



PLAY

AFL NINES

NATIONAL POLICY HANDBOOK



PURPOSE

The National AFL Nines Policy Handbook aims to:

- 1) Make it easier for leagues, clubs, volunteers and other stakeholders to administer AFL Nines within their communities;
- 2) Provide framework for key organisational requirements in relation to delivery of AFL Nines;
- 3) Address appropriate standards of behaviour and prevention of discrimination and harassment in AFL Nines; and
- 4) Encourage the game of AFL Nines is played in a fair, and good spirited manner.

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AFL NINES COMPETITION ELIGIBILITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This AFL Nines Competition Eligibility Policy is divided into three (3) sections:

- 1) Age Eligibility
- 2) Team Eligibility
- 3) Scoring Eligibility

When implementing this policy, the AFL's registration and database system PlayHQ will be used as the single source of fact. This includes when someone selects their age and gender. The table below indicates how selections available in PlayHQ correspond to the references in gender in this policy. Participants can self-identify their gender.

PLAYHQ GENDER SELECTION	REFERENCE WITHIN THIS POLICY
Male	Men or Trans-men
Female	Women or trans-women
Non-binary	Non-binary
Different identity	Case by case dependant on how players self-describe
Prefer not to say	Players who selected 'Prefer not to say' during registration are considered within the non-binary eligibility requirements

The AFL Gender Diversity Policy (Community Football) (as amended from time to time) is adopted as part of these Regulations and its terms are deemed terms of these Regulations.

AGE ELIGIBILITY

In order to participate in an AFL Nines Competition, the Participant must:

- a. satisfy the following age requirements:

- i. in respect of an AFL Nines youth competition, be at least 12 and no older than 18 years of age as at 31 December in year of participation, and be in secondary school;
 - ii. in respect of an AFL Nines adult competition, be 15 years of age or older as at competition start date in the year of participation;
 - iii. participants who do not meet the above age eligibility criteria are ineligible to play AFL Nines in that respective competition;
- b. for the avoidance of doubt, should a participant turn 15 years of age during a competition, they may participate from that point onwards, provided they have registered on PlayHQ and paid any applicable fees.

TEAM ELIGIBILITY

The AFL is committed to inclusion and providing all people with an opportunity to participate in AFL Nines.

Youth Boys, Men's Open or Men's Masters Competitions

To participate in a Youth Boys/Men's Open/Masters competition, each team must have nine (9) players who are men, trans men, or non-binary people on the field at any one time.

Youth Girls, Women's Open or Women's Masters Competitions

To participate in a Youth Girls/Women's Open/Masters competition, each team must have nine (9) players who women, trans women or non-binary people on the field at any one time.

Mixed Youth, Mixed Open or Mixed Masters Competitions

To participate in a Mixed competition, each team must have nine (9) players, which include a minimum of three (3) players on the field at any one time who are:

- men, trans men or non-binary people; and
- women, trans women, or non-binary people.

Should a team within a Mixed competition be unable to meet the above minimum requirements, the team may be permitted by the Controlling Body to play with a reduced number of players coinciding with the number of players they are short, but always ensuring a mix of players on the field.

For example, if a team only has two players who are women or non-binary, then the team would field a maximum of eight (8) players, always including women and non-binary players on the field, with all remaining players being on the interchange.

Noting that teams who cannot field five (5) players may be required to forfeit that week's match.

SCORING ELIGIBILITY

Non-Mixed Competitions

For all competitions excluding Mixed competitions, scoring is as follows:

- Behind – one (1) point
- Goal – six (6) points

Mixed Competitions

In Mixed competitions, scoring is the same as the above with the addition of a Super Goal:

- Behind – one (1) point
- Goal – six (6) points
- Super Goal – nine (9) points (awarded for goals kicked by women and trans women players)

A 9-point super goal will be recorded for women and trans women players.

For the avoidance of doubt, goals kicked by non-binary players are recorded as six (6) points.

Please note that in some Mixed competitions, scoring rule may differ locally. For example, a competition may choose not include the nine (9) point Super Goal rule and instead award six (6) points for all goals. If you are unsure of the rules in your competition, please contact your local Competition Coordinator.



AFL NINES FORFEIT POLICY

This AFL Nines Forfeit Policy, as updated from time to time, can be accessed at play.afl/nines. Unless otherwise stated, capitalised terms in this policy have the meaning given to them in the AFL Nines Terms and Conditions of Participation, available [here](#).

POLICY OBJECTIVE

AFL Nines competitions rely on team commitment to ensure a fair and enjoyable experience for all participants.

This AFL Nines Forfeit Policy provides guidance for the Controlling Body in the event a team within a competition forfeits. The following policy applies to any team that forfeits a scheduled match within an AFL Nines competition.

For the avoidance of doubt, reference to the “Controlling Body” in this Policy includes the applicable Competition Coordinator responsible for managing and administering the relevant Competition.

FORFEIT NOTIFICATION AND FINANCIAL PENALTIES

Teams must notify the Controlling Body as early as possible if they are unable to field a team to compete in a scheduled match.

A forfeit communicated to the Controlling Body at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled match will be classified as an **“Early Forfeit”**. Early Forfeits will avoid financial penalties.

A forfeit within 24 hours of a scheduled match will be classified as a **“Late Forfeit”**. Late Forfeits may result in financial and non-financial penalties.

Further details of the different forfeit types and penalties is set out in the table in Section 3 below. Financial penalties will be determined with respect to the costs incurred for venue hire and officiator fees. Financial penalties must be paid prior to the offending team’s next scheduled match. If a forfeit payment is outstanding, the Competition Coordinator may, at their discretion:

- a) cancel the offending team’s next scheduled match; or
- b) allow the offending team’s next scheduled match to proceed but withhold competition points from the offending team.

FORFEIT PENALTIES

The table below provides details of the forfeit penalties for AFL Nines Competitions.

FORFEIT TYPE	PENALTY
Early Forfeit (24+ hrs)	Loss recorded (0 points). No financial penalty.
Late Forfeit (<24 hrs)	Loss recorded (0 points). Up to \$50 fee may apply Written warning issued.
No-show Forfeit (no notice)	Loss recorded (0 points). Up to \$75 fee may apply. Written warning issued.
Repeat Foreit	Upon three (3) forfeits, regardless of forfeit type the offending team may be removed from the competition without refund.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS WHERE FORFEITS MAY OCCUR

The match official may also determine a Late Forfeit has occurred for the following reasons:

- a team is unable to field five (5) players (minimum number to play is five (5));
- a team in a mixed division is unable to field the minimum number of players required (three (3) of the same gender), whereby playing with the reduced number of players now totals less than the minimum of five (5) required.

For the avoidance of doubt, competitions or divisions that have a scheduled BYE round are not eligible for refunds.

YOUR OPPONENT FORFEITS

If a match is forfeited against your team (i.e. your opponent cancels):

- a win is recorded (full points – 4 points);
- the Controlling Body may schedule a friendly game where possible;

- as per our refund policy, no refund is provided unless multiple forfeits prevent your team from playing a fair portion of the season (Less than 75% of the scheduled competition games).

TEAM CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

The person assigned as a Team Captain of a forfeiting team is responsible to the Controlling Body for:

- communicating forfeits in a timely manner;
- communicating forfeits with own team members; and
- completing any payment of penalties prior to the following week's match.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS WHERE FORFEITS MAY OCCUR

The Controlling Body, or representative of the Controlling Body, is responsible for:

- communicating with affected teams as soon as a forfeit is confirmed;
- contacting other teams within the competition to arrange a friendly or fill-in match for the opposing team who is affected by the forfeit;
- recording any forfeit information within competition records;
- communicating any penalties, including fees in writing to the forfeiting Team Captain;
- initiating refunds where applicable.

REFUND PROCESS

The AFL Nines refund policy in relation to forfeited matches is as follows:

- refunds are determined by the Controlling Body in accordance with the AFL Nines Terms and Conditions of Participation and this policy;
- no refunds are provided for matches where a team has forfeited;
- no refunds will be issued to a team that is removed or withdraws as a result of Repeated Forfeits;
- if a match is forfeited against your team (i.e. your opponent cancels) and the Controlling Body is unable to find a further 'friendly' match and this results in your team participating in less than 75% of the scheduled competition games, you may be eligible for a pro-rata refund;
- if a team is eligible for a refund, it will be processed through the PlayHQ refund system and returned as follows to:
 - the Team Captain who registered the team; or
 - individual players, if the competition required players to make individual payments, using their original payment method;
- if the Controlling Body deem that a team is eligible for a refund, it is up to the Team Captain to contact the Controlling Body to initiate the refund process;

- g) In considering a refund request, the AFL's Customer Service Team will obtain relevant details via the Controlling Body, Competition Coordinator and/or AFL Nines State Lead before proceeding; and
- h) refunds do not include any fees previously paid to PlayHQ upon registration of the team.

Further information regarding the refund process can be obtained by contacting our customer service team at nines@afl.com.au.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES & DISCRETION

The Controlling Body has discretion in waiving any and all fees associated with forfeit penalties, including where a forfeit occurs due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances (e.g. emergencies, weather, facility issues).

CONTROLLING BODY FORFEIT PROCESS

FORFEITS	ACTION	METHOD
First	Within 24 hours - Penalty recorded in line with penalty table - Payment request executed by Controlling Body via PlayHQ for amount displayed in penalty table - Penalty communicated to respective Team Captain	Phone and Email
	Outside 24 hours No team penalty recorded	
Second	Within 24 hours - Penalty recorded in line with penalty table - Payment request executed by Controlling Body via PlayHQ for amount displayed in penalty table - Penalty communicated to respective Team Captain, including three forfeits may mean removal from competition	Phone and Email
	Outside 24 hours - No team penalty recorded - Communication with respective Team Captain, including three forfeits may mean removal from competition	Phone and Email
Third	Within 24 hours - Controlling Body to review the reasons behind all three forfeits and make decision on if penalty should be recorded in line with penalty table - Communication with respective Team Captain	Phone and Email

	Outside 24 hours - Controlling Body to review the reasons behind all three forfeits and make decision on if penalty should be recorded in line with penalty table - Communication with respective Team Captain	Phone and Email
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AFL NINES – DISCIPLINARY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This AFL Nines Disciplinary Policy establishes the process for applying penalties by an umpire and the Controlling Body for offences arising in AFL Nines, including issuing yellow and red cards and identifying reportable offences.

CRUDE LANGUAGE AND PLAYER CONTACT

CONDUCT	OFFENCE NO.	UMPIRE ACTION
For crude language or incidental contact with an opposition player NOTE: An umpire may apply a 15m penalty in cases of a subsequent incident by a team (i.e. a different player) NOTE: For serious verbal abuse, (e.g. highly abusive, offensive or threatening language) a yellow or red card may be issued immediately.	1st	Free kick + verbal warning
	2nd	Free kick + 15m penalty
	3rd	Free kick + yellow card

YELLOW CARDS

- A player that receives a yellow card must immediately leave the field and cannot return to the field for 5 minutes of playing time (i.e. does not include any break time).
- The Team Captain will be advised of the send-off and the yellow carded player may be replaced by a substitute.
- The 5 minutes is to be tracked by the Competition Coordinator (if present), the relevant Team Captain, or the Umpire.

RED CARDS

- Two yellow cards issued to a player in one match will result in a red card being issued to the player.
- A Category 2 or Category 3 offence will result in a red card being immediately issued to a player.
- The red carded player must immediately leave the field and cannot return to the field for the remainder of the match.
- The Team Captain will be advised of the send-off and the carded player cannot be replaced by a substitute.

REPORTABLE OFFENCES

- A player who receives a red card, will also be reported for the offence(s) by the umpire or Competition Coordinator (if present). A player may also be reported and not receive a red card.
- A reported player will incur an automatic one match suspension from participation in the next AFL Nines match.
- Any reportable offence will be referred to the Controlling Body by the Umpire or Competition Coordinator (if present) by completing and submitting an *Notice of Report – AFL Nines* form.
- On receipt of a *Notice of Report – AFL Nines*, the Controlling Body is to assess the matter in accordance with “Controlling Body Assessment”.
- On review of the *Notice of Report – AFL Nines*, the Controlling Body may extend the automatic one match suspension to two or more matches having regard to the Penalty Table below and other relevant matters (see Controlling Body Assessment).
- A suspension applies only to AFL Nines. It does not carry into a Community Football competition, or vice versa.
- If the suspension is for a period that extends beyond the current AFL Nines competition, the remainder of the suspension will apply to any future AFL Nines competition for which the person registers.

COMPETITION EXCLUSION

- The Controlling Body may determine to apply a Competition exclusion to a reported person for a Category 3 offence or where the person commits a second reportable offence during the competition.
- Where a Competition exclusion is applied, a person cannot participate:
 - in any form for the remainder of the Nines competition; and
 - in any other AFL Nines competition for a three (3) month period commencing from the date of the incident.
- Where a decision is made by a Controlling Body to apply a Competition exclusion to a person, that person is to be notified of this in writing by the Controlling Body or the AFL State Nines Lead as applicable
- A decision to apply a Competition exclusion to a person is final and not subject of any appeal right other than provided by law.

PENALTY TABLE

OFFENCE TYPE	OFFENCE
Category 1 Offences • Yellow Card • Second offence – Red card & auto 1 match suspension	Disputing a decision of an Umpire
	Using abusive, insulting or obscene language towards or in relation to another person (low level)
	Engaging in careless rough conduct (e.g. accidental bump)
	Use of an obscene gesture
	Attempting to trip another person

	Carelessly making contact with an Umpire
	Engaging in time wasting
Category 2 Offences • Red Card & auto 1 match suspension • Indicative 'extended' suspension of an additional 1 or more matches • May have a Competition exclusion applied for a 2nd reportable offence	Instigating or engaging in a melee
	Pulling the hair of another person
	Wrestling another person
	Striking, kicking or kneeing another person
	Attempting to strike, kick or knee another person
	Engaging in intentional rough conduct (e.g. intentional bump, push, tackle, charge)
	Using abusive, insulting or obscene language toward another person (medium or high level)
	Using abusive, insulting or obscene language towards or in relation to an Umpire
	Intentionally tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
	Making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face or eye region of another person
	Making unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Injured Player
	Unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an Umpire
	Failing to leave the Playing Surface when directed to do so by an Umpire
Category 3 Offences • Red Card & auto 1 match suspension • Indicative 'extended' suspension of an additional 2 or more matches • May have a Competition exclusion applied	Eye-Gouging another person
	Head-butting or making intentional contact to another person using the head
	Stomping on another person
	Intentionally making contact with, or striking, an Umpire
	Attempting to Strike an Umpire
	Spitting on or at an Umpire or another person
	Behaving in threatening manner towards or in relation to an Umpire or another person
	Any other act of serious misconduct

CONTROLLING BODY ASSESSMENT

For the purpose of this Policy, a Controlling Body includes:

- the AFL;
- any State Body, league, association, club or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of matches of AFL Nines, who has determined to play such matches in accordance with AFL Nines Rules & Regulations.

The sanctions referred to in the Penalty Table are indicative only. In assessing an offence and determining a sanction, the Controlling Body may:

- consider any relevant matters including the nature of the reported person's conduct, the extent and location of contact made to another person and the impact on the other person including any injury sustained;
- seek additional information from any person involved in the match and that person is required to cooperate and comply with any such request; and refer to Appendix 1 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook ('the Handbook') for guidance.

Note: Where Appendix 1 of the Handbook used as a guide, sanctions should align to the Early Guilty Plea sanction in that Appendix, or where the offence is a Category 3 offence (which aligns to a Direct Tribunal Referral offence under the Handbook), to a minimum suspension of 3 matches.

Following completion of its assessment, the Controlling Body may:

- Uphold or overturn the reportable offence;
- Find the player guilty of a lesser or more serious offence and impose the appropriate penalty for that offence; or
- Find the player guilty of the offence but with consideration to mitigating factors impose a lighter penalty

The reported person will be notified in writing of the Controlling Body decision via a *Notice of Sanction*.

REVIEW OF DECISION

Unless otherwise determined by the Controlling Body in exceptional and compelling circumstances, a reported person who has received a suspension of three (3) or more matches for an offence, may request a review of the decision of a Controlling Body on one or both of the following grounds:

- the decision was so unreasonable that no Controlling Body acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it; or
- the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive.

For the avoidance of doubt, only the appeal grounds specified above may be relied upon in a request for review of a Controlling Body decision.

The Controlling Body may charge a fee (not exceeding \$250) for review of decision. This is to be communicated with the player/s involved upon request.

A request by a reported person for review of a determination of the Controlling Body must:

- be made in writing on the *Request for Review of Decision* form, with all required particulars to be completed;
- attach all evidence to be relied upon in support of the review ground(s); and
- be lodged with the State or Territory AFL Nine's Lead by no later than 5:00pm on the first business day following the decision.

Where an Offending Person is under the age of eighteen (18) years, the *Request for Review of Decision* is to be signed by a parent or guardian of the Person.

Legal representation in a request for review is expressly prohibited.

The State AFL Nines Lead will convene a Panel (**Review Panel**) comprising at least two (2) persons to assess and determine the request for review. No person who was involved in the Controlling Body decision may be appointed to the Review Panel. In determining whether any appeal ground relied upon has been met the Review Panel may inform itself as to any matter in such manner as it determines.

On completion of its review, the Review Panel may confirm, reverse or modify the decision of the Controlling Body based on the available and provided evidence.

The decision of the Review Panel will be notified in writing to the reported person and is final and binding and subject only to any rights of appeal provided by law.

APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS

A suspension is to apply to the next scheduled match(es) that the suspended participant's team is scheduled to play. During the period of suspension, a suspended participant is not entitled to play in any other Nines competition.

If the suspension extends beyond the current Nines competition the persons Team is participating in, the remaining matches of suspension will apply to any future Nines competition the participant registers for subject to the following.

Any such future competition the participant registers for must be one that is reasonably accessible to the participant (e.g. they can't register for one hours away just to circumvent the suspension); and

The participant must participate in that competition following the end of the suspension.

Any breach of these sanction conditions may, at the discretion of the Controlling Body, lead to the Participant's Competition exclusion from all future participation in any Nines competition





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