



PLAY

# GROUND MARSHALL GUIDE

2026



# THE ROLE

The Home Club is responsible for crowd control at all official league matches through their appointed Ground Marshall.

## Ground Marshall Requirements (Minimum 1 Required):

- **Appointment:** The home/hosting club must supply at least one Ground Marshall.
- **Attire:** Must wear an **ORANGE** bib (available from AFL Queensland), club shirt, and enclosed footwear.
- **Age Requirement:** Must be at least 18 years of age.
- **Location:** Must remain outside the playing arena, patrolling crowd behaviour, except when attending incidents involving the coaches' boxes.
- **Umpire Escort Duties:** Responsible for escorting umpires on and off the field at the start, half-time, and conclusion of the match.
- **Game Timing:** Ensure games commence at the designated times in consultation with umpires.
- **Safety Checks:** Confirm a First Aid Officer and stretcher are present.
- **Point of Contact:** Serve as the main point of contact for visiting teams and umpires.
- **Code of Conduct:** Oversee compliance with the Code of Conduct on match day and report any breaches to AFL Queensland.
- **Training:** Completion of AFL Queensland Ground Marshall accreditation is recommended.

## Key Behavioural Guidelines:

Ground Marshalls should:

- Reflect the **positive** values of the Code of Conduct.
- Act in a firm yet polite manner, avoiding an overly officious approach when addressing breaches.
- Provide a proactive and supportive presence to all participants on game day.

The role of the Ground Marshall is essential to the quality management of AFL Queensland match days. Their conduct and duties contribute significantly to fostering a safe, positive, and enjoyable environment for all participants.

# QUICK LINKS

MARSH CHECKLIST



INCIDENT REPORT



EDUCATION MODULE



PLAYHQ



## SENIORS



## JUNIOR & YOUTH



# HOW TO REGISTER AS A GM

## Step 1

Register as a Ground Marshall through your Club's [PlayHQ](#).

Head to PlayHQ and search for your club

Then register as a Volunteer and select the Ground Marshall/Manager role when selecting your "main role".

### Additional Questions

AFL requests the following information:

Please select your AFL/AFLW Club of support?\*

Brisbane Lions

Which of the below best describes your 'main' role?\*

✓ Please select  
Coach Coordinator / Director  
Committee role (portfolio not listed above)  
**Ground Marshall/Manager**  
Media / Website / Communications  
PlayHQ Lead / Registrar  
President / Vice President  
Safeguarding Children / Integrity Officer  
Secretary  
Sponsorship / Fundraising / Grants  
Treasurer  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Women / Girls Coordinator  
Other (non-Committee role)

Continue →

## Step 2

Complete the Ground Marshall Education module on [Play.AFL](#).

The module takes 5-10 minutes and will entail everything the Ground Marshall needs to know.

Once complete, the Ground Marshall will be accredited.

### GROUND MARSHALL MODULE

Understand the requirements of a Ground Marshall and the roles played by individuals on a matchday.



# COACHES & ASSISTANTS

## Applies to All Age Groups

- **Registration & Accreditation:** All Coaches and Assistant Coaches must be registered and accredited in accordance with the AFL National Coaching Accreditation Policy.
- **Code of Conduct:** Coaches and Assistant Coaches must comply with the AFL Coaches Code of Conduct.
- **First Aid Compliance:** Coaches and Assistant Coaches must adhere to the decisions of the officially appointed First Aid Officer. If a First Aid Officer advises that a player requiring first aid **must not** continue playing, this decision must be respected.

## Applies to Youth Football (13s - 17s)

- **Coach's Area:** Coaches and Assistant Coaches must remain within the designated Coach's Box or designated Coach's area. Entry onto the playing surface is only permitted during authorised breaks.
- **Identification:** Coaches and Assistant Coaches must wear their official lanyard as outlined in the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures.

## Applies to Junior Football (8s - 12s)

- **On-Field Presence:** One Coach or Assistant Coach is permitted on the playing surface during play at any given time.
- **Identification:** Coaches and Assistant Coaches must wear their official lanyard as outlined in the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures.

**JUNIOR & YOUTH - 1 X COACH, 1 X ASSISTANT COACH (1 ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT IF FEMALE)  
SENIOR - 1 X COACH, 3 X ASSISTANT COACH**

# MANAGERS

## Applies to All Age Groups

- **Designated Area:** Team Managers must remain within the designated Coach's Box or Coach's Area, except when required to assist a player who has been ordered off the playing surface.
- **Registration:** Team Managers must be registered through PlayHQ and listed on the official match day team sheet.
- **Compliance:** Team Managers must adhere to the National Community Football Policy and the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures.
- **Post-Game Duties:**
  - Communicate with umpires at the end of the game to obtain the "all clear" (confirming whether any reports have been made).
  - If the "all clear" is not received, proceed to the Umpire's room to obtain the report within 10 minutes of the match's conclusion.
  - Notify all relevant parties of any report, including players, officials involved, the player's parent/guardian, and the Club President.
- **Spectator Behaviour:** Work alongside the Ground Marshall to assist in managing spectator behaviour for your club.

## Applies to Junior & Youth Football (8s - 17s)

- **Identification:** Team Managers must wear their official lanyard as outlined in the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures.

**JUNIOR & YOUTH - 1 X MANAGER**  
**SENIOR - 1 X MANAGER**

# WATER CARRIERS

## Applies to Seniors

- A maximum of four (4) names may be entered on the official match day team sheet (both printed copies and in PlayHQ).
- **Role and Responsibilities of Water Carriers:**
  - Water Carriers may only enter the playing surface when:
    - A shot for goal is taken,
    - A goal or behind is kicked, or
    - There is a break in play.
  - Water Carriers must leave the playing surface by the most direct route and remain behind the boundary line after delivering water.
  - When not delivering water, Water Carriers must stay off the playing surface and behind the boundary line.
  - Water Carriers must be of a suitable age for the age group they are supporting.
  - At no time are Water Carriers to deliver messages to players.
  - Water Carriers are not permitted to enter the coach's box during play.
- **Compliance Requirements:**
  - Water Carriers must abide by the National Community Football Policy and the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures.
- **Attire Requirements for Water Carriers:**
  - Water Carriers must wear a pink bib, along with either a club polo or club hat.

## Applies to Junior & Youth

- In case of extreme heat, Runners are permitted to carry water in Youth Competitions. Please refer to [AFL Queensland's Extreme Heat Policy](#).

**SENIOR - 4 X WATER CARRIER PERMITTED**

# RUNNERS

## Applies to All Age Groups

### • Attire Requirements:

- Youth: Team Runner **must** wear a pink bib with either a club polo shirt or club hat.
- Seniors: Team Runner **must** wear a pink shirt and shorts.

### • Role and Responsibilities:

- The Team Runner may only enter the playing surface to deliver messages from the coach.
- They **must** run directly to the player(s), deliver the message, and promptly return to the coach's box or designated area.
- At no time is the Team Runner permitted to perform the duties of a Water Carrier.

### • Compliance Requirements:

- The Team Runner must have their name included on the match day official team sheet (both printed copies and on PlayHQ).
- They must adhere to the National Community Football Policy and the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures.

**JUNIOR & YOUTH - 1 X RUNNER**

**SENIOR - 1 X RUNNER**

# WHITE CARDS

## Applies to All Age Groups

- During breaks in play (e.g., quarter-time), the Ground Marshall will meet with the umpires.
- The umpires will inform the Ground Marshall if a white card has been issued and the reason for its issuance.
- This information will then be relayed to the coach's box by the Ground Marshall.
- Ground Marshalls must be aware that their role is strictly to deliver the information and not to engage in any discussions or arguments with the coach's box about why the white card was issued.

# GOAL UMPIRES

## Applies to All Age Groups

- If a Goal Umpire is not appointed, each team must supply one (1) Goal Umpire for the match.
- **The Goal Umpire must:**
  - Be of a suitable age for the particular age group.
  - Wear a light blue bib.
  - Be supplied with goal flags and an official AFLQ scorecard.
  - Wait for the field umpire to signal "all clear" before signalling a goal or behind.
  - Record scores on the official AFLQ scorecard and confer with the opposing Goal Umpire at every break.
  - Wave the flags to the scoreboard attendant after each break to confirm concurrence with the scoreboard.
- **Behind the Goal Area:**
  - Only one (1) person is permitted behind the goal area at any time.
- **Discrepancies:**
  - If a scoring discrepancy arises, the matter must be referred to the Competition Manager. This procedure applies to all matches.
- **Compliance Requirements:**
  - The Goal Umpire's name must be entered on the official match day team sheet (both printed copies and in PlayHQ) and the official AFLQ scorecard.
  - Goal Umpires must adhere to the National Community Football Policy and the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures.

**JUNIOR & YOUTH - 1 X GOAL UMPIRE FROM EACH TEAM IF NO LEAGUE UMPIRE APPOINTED**

**SENIOR - 1 X GOAL UMPIRE FROM EACH TEAM IF NO LEAGUE UMPIRE APPOINTED**

# CLUB FIELD UMPIRE

## Applies to All Age Groups

- **Eligibility and Attire:**
  - Club Field Umpires must be of a suitable age for the particular age group.
  - Club Field Umpires must wear the designated green Club Umpire uniform.
- **Training Requirements:**
  - Club Field Umpires must complete Club Umpire training as directed by the Competition Manager before officiating their first match.
- **Role and Responsibilities:**
  - Club Field Umpires are not permitted to order players off the field but may report a player or official through the “Referral of Incident” process.
  - Club Field Umpires must complete all match day paperwork as required by the Competition Manager.

# TIMEKEEPER

## Applies to All Age Groups

- At any season-fixtured match, it is desirable that each team supplies one (1) Timekeeper.
- **Timekeepers must:**
  - Agree on the time prior to the siren being sounded.
  - Ensure the siren sounds until acknowledged by the field umpire(s).
  - Be of a suitable age.
  - Abide by the National Community Football Policy and the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures.

## Applies to Seniors

- Timekeepers must complete an official AFLQ timesheet, which must be submitted to the umpire at the conclusion of the fixture.

# RESOLVING CONFLICT

## STOP

- Asses the risk and situation as you approach
- Decide whether to send for assistance.
- Stay open minded, intending to defuse the situation.
- Don't argue, accuse or tell them to "calm down".

## LOOK

- Are they intoxicated?
- Are their expectations of the Umpire, Coach, Player or Club too high?
- Is something or someone in the vicinity exasperating the situation?
- Am I the focus of their anger?
- Has the person displayed aggression towards and individual or group?
- Is it likely that the person will physically and/or mentally harm you or others?
- Do you think that the situation is more appropriate for the police?

## LISTEN

- Receive other people's comments without interruption.
- Show empathy and use statements carefully.
- Validate and clarify.
- Be quiet.

## RESPOND

- Remain calm and keep your language short and simple.
- Use non-threatening body language and tone of voice.
- Very rarely is using the word "no" going to get you very far with the public.
- It is better to say "I need" or "we need" rather than "you must" or "you have too"
- Learn to feel comfortable with phrases such as "I can help you better if..." "I need you to help me by slowing down just a little bit..."

## In Summary:

**LISTEN** to what the problem is for them.

**STATE** what the problem is for you.

**FOCUS** on the problem, not the person.

**LOOK** for answers so everyone gets what they need.

If the situation cannot be resolved in a rational manner, report the incident.

# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT

Coaches, officials, and Ground Marshalls across Queensland are committed to putting a stop to poor game day behaviour at junior footy matches. However, they are often unsure of how to intervene and who is responsible for addressing these issues.

## Reporting Inappropriate Behaviour

Responsibility: **EVERYONE**

- Any behaviour that contravenes the National Community Football Policy or the AFL Queensland Community Competitions Rules & Procedures should be reported to the Ground Marshall.
- If you are unsure who the Ground Marshall is, report the behaviour to a club committee member for guidance.

## Approaching the Offender

Responsibility: **Ground Marshall/Committee Member**

- The Ground Marshall should be the first to approach the offender to address the situation and prevent it from escalating.

## Issuing a Warning

Responsibility: **Ground Marshall/Committee Member**

- On the first breach of the Code of Conduct, the offender may be issued a verbal warning.
- The offender should be reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct, as they may not realise their behaviour is unacceptable.

## Suspending Play

Responsibility: **Umpire**

- The umpire has the authority to suspend play and refuse to restart until appropriate action has been taken.
- They may request the removal of a person from the sideline, with play only resuming once that person has left the vicinity.

## Removing Individuals from the Field of Play or Venue

Responsibility: **Ground Marshall**

- When a red card is shown to a player, the umpire must communicate directly and immediately with the Ground Marshall.
- The player will be escorted from the vicinity for the remainder of the game by the Ground Marshall.
- Removing a spectator or parent from the venue can be more challenging due to most grounds being Council-owned and open to public access.
  - The Ground Marshall can address the disturbance by speaking with the individuals involved, requesting they calm down or relocate to another area.
  - If the disturbance continues and the individuals refuse to leave, the Police should be contacted for assistance.

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## Involving the Police

Responsibility: **Ground Marshall/Committee Member**

- If any behaviour is believed to constitute a criminal act, the Police should be notified immediately by the Ground Marshall or a Committee Member.

## Taking Disciplinary Action

Responsibility: **Club Committee/AFL Queensland**

- For repeated or serious misconduct, disciplinary action may be taken in line with the AFL Queensland State Junior Football Rules & Regulations.
- Possible actions include mediation, suspension, or expulsion.
- Serious issues may be escalated to AFL Queensland for further action.



# GROUND MARSHALL SENIORS

As a Ground Marshall, your role is vital in ensuring the smooth management of game day. Your duties include upholding the highest standards of the Code of Conduct, reflecting its positive values, and providing proactive support to all participants.

We sincerely thank you for your dedication and the important contribution you make to our great game!

## Desirable Characteristics

- Effective communication skills
- Organisational and time management skills
- Positive and enthusiastic
- Ability to deal with potential conflict in a calm and non-confrontational manner

## Time Commitment

- 1 -4 hours per week or as requested

## Duties & Responsibilities

- Introduce yourself to the umpires a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the start of the game.
- Ensure you have a nominated committee contact to report any issues before, during or after the game(s).
- Escort the umpires from their change rooms to the centre of the field prior to the start of each match.
- Escort the umpires from their assembly point on the field to their change rooms at half time.
- Escort the umpires from their change rooms to the centre of the field after the half time break.
- Escort the umpires from their assembly point on the field to their change rooms at the conclusion of the match.
- Stand with the umpires during the quarter and three-quarter time intervals and provide water as needed.
- Liaise with umpires during breaks so they can advise of any inappropriate behaviour noticed around the oval.
- Monitor the behaviour of those in the coaches boxes.
- Monitor and manage off-field behaviour, reporting any inappropriate behaviour to the nominated committee member for your club.
- Ensure alcohol is **not** consumed outside designated areas at clubs.
- Report any incidents, resolved or not, via online form (QR code provided).

MARSH CHECKLIST



INCIDENT REPORT



EDUCATION MODULE



PLAYHQ



# GROUND MARSHALL MATCHDAY CHECKLIST

## BEFORE THE GAME

- Marsh Game Day Checklist:** complete if 1st game of the day
- Field Markings:** coaches boxes and interchange marked out.
- First Aid:** confirm provider, equipment and stretcher in place.
- Coaches Box:** only Coach, Assistant Coach/s, Manager and interchange players in box, all wearing enclosed footwear.
- Scoreboard Attendant, Siren & Timekeeper:** available, understand their role and in place.
- Footwear:** every game day volunteer is in enclosed footwear.
- Umpires:** introduce yourself to Umpires 15 minutes prior to game and be prepared to escort them to the oval.
- Ground Marshall:** wear **ORANGE** GM bib and ensure games start on time.

## DURING THE GAME

- Behaviour:** monitor spectators and coaches boxes for breaches of Code of Conduct.
- Umpires:** be visible to provide assistance as needed. Escort Umpires to and from the oval for half time break and provide them with water.
- Red Cards:** escort any red carded players from the vicinity for the remainder of the game.
- First Aid:** assist if called upon by First Aid provider, coordinate emergency services if needed.

## AFTER THE GAME

- Umpires:** once 'all clear' given, escort the Umpires from the oval.
- Team sheets:** ensure you sign both copies.
- Red Cards:** escort any red carded players, along with Team Manager, to the Umpire room no later than 10 minutes after completion of game.
- GM Incident Form:** to be completed for any breaches of Code of Conduct, unreasonable behaviour or incidents that require follow up from AFLQ, forward to your Club/Competition Manager.

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