

## **2026 AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft** **Information and Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Nomination Process**

Nominations will open at 9am (AEST) on Tuesday 28 April 2026 and close at 5pm (AEST) on Thursday 21 May 2026.

Nominations are to be completed via <https://www.play.afl/draftnominations>

The AFL will notify AFL Clubs and State Bodies of players who have nominated for the MSRD.

### **Player Eligibility**

A player is eligible for the Mid-Season Rookie Draft (MSRD) if they meet one of the following:

- A player has nominated for the 2025 National Draft.
  - *A player who nominated for the most recent National Draft but was not selected during the Draft, and who committed for a further year as a 19-year-old Northern or NGA Academy player is available to all Clubs should they nominate for the MSRD.*
- A player who has previously been on the list of an AFL Club (not required to have nominated for the most recent National Draft), including as follows:
  - A Delisted player
    - A player delisted by a Club cannot be reselected in the MSRD by the same Club in the period immediately following their delisting, unless they nominated for the most recent National Draft.*
  - A Retired player and/or a player who has delisted themselves and has not been on an AFL List for one year or more. For example, Matt Crouch retired in 2025 and as such he is not able to be selected in the 2026 MSRD.
- A player who:
  - was eligible for the 2025 AFL National Draft but did not nominate;
  - is currently registered in one of the WAFL, SANFL or VFL; and
  - has played a minimum of three (3) senior State League matches in 2026 by Monday 18 May 2026.

For the avoidance of doubt, the required minimum of three (3) State League matches refers to 'senior' matches in 2026 only (not U18 or Reserves) for the following competitions:

- WAFL League matches
- SANFL League matches
- VFL matches

Please note the following matches will contribute towards the three (3) match eligibility:

- Selection for the VFL Young Guns
- Selection for WA U21 (against WA U18)
- Selection for SA U20 (against SA U18)

### **Contract Options**

Eligible players can select one of the following two Contract options:

- A short-term contract ending on 31 October 2026 (mandated \$58,000 base payment plus \$4,000 senior match payment and standard Rookie Games incentives), with \$20,000 paid to the player if in the 2027 Season they are not re-signed by their current Club, picked up as a delisted free agent, selected in the next National or Rookie Draft or selected in the next SSP (the \$20,000 is to be paid after the SSP closes, noting it will not be included in the 2027 TPP Limit).
- A longer-term contract ending on 31 October 2027, with the payments in 2026 to be as per the short-term contract mandated payments above and the Player and Club bound by the standard CBA Rookie Minimum contract terms in 2027. Players who nominate this contract length are treated as per any other player at the end of that contract (i.e. they do not receive an additional \$20,000 if they are not re-contracted or picked up by another Club at the end of the contract). Any player who nominates this contract length cannot be offered a shorter contract.

### **Nomination of Contract Terms (previously listed players only)**

A player who was previously on the list of an AFL Club may nominate their terms (if different than the above contract options) by selecting 'Yes' under Category Selection and then choosing 'Category 1' when completing the nomination form. Please note:

- Any player who nominates their contract terms must be paid these terms, which are unable to be varied for the term of this contract (notwithstanding that the Club and Player are bound by the minimum terms as set out in the CBA, including games played incentives).
- If a Player nominates their terms, they must do so for a minimum period ending 31 October 2027.

General Contracting Notes:

- For any previously listed players selected in the MSRD who were previously listed for a minimum of two years on an AFL list/s, where their base payment is at least \$12,000 higher than the Rookie minimum base payment under the CBA for the applicable season, the CBA Rookie Games incentives are not required to be included in their contract, however the Club may choose to do so if they wish. All other players selected in the MSRD must have the CBA games incentives included in their contract.
- Players cannot amend their contract option or contract terms after the final deadline for nomination.

### **First Year Player Relocation Benefits 2026**

The following benefits and entitlements, as set out in the CBA, for First Year relocated players are to be paid on a pro-rated basis at 50% as follows:

- **Player/Family Flights and Accommodation** - 5 Flights (for use of Player and/or Family) and 4 nights' accommodation (for use of family).
- **Living Allowance** - \$8,250 (plus FBT where applicable)

The following benefits and entitlements are at 100% for MSRD players, being:

- **Relocation** (100% of relocation costs of relocating the player and their belongings)

Should the player be contracted for 2 years, or recontracted for a second year, any remaining benefit from the above allowances will be rolled over to the second year (2027 season) and the player will be entitled to the remaining 50% of the Player/Family Flights/Petrol and Accommodation and Living Allowance benefits.

Players eligible for relocation benefits must have the relevant benefits included on their Standard Player Contract.

### **Non-First Year Player Relocation Benefits 2026**

Previously listed players may be provided the AFL Non-First Year Player Relocation Allowance if they are an Interstate Relocated Player or Regional Relocated Player.

- The AFL Non-First Year Player Relocation Allowance comprises the reasonable costs of relocating the Player and their belongings (based on actual costs).
- The AFL Non-First Year Player Relocation Allowance must be agreed between the Player and the relevant Club and specified in the Player's Standard Playing Contract.

### **State League Participation**

Players who are selected in the MSRD that remain in their original State will not be permitted to play against their original Club unless otherwise agreed by all parties.

Any player selected in the 2026 MSRD has the right to return to their original Club to participate in finals if their service is no longer required at their AFL Club (subject to State League approval).

### **Medicals / Player Interviews**

It is up to Clubs to determine whether they need to interview a player and/or conduct a medical assessment.

If a nominated player was medically screened as a part of the 2025 draft combine, their medical information can be available for AFL medical staff on request.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **When is the AFL Mid-Season Rookie Draft?**

The evening of Tuesday, 26 May 2026, in the week following round 11. Nominations for eligible players open at 9am (AEST) on Tuesday 28 April 2026 and close at 5pm (AEST) on Thursday 21 May 2026.

#### **Who is eligible for this draft?**

Clubs are able to recruit any footballer who nominated for the 2025 AFL National Draft, who was previously on an AFL list, or who meets the other eligibility criteria.

Any player who was delisted at the end of 2025 cannot be re-selected by the club that delisted them, unless they nominated for the most recent AFL Draft.

**What about players part of an AFL Academy?**

If an eligible 19 yr old AFL Academy member – either through the Northern Academies or through Next Generation Academies – opts to nominate for the Mid-Season Rookie Draft, they can be selected by any club. However, if they choose not to – or if they're not selected – they keep their eligibility for their respective Academy sides ahead of the end-of-season AFL Draft.

**How many picks can clubs have?**

Clubs have the option of leaving list spots available after the previous season's trade and draft period, as well as after the Pre-Season Supplemental Selection Period. They can also open further list spots throughout the first half of the season, should they suffer a long-term injury or have a player prematurely retire from the game before the end of their contract who is then made inactive for the remainder of the season.