semi Final 1 and 2nd and 3rd and 4th will playoff in Semi Final 2. The winner of each Semi Final will progress to the Division 1 Grand Final, and the losers of each Semi Final will progress to Third-Place Playoff (**FINALS**).
- (e) At the conclusion of the Lightning Round, for Division 2, according to the ladder, 5th and 8th will playoff in Semi Final 1 and 6th and 7th will playoff in Semi Final 2. The winner of each Semi Final will progress to the Division 2 Grand Final, and the losers of each Semi Final will progress to Third-Place Playoff (**FINALS**).

The Finals will include the following Matches:

- i. Division 1:
 - 1st v 2nd (Grand Final);
 - 3rd v 4th (Third-Place Playoff);
- ii. Division 2:
 - 1st v 2nd (Grand Final);
 - 3rd v 4th (Third-Place Playoff);

12. Open Points

- (a) Open Points will be awarded for all Lightning Round and Divisional Series Matches as follows:

i. Win	4 Points
ii. Draw	2 Points
iii. Loss	0 Points
iv. Forfeit To	4 Points
v. Forfeit Against	0 Points
- (b) Where two (2) or more Teams finish on the same number of Open Points at the conclusion of the Lightning Round, their ladder positions will be determined by their total points for and total points against, calculated using the AFL percentage formula.
- (c) Teams involved in a forfeit will receive the average 'for' and 'against' scored, for that round. 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.

13. Drawn Match During Finals

- (a) In the event of a drawn Match during Finals, following the siren Teams will take a five (5) minute break, before playing an additional two x five (5) minute halves (with a two (2) minute break between each) **(Extra Time)**
- (b) If the scores are tied at the end of Extra Time, play will resume two (2) minutes after the final siren and the Team that scores first will be declared the winner.

14. Awards

- (a) The following trophies and awards shall be awarded for the Open:
 - i. Premiers Cup (Perpetual) - Winner Division 1;
 - ii. Premiers Cup (Perpetual) - Winner Division 2;
 - iii. Premiers Flag - Winner Division 1;
 - iv. Premiers Flag - Winner Division 2;
 - v. Premiers Medallions - Winner Division 1;
 - vi. Premiers Medallions - Winner Division 2;
 - vii. Kevin Faulkner Medallion - Best on Ground for Division 1 Grand Final;
 - viii. Brendan Stroud Medallion - Best on Ground for Division 2 Grand Final;
 - ix. Game Ball, Best on Ground – All Finals, excluding the Grand Finals;
 - x. Best and Fairest Trophy, from each team;
 - xi. ADF Spirit of the Championships Award; and
 - xii. All Australian Team – Football Jumper and Certificate (one team and one coach across the entire championships).
- (b) The Kevin Faulkner and Brendan Stroud Medallions will be determined by the Umpires officiating the respective Division Grand Finals.
- (c) Best on Ground for all Finals Matches will be determined by the Umpires officiating the respective Finals Matches and awarded the Match football.
- (d) A Best and Fairest Trophy for each Team will be determined by each Team's coach.
- (e) The ADF Spirit of the Championships Award will be awarded by a panel of ADF, DSA & AFL members, to a player who best upholds the ADF's values.
- (f) All awards are to be judged against the AFL's values set out in Appendix 2.
- (g) The All-Australian team will comprise of the best performing Players and Coach during the Championships and will be determined by the AFL in consultation with the Head Coaches of all the teams participating in the Championships and having regard to the AFL's values set out in Appendix 2. Ten (10) Players and one (1) Coach will be selected as All Australian.
- (h) The All-Australian team should include four (4) defenders, two (2) centres and four (4) forwards.
- (i) The All-Australian team is a representative team selected from participants in the Championships. Selection in the team is the highest honour available in the AFL Disability Inclusion Pathways and represents a significant achievement.

15. Match Requirements

15.1. Wheelchair Specifications

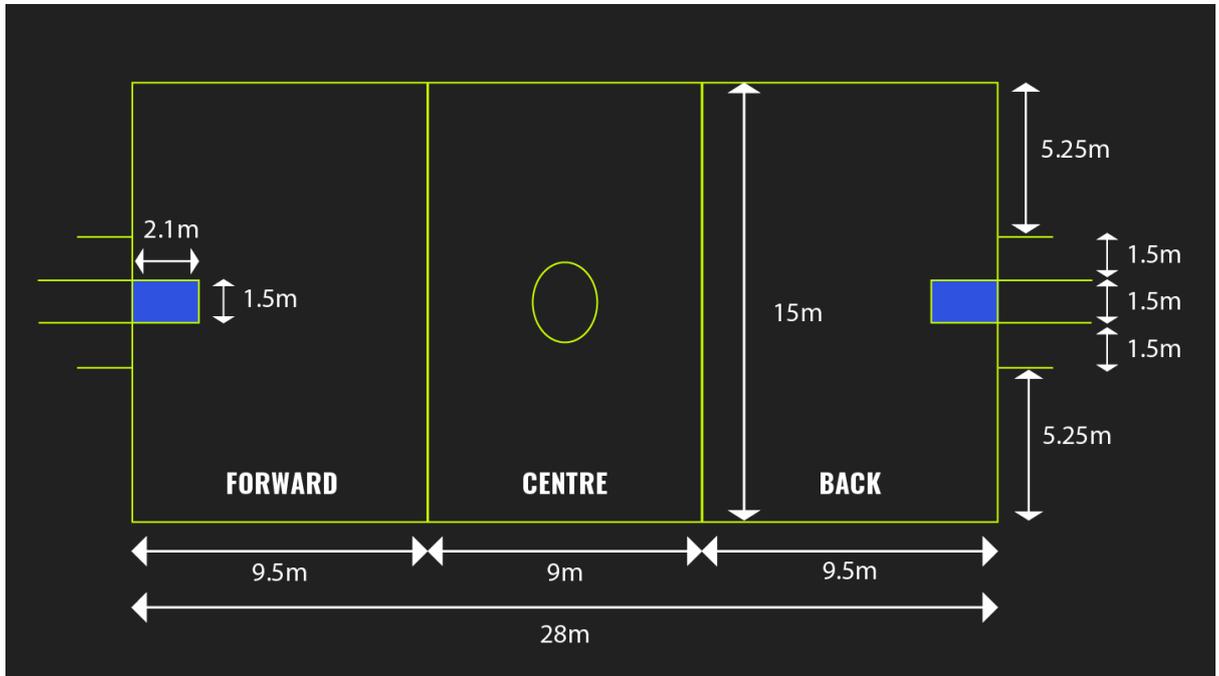
All sports wheelchairs are required to be approved by state and territory representative at team selection. All chairs will be inspected by an AFL representative before first game of play, if a wheelchair does not meet the specifications, it will not be authorised to be used for match play.

All wheelchairs used by Players in the Open must meet the following requirements:

- (a) be equipped with a seat strap and Players must wear the strap at all times while playing;
- (b) have foot bars adjusted so the feet sit behind the edge of the bar;
- (c) Have one or two anti-tip devices, utilising no more than a total of two small castors attached to either the frame or rear axle and located at the rear of the wheelchair;
- (d) have anti-tip devices which do not protrude past the line of the rear wheels and castors, which are no more than 2cm off the floor;
- (e) have a front fender bar, no more than 11cm to centre of bar off the floor;
- (f) have rear wheels which are no more than a maximum of 27 inches in diameter;
- (g) have a maximum frame height of 58cm (including the cushion);
- (h) have no protruding footplates or parts;
- (i) if it has coloured tyres, they do not mark the field;
- (j) if it has a rear bar, the rear bar must be covered with a soft material;
- (k) not be a 'rugby wheelchair' or an 'everyday wheelchair';
- (l) have all sharp or protruding parts covered with padding

15.2. Playing Surface and Player Zones

(a)



Each Match will be played on an indoor basketball/netball court, as per the specifications in the diagram:

(b) There are designated Zones (Forward, Centre and Defence) on each Playing Surface (as per the diagram above). Those Zones dictate where Players can play.

- i. Forward Players: Forward and Centre Zone
- ii. Defender Players: Centre & Back Zones
- iii. Centre: all Zones

(c) Only Forward Players can score

(d) Pursuant to clause 7(c) of these By-Laws, where a Player is not wearing a coloured wristband on each wrist which identifies their playing position, a free kick will be awarded against that Player's Team.

15.3 Football Requirements

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

15.4 Length and Timing of Matches

(a) The length of quarters/halves and breaks in the Matches will be as follows:
Lightning Round:

- (i) two (2), ten (10) minute halves
- (ii) four (4) minute half time

Finals

- (i) Four (4) x ten (10) minute quarters
 - (ii) Four (4) minute quarter and three-quarter time
 - (iii) Six (6) minute half time
- (b) Timekeepers shall sound the siren (1 blast) one (1) minute prior to and at the commencement of time for each quarter/half.
- (c) Teams are not permitted to leave the Playing Surface during any of the intervals
- (d) The only time the clock may be stopped during a Match will be as follows:
- (i) For all Matches (Lightning and Finals)
 - A. At the discretion of the Umpire when a Player falls from their wheelchair during the first three quarters or first half (for example, where a Player is taking a long time to return to their wheelchair)
 - B. For a Classification Review, conducted by the Match Manager; or
 - C. Where the Umpire determines the clock must be stopped to uphold the integrity of the Match, such as due to an injury, a delay to the game (retrieval or change of the football), to reestablish the position of the Goal and/or Point posts.
 - (ii) For Lightning Round Matches:
 - A. Where a Player falls from their wheelchair and the Umpire considers there are safety concerns (the Match Manager is to activate time off following Umpire's signal)
 - B. After a goal is scored the Match Manger is to stop the clock and restart the clock once the ball is brought back into play once the ball leaves the Field Umpires hand at the centre ball up..
 - (iii) For Finals Matches
 - A. Where a Player falls from their wheelchair and the Umpire considers there are safety concerns (the Match Manager is to activate time off following Umpire's signal)
 - B. After a goal or behind is scored in the final quarter (the clock is to be turned back on once the ball is brought back into play following a behind or once the ball leaves the Field Umpires hand at the centre ball up following a goal.) It is the responsibility of the Match Manager to activate time on and off following a behind or a goal.

Should a Team query whether the clock should be stopped, they need to approach the field umpire first, who will then consult with the score bench. Players are not to approach the score bench directly. If it is deemed the clock has been stopped prematurely or wasn't stopped at all, the field umpire has the power to adjust the time clock with the score bench before resuming play.

15.5 Umpires

For all Matches, a minimum of two Field Umpires and two Goal Umpires will be appointed by the AFL. Umpires are required to have completed the AFL's Wheelchair Umpiring Module prior to being selected to umpire at the AFL Open.

15.6 Rule Adaptations

The Open will adhere to the Laws of Australian Football, with adaptations and adjustments provided under this clause (pursuant to law 2.2(a) of the Laws of Australian Football).

15.7 Disposals

- (a) In this Competition, there is no kicking allowed, instead:
 - (i) a Handball is equivalent to a kick (if a Player does not have full mobility to complete a Handball an exception can be made following the Umpire's approval); and
 - (ii) a single-handed underarm throw is equivalent to a Handball.
- (b) When throwing the ball, a Player's arm must remain under shoulder height for the disposal to be legal.
- (c) The following actions are illegal disposals:
 - (i) A double handed pass, e.g. chest pass, rugby pass, flick pass.
 - (ii) Handing the football to another Player.
- (d) If the football is handballed by a Forward Player on the Attacking Team at the time when another Player is touching the football, the football shall be deemed to have been touched by that Player.

15.8 Scoring & Mercy Rule

- (a) A goal is scored when the football is Handballed completely over the Goal Line by one of the Attacking Team's Forward Players, without being touched by any other Player and even if the football first touches the ground.
- (b) A Behind is scored when any of the following occurs:

- (i) the football passes completely over the Behind Line;
 - (ii) the football touches or passes over the Goal Post or touches any other attachment to the goal post;
 - (iii) one of the Attacking Team's Forward Players Handballs the football over the Goal Line but before completely passing over the Goal Line, the football is touched by another Player; or
 - (iv) if a Defending Player plays on from behind the Goal Line or Behind Line and subsequently changes direction before entering the Playing Surface.
- (c) Where a football touches or passes over a behind post, the football shall be out of bounds.
- (d) Time to take a set shot at goal
- Players have fifteen (15) seconds from the time the Umpire sets the mark to have a shot at goal. Should the Player not dispose of the football in that time, play on is to be called.
- (e) **The Mercy Rule** will be activated when a team is leading by 50 points or more.
- (i) When the Mercy Rule is activated, if the leading team scores a point, the trailing team will take the kick out from the half back line. If the leading team scores a goal, the trailing team will take possession of the ball in the centre circle, not requiring a ball up to restart play.
 - (ii) If the trailing team brings the margin back under the designated amount, the Mercy Rule is deactivated, and play will revert to normal.

15.9 Arm Chop

- (a) When a Player is defending, they must not deliberately chop the arms of the opposition Player when that opposition Player is marking or passing the ball. A free kick will be given if this occurs.

15.10 Bouncing the Ball while in Possession

Pursuant to law 18.3(c) of the Laws of Australian Football, while a Player is in possession of the football they must bounce or touch the football every 15 metres. This law is amended as follows:

- (a) Players must bounce the ball after three (3) pushes/wheelchair change in direction or once every ten (10) metres, whichever comes first (there is no limit to the number of bounces a Player can take before they dispose of the ball).
- (b) Players may either:
 - (i) bounce the ball in the traditional way (bouncing or tapping ball on the ground); or
 - (ii) touch the ball on top of the wheel of their wheelchair.
- (c) A Player shall be deemed to be in possession of the football during the period when the Player disposes of the football to themselves and regains possession without the football touching the ground.

15.11 Ball Up

- (a) Each Team must have no more than one Ruck contesting any centre bounce or ball up. That Ruck must be the Centre.
- (b) Each Team may have one additional Player in the Centre Zone at the ball up. If more than one additional Player is in the Centre Zone, a free kick will be awarded against that additional Player's Team.
- (c) An Umpire may declare a ball up if they deem:
 - (i) multiple Players have the ball and the ball is not moving; or
 - (ii) a Player has wheeled on top of the football with other Players surrounding.
- (d) Aside from the opposing Rucks, no other player is permitted within two metres of the centre circle at a Centre Ball Up until the football has been touched by either Ruck or the Umpire calls 'Play On'.
- (e) A field Umpire shall award a Free Kick in a Ruck contest against a Player where the Player:
 - who is not a Ruck and contests a throw-up;
 - unduly pushes or bumps an opposition Ruck;
 - blocks an opposition Ruck;
 - makes contact with an opposition Ruck prior to the football leaving the field Umpire's hand;
 - who is a Ruck, enters their attacking half or moves outside the Centre Circle prior to the field Umpire throwing up the football; or
 - hits the football Out of Bounds On the Full from a ball up.

15.12 Rushed Behind

Law 18.11.2(a) of the Laws of Australian Football is amended to reference two (2) metres rather than nine (9) metres.

15.13 Player Falling Out of Wheelchair

When a Player falls out of their wheelchair during play:

- (a) if there is a safety concern for that Player, the Umpire will immediately suspend play;
or
- (b) if there is no safety concern, the Umpires will withhold their whistles until the particular play in progress has been completed; and
- (c) if that Player is unable to get back into their chair unassisted, the Umpire will suspend play at the next stoppage of play to allow support staff to enter the Playing Surface to assist. For clarity, no support staff are to enter the Playing Surface while the clock is running.
- (d) If a Player falls out of the chair to gain possession of the ball or by falling keeps opponents from gaining possession of the ball, the ball is awarded to the opposing team.

15.14 Tackling

- (a) A traditional tackle is prohibited in this Competition, instead Players are to 'tackle' by touching the Player in possession with one (1) or two (2) hands.
- (b) Where a Player in possession has been touched pursuant to (a), the Umpire is to yell 'tackle'.
- (c) A free kick will be awarded against any Player that grabs an opposition Player or their wheelchair.

15.15 Holding the Ball

- (a) If a Player elects to 'play on' (after receiving the ball) by rolling away from the opposition Player and is immediately tackled/touched then the Player has only one second to dispose of the ball before the umpire calls prior opportunity.
- (b) If a player has no prior opportunity when they are touched/tackled, the ball carrier must dispose of the ball within three seconds before 'holding the ball' is awarded.
- (c) In the situation where a Player is receiving the ball and is immediately touched/tackled once taking possession, but the ball carrier breaks away from the

tackler into open space, the ball carrier will only have one second to dispose of the ball before holding the ball is called. This is regardless of whether the player who applied the touch/tackle is not in close proximity to the ball carrier.

- (d) Holding the ball will also be awarded for any Player that takes the ball out of a ruck contest.

15.16 Holding the Player

- (a) A Player must not hold another Player with any part of their wheelchair or body so that the Player's movement is impeded in any direction. For clarity, pushing and pulling of the Player constitutes the same as holding.
- (b) Players from one Team cannot "double team" an opponent (i.e. sandwiching between two (2) wheelchairs), with the result of locking down the opponent's position on the field. Players who are double teaming must allow their opponent adequate space to move.

15.17 Charging/Bumping

- (a) A Player cannot charge or bump a stationary Player in a reckless manner and must avoid contact where possible when travelling at speed/with momentum. At no time can a Player bump another Player in the rear axle of their wheelchair.
- (b) A Player is not permitted to contact an opposing Player's wheelchair such that the wheelchair is made to rotate in the horizontal or vertical plane in a way that places the opposing Player's safety at risk.
- (c) A Player cannot continuously ram their opponent to gain their position on the field. Initial contact can be made without the contact being reckless, however a free kick is to be paid should a Player continuously pull their wheelchair back (forwards or backwards) and ram their opponent.

15.18 Ball Transition

The football does not need to be touched by a Player in every zone. The football can be passed from the defensive zone into the forward zone without a Player touching it in the centre zone.

15.19 Scoring Zones

- (a) Scoring can only take place within the Forward and Centre Zones (this includes from outside the Boundary Line (i.e. when there is a last touch out of bounds free kick), by the designated Forwards.

- (b) Where a Centre or Defender attempts to handpass to their Forward and it crosses either the Goal or Behind Line (whether the Forward touches it or not), no score is to be awarded. The defending team is to bring the football back into play from the goal square.
- (c) A rush behind is to be awarded where:
 - (i) the Centre or Defender is in possession of the football and the football rolls across the opposition Team's Goal Line, whilst under pressure;
 - (ii) the Defending Team ineffectively disposes of the football, causing the football to cross the opposition Team's Goal Line; and
 - (iii) the Defending Team fumbles the football across the opposition Team's Goal Line.

15.20 Movement into Zones

- (a) Where a Player accidentally moves into a Zone they are not allowed to enter and they do not impact play, that Player can immediately move out of the Zone without a free kick being awarded against them.

Note: A Player's momentum can sometimes bring them forward into a disallowed Zone but where that occurs, the Player must return to their allowed Zone to dispose of the football.

- (b) Where a Player moves into a Zone they are not allowed to enter (whether intentional or not) and impact play, a free kick is to be awarded against them.

15.21 Shepherding

- (a) A Player can shepherd a Player who has possession of the football, provided they are within two (2) meters of that Player. The shepherding Player must not bring the opposition Player to a complete stop, otherwise it will be classed as 'blocking'.
- (b) Should the shepherding Player shepherd in a reckless manner, a free kick will be awarded against the shepherding Player.
- (c) Where:
 - (i) a Player blocks an opposition Player from reaching a contest; and
 - (ii) the football is within two (2) metres of both Players;
 - (iii) a free kick will be awarded against the blocking Player.

- (d) A Player cannot prevent an opposition Player from attacking the football by blocking the path of that Player.

15.22 Unfair Advantage

The following practices are considered an unfair advantage and a free kick will be awarded against the Player with the unfair advantage if the practice is engaged:

- (a) a Player's backside rising from the seat of their wheelchair;
- (b) A Player's feet/foot not placed on the footplate behind the footbar

Players may choose to strap their feet down but this is not a requirement.

15.23 Out of Bounds

- (a) The Football will only be deemed out of bounds when the ball has completely crossed the Boundary Line. For clarity, where a Player's wheelchair crosses the Boundary Line, play will continue unless the football has also crossed the Boundary Line.
- (b) Where the football crosses the Boundary Line, the 'last touch rule' will be in effect. Should the Umpire be unable to decide who the football came off last, the Umpire will move two (2) metres in from the Boundary Line and throw the ball up.
- (c) When the football goes out of bounds, the closest Player to the football (of the relevant Team) must take the football from the sideline, with the free kick to be taken at the point where the football crossed the Boundary Line.
- (d) If a Forward was the closest Player to where the football went out of bounds within a Forward Zone, and the siren sounds, then the Forward can have a set shot on goal. However, if a Centre was the closest to where the football went out of bounds, then the quarter is finished.
- (e) Where a Player deliberately throws or handpasses the football into an opposition's wheelchair, causing the football to cross the Boundary Line, the last touch is not to be awarded, and a free kick is to be awarded against the player who completed the deliberate act.

15.24 Marking

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

- (b) If a Player takes the mark right on the Zone line and an opposition Player cannot go into that Zone, that opposition Player has the right to stand the mark, even if they are not allowed in that third. Once the football has been moved on, the opposition Player must go back to their allowed Zones.

15.25 5 Metre Penalty

- (a) A five (5) metre penalty may be applied on top of a free kick at the Umpire's discretion as per 15.25(b):
- (i) is to take the free kick; and
 - (ii) if that Player is a Forward, they are permitted to have a shot on goal.
- (b) A five (5) metre penalty may be awarded against a Player where that Player:
- (i) moved off the mark;
 - (ii) unreasonably held an opposition Player after the opposition Player marked the football or was awarded a free kick;
 - (iii) entered the Protected Area or was in the Protected Area and did not make every endeavour to immediately vacate the Protected Area, except when they were accompanying or following within two metres of their opposition Player;
 - (iv) not returned the football directly and on the full to a Player awarded a mark or free kick;
 - (v) engaged in any conduct which has delayed or impeded play; or
 - (vi) engaged in any other conduct for which a free kick would ordinarily be awarded.
- (c) When a Field Umpire imposes a five-metre penalty, the following procedure shall be invoked:
- (i) the Field Umpire shall advance the Mark by five metres in a direct line with the centre of the Goal Line of the Team awarded the five-metre penalty;
 - (ii) if the Player who received the five-metre penalty is less than five metres from the Goal Line, the Mark shall become the centre of the Goal Line;
 - (iii) if any Player from the opposing Team impedes or delays the Player with the football whilst the mark is being advanced, a second five metre penalty shall be imposed by the Field Umpire after the initial five metre advancement; and
 - (iv) the Player who is awarded the five-metre penalty may elect to play on at any stage whilst The Mark is being advanced.

- (v) If the penalty is to be taken from a Zone where the Player cannot go (for example, if the 5 metre penalty is awarded to a Defender in the Centre Zone and is advanced into the Forward Zone) the Player is to dispose of the football and immediately return to their permitted zone.

15.26 Push in the Back

- (a) A Player cannot push or bump an opposition Player in the back, which includes the back of the wheelchair. Should a Player push an opposition player in the back, a free kick is to be awarded against the offending player.

15.27 Playing on from Behind

- (a) Following the score of a point, the Player may roll out of their defensive goal square once the goal Umpire has signalled a behind. The Player playing on, doesn't need to dispose of the ball to themselves to play on, they can simply push outside of the goal square to signify they are playing on. The defender or ruck may be able to bring the ball back into play.
- (b) The Player standing the mark after a behind is scored, shall be placed two (2) metres back from the end of the goal square.

15.28 In Danger

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

15.29 Breach of Team Point Ceiling

- (a) Where a Team wishes for the opposition to be reviewed for exceeding the Team Point Ceiling
 - (i) The Team captain must notify the Umpire of the suspected breach (note, it must be the captain – no other Player may approach the Umpire with respect to this clause);
 - (ii) the umpire will then direct the Match Manager to stop the clock;
 - (iii) The Match Manager must undertake a review of the Classification of all Players on the Playing Surface, for the relevant team while the Umpire watches the Playing Surface to ensure there is no movement of Players and they all remain on the Playing Surface; and
 - (iv) The Match Manager will inform the Umpire and captains of each Team of the outcome of that review.
- (b) If, within a Match, a Team is found to have:

- (i) exceeded the Team Point Ceiling; or
- (ii) falsely accused the opposition Team of exceeding the Team Point Ceiling;
- (iii) one (1) goal (six (6) points) will be awarded to the score line of the other Team and that Team will have the benefit of starting with the ball in the centre of the Playing Surface, avoiding a ball up to commence play.

15.30 Interchange

- (a) Interchange of Players can occur at any time during the Match.
- (b) Where Players are interchanging, they must:
 - (i) enter and exit the Playing Surface from the interchange gates, which will be located in the Centre Zone; and
 - (ii) wait for the exiting Player to be completely outside the Boundary Line before the interchanging Player enters the Centre Zone
- (c) There is no limit on the number of interchanges a Team can make during a Match.

15.31 Front on Contact

- (a) Players are not allowed to make forceful front on contact with an opposition Player in a marking contest if they are not simultaneously attempting to mark or spoil the football.
- (b) Should a Player not be making a genuine attempt at the football, whilst going back with the flight of the football, a free kick against the infringing Player is to be awarded.

15.32 Illegal Advantage

- (a) A Player who does not have possession of the football may not leave the Playing Surface deliberately to gain an advantage when the football is live unless the Player may be avoiding an injury to themselves or others.
- (b) If circumstances cause the Player to leave the Playing Surface, they must return to the Playing Surface:
 - (i) at the point nearest to where they exited; and

- (ii) in a way which does not give them an advantage which they did not have while on the Playing Surface (they may also not reclaim any advantage they lost by leaving the court).
- (c) Should a Player take illegal advantage when returning to the Playing Surface, if their Team has the football, the Umpire is to pay a free kick against their Team. The free kick is to be taken wherever the football is located during the infringement, resulting in a turnover.

15.33 Protected Area

- (a) The Protected Area after a Player is awarded a mark or free kick is a corridor which extends from two metres either side of the mark and two metres behind, to two metres either side of, and two metre arc behind, the Player with the football.

15.34 Play On and Advantage

- (a) 'Play On': The football shall remain in play on every occasion when the field Umpire calls and signals 'Play On' or 'Touched Play On'. Should a Player want to play on after taking a mark, they can push off their line, and 'Play On' will be called. There is no need for the Player to touch the ball on their wheel to Play On.
- (b) The Advantage Rule: A field Umpire will call and signal 'Advantage' where a Team offended against demonstrates an intent to continue with play within a reasonable time.

15.35 Standing the Mark

When a Player is awarded a Mark or Free Kick, one Player from the opposing Team may:

- (a) stand on The Mark; or
- (b) otherwise be directed by a field Umpire.

15.36 Umpire Indirect Contact

- (a) If the football touches an Umpire or any Football Official, and in the opinion of the field Umpire it has affected a score, play will be stopped, and the Umpires will determine if the score should be recorded;
- (b) If the football touches an Umpire or any Football Official, and in the opinion of the field Umpire it has not affected a score, the field Umpire shall call 'Play On', and the football shall remain in play; and

16. Finals Eligibility

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

17. Order Off Rules

- (a) Players may be ordered from the playing field by a field Umpire for breaching the Laws of Australian Football, Policy Handbook or these By-Laws. This clause addresses the Cards that may be issued by an Umpire to a Player or Official in circumstances of certain conduct.

17.1. Yellow Card

- (a) A Player or Official shown a Yellow Card by a Field Umpire must immediately leave the Playing Surface and may return once:
 - (i) Lightning Round - seven (7) minutes; or
 - (ii) Finals - ten (10) minutes; playing time has elapsed since their removal.
- (b) Players or Officials receiving a Yellow Card may be replaced by another Player/Official at any time.
- (c) If a Player or Official commits a second Yellow Card offence, then the Umpire will show a Red Card to that Player/Official.

17.2. Red Card

- (a) A Player or Official shown a Red Card by a Field Umpire must immediately leave the Playing Surface and is not permitted to return to the Playing Surface for the remainder of the Match.
- (b) Players/Officials who have been issued a Red Card cannot be replaced for that Match.
- (c) Should a Player/Official receive two Yellow Cards or a Red Card from the Umpire, the Player/Official will receive an automatic one (1) Match suspension. The one (1) Match suspension is:
 - (i) to be served directly after the Match in which the incident occurred. However, if the Match in which the two Yellow Cards or Red Card was issued to the Player/Official is a Finals Match, the one (1) Match suspension will be served directly following the Match in which the

incident occurred or in the first Match of the Competition in the next year the Player/Official participates.

- (ii) The Tribunal can increase any suspension should they deem the matter serious enough.

17.3. White Card

Where a Field Umpire considers a Coach is abusing any Umpire or acting in an inappropriate manner, they may issue a White Card. There is a three-phase system managed by the Field Umpire/s as follows:

- (a) Phase One – White Card shown;
- (b) Phase Two – If one White Card has already been issued to that Team during that Match:
 - (i) White Card shown again;
 - (ii) free kick awarded to the opposition Team; and
 - (iii) 5m penalty awarded in favour of the opposition Team;
- (c) Phase Three – If two White Cards have already been issued to that Team during that Match:
 - (i) Red Card to be shown;
 - (ii) Head Coach put on report;
 - (iii) Head Coach to vacate the venue;
 - (iv) free kick awarded to the opposition Team; and
 - (v) 5m penalty awarded in favour of the opposition Team.

Note: The Head Coach of each team will be responsible for managing the behaviour of their Team's Coaches and other officials.

17.4. Reporting Players and Officials

Umpires and other Appointed Persons have an obligation to report to the Controlling Body any Player or Official who commits or engages in conduct which may constitute a Reportable Offence:

- (a) during a Match; or
- (b) on the day of the Match and Within the Immediate Proximity of the Arena where the Match is conducted.

Reports are to be made as per the Laws of Australian Football.

17.5. 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, an 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
 - i. The Tribunal will be made up of no less than two (2) members representing the AFL and DSA.
 - ii. The AFL may at their absolute discretion 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
 - i. Attempting to strike another person;
 - ii. Attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg;
 - iii. Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language;
 - iv. Disputing a decision of an Umpire;
 - v. Using an obscene gesture;
 - vi. Engaging in time wasting;
 - vii. Engaging in an act of staging;
 - viii. Engaging in a melee, except where the Player's sole intention is to remove a teammate from an incident;
 - ix. Wrestling another person;
 - x. Interfering with a Player going for goal;
 - xi. Intentionally shaking a goal or behind post when another Player is preparing to, or is going for goal or after the Player has scored a goal and the football is in transit;
 - xii. Wearing prohibited jewellery and equipment, improper uniform or equipment;
 - xiii. Send off from the Match (2 Yellow Cards or 1 Red Card).
- (e) Set penalty: 2 match penalty
 - i. Intentionally or carelessly striking another person;
 - ii. Intentionally or carelessly charging another person;
 - iii. Intentionally or carelessly engaging in rough conduct against an opponent which in the circumstances is unreasonable;
 - iv. Intentionally or carelessly bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front-on when that Player has their head down over the football;
 - v. Intentionally or carelessly tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg;
 - vi. Attempting to kick another person;
 - vii. Intentionally or carelessly scratching another person;
 - viii. Carelessly contacting an Umpire;
 - ix. Instigating a melee;

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

18. Uniform

- (a) All Teams playing in the Open must have the Open's logo printed on their playing uniform, on field and off-field. For branding guidelines please refer to AFL staff. Any team that does not comply with the branding guidelines may be penalised at the discretion of the Tribunal.
- (b) Water carriers are required to wear Hi-Vis blue bibs.
- (c) Players wanting to wear SKINS Compression must be black 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.
- (e) 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.
- (f) Should the jewellery not be able to be removed, the Player will be required to place tape over the top of it.

19. First Aid Requirements

- (a) The AFL will arrange a minimum of one accredited level 1 sports trainer 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. All Players must bring their own strapping tape should they require strapping prior to their Matches. Strapping tape will not be supplied.

19.1. Concussion Management

Section 19 (Concussion) of the Policy Handbook will apply to the Open. All players and officials are bound by [The Management of Sport Related Concussion in Australian Football](#).

Day of Injury Management.

The most important steps in initial management include:

- (a) Recognising that a player may have suffered a concussion or injury to their brain;
- (b) Removing the player from the match or training; and
- (c) Referring the player to a medical doctor for assessment

Any player who has suffered a concussion or is suspected of having a concussion must be medically assessed as soon as possible after the injury and must NOT be allowed to return to play in the same match or training session.

19.2. Injury Management

- (a) A Player who is removed from the playing field by a stretcher cannot return to the playing field in that Match.
- (b) 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.

20. Social Media Policy

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

21. Gender Diversity Policy

[Gender Diversity Policy](#): Community Football will apply to the Open.

Appendix 1 – Uniform Requirements



AFL OPEN

WHEELCHAIR

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 Championships – 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

