2026 Telstra AFL Draft Booklet

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Foreword

The Future of the Game

The Telstra AFL Draft, the Telstra AFL Pre-Season Draft and the Telstra AFL Rookie Draft are integral to the continued development of the AFL competition.

More than 4000 players have been given the opportunity to play with an AFL club since the first Draft in 1986. Some of these have turned out to be among the most influential players of their generation.

In 2016, for example, we saw the names of Hugh McCluggage (Brisbane No. 3), Shai Bolton (Richmond No. 29), Tom Stewart (Geelong No. 40) and Nick Larkey (North Melbourne No. 73) appear on AFL lists for the first time. We only hope that newcomers from the 2025 AFL Draft, including Willem Duursma (West Coast No. 1), Latrelle Pickett (Melbourne No. 12) and Blake Thredgold (North Melbourne No. 26), can reach similar heights over the next few seasons.

All players are to nominate for the Telstra AFL Draft via the AFL website online nomination process and complete the nomination form electronically. Where a nominating player has not attained the age of 18 at the date of submission, the nomination must be submitted by the player's parent or guardian. To nominate, go to play.afl/draftnominations.

All Telstra AFL Draft nominations are valid for only one year. If you have nominated previously, you will be required to renominate for the 2026 Drafts.

The 2026 Telstra AFL Draft will again include live trading of selections and bidding for Father-Son, Northern Academy and NGA Academy players.

This booklet provides general information on the Telstra AFL Drafts and an overview of the AFL Draft procedure. It is not a complete guide to the AFL Player Rules governing the Drafts. It also notes the Rookie-listing procedures. The booklet has been compiled from several AFL Player Rules. Any further interpretations required should be directed to the AFL.

Andrew Dillon, Chief Executive Officer

Key Questions

If I nominated for the Telstra AFL Draft last year, do I need to nominate again?
Yes. Nominations are valid for only one year.

I am no longer on a Primary or Rookie List of an AFL Club but want to continue playing AFL football. What do I do?
You will have to (re)nominate for the Telstra AFL Draft.

If I am selected at the Telstra AFL Draft, am I bound to the club that selects me?
Yes, for a period of 35 or 23 months, depending on where you are selected.

If my father played with an AFL club, can I automatically play with the same club?
The AFL has a bidding system for Father-Son draft selections if the father meets the criteria set out in the AFL Rules.

How do I nominate for the Telstra AFL Draft?
You must nominate online via play.afl/draftnominations. Once the form has been completed online, you will receive an email alert when the nomination has been approved by the AFL.

I live in country Western Australia and play with my local country club. Am I eligible for the Draft if I nominate?

To be eligible for the Telstra AFL Draft, you need to have been registered and played at least one game in the WAFL competition. The same applies in South Australia, where players must have played in the State League competition.

If I did not nominate for the Telstra AFL Draft, can I then nominate for the Telstra AFL Pre-Season and/or Rookie Draft?

No. Part of the eligibility criteria is that a player must have been eligible for, but not selected at, the Telstra AFL Draft. The exception is a player delisted from a Primary List who stipulates that their nomination form is to be held over for the Telstra AFL Pre-Season Draft.

Nomination Process

1. Go to play.afl/draftnominations to nominate for the Draft.
2. Complete the online Draft form.
3. Submit the form online. If the player is under 18 at submission, the player's parent or guardian must submit the nomination.
4. The AFL will review the nomination. An email alert will be sent once it has been approved.

Nomination Categories

Category 1 Players

Players, other than first-year draft choice players or such players in their second year, may nominate the football payments they require for a minimum period of two years. A Category 1 player can only be drafted by a club prepared to meet the financial terms and conditions specified in the nomination.

Category 2 Players

Players may nominate generally without specifying financial terms and conditions. A Category 2 player may be drafted and contracted on terms and conditions agreed between the player and the club.

Key Dates

Telstra AFL Draft

Milestone	Date
Exchange (Trade) Period	Monday 5 October to Wednesday 14 October 2026
List Lodgement (1)	Friday 30 October 2026
Father-Son and Academy Bidding Nominations Lodged	Friday 30 October 2026
Out-of-Contract Listed AFL Primary List Players Draft Nomination Form Lodged	Friday 30 October 2026
Draft Nomination close (for all players, including recent delisted Primary List/non-retained Rookie List players)	Wednesday 11 November 2026
AFL Draft Selection Meeting	Thursday 19 November and Friday 20 November 2026

Notes: Out-of-contract and delisted Primary List players must stipulate whether they are entering the National Draft or whether their nomination is to be held over for the Pre-Season Draft. Non-retained Rookie List players must renominate for the National Draft to remain eligible for the Pre-Season and Rookie Drafts.

Telstra AFL Pre-Season and Rookie Draft

Milestone	Date
List Lodgement (2)	Monday 23 November 2026
Northern Academy, NGA Academy and Father-Son pre-selected Rookie nominations submitted	Monday 23 November 2026
AFL Pre-Season Draft Selection Meeting	Monday 23 November 2026
AFL Rookie Draft Selection Meeting	Monday 23 November 2026
Final List Lodgement	Tuesday 24 November 2026

Telstra AFL Draft in Detail

Players Eligible to be Drafted

A player who has nominated is eligible to be drafted if the player:

1. has attained, or will attain, the age of 18 years on or before 31 December 2026;
2. is not bound to an AFL club;
3. if invited, attends the AFL Draft Combine or another AFL-approved or organised test or evaluation, unless the General Counsel accepts a reasonable explanation for non-attendance; and
4. meets at least one of the registration, competition or residency requirements below:

    - was previously registered with the AFL;
    - was registered continuously from 1 June immediately preceding the Draft and played at least one game that season in the WAFC or SANFL State League competition;
    - was registered continuously from or before 1 June immediately preceding the Draft with a recognised club or school competition in Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Queensland or the Australian Capital Territory; or
    - was a bona fide resident for a continuous period of three years preceding the Draft in a country other than Australia.

Drafted Player Bound for 35 or 23 Months

A player chosen at the AFL Draft Selection Meeting, or otherwise included on a club's Primary List, is ineligible to be included on another club's Primary List for 35 months for selections 1 to 20 and 23 months for selections 21 onwards. This does not apply where the player enters into a Contract of Service for at least one AFL season, is exchanged, or is deleted from a club's Primary List.

Minimum Contract Term for Certain Players

A club drafting a player who has not previously been drafted must offer a Contract of Service for at least two AFL seasons. A player listed for the first time who is over 23 may be offered a one-year contract.

Draft Age

The minimum Draft age is 18 years as at 31 December 2026.

Primary List and Non-Retained Rookie List Players

All Primary List and non-retained Rookie List players delisted by AFL clubs must complete and lodge a Draft nomination to be eligible for the Telstra AFL National Draft.

Nominated Football Payments

A player, other than a first-year draft choice or a second- or third-year player, may specify in the nomination form the football payments required over two years if selected.

- The nominated requirements constitute an offer to the selecting club.
- The selecting club is deemed to accept that offer.
- Immediately after the Draft Selection Meeting, the player and club execute a Contract of Service providing for those payments.

Nomination by Uncontracted Player

A player on an AFL club list who is not contracted on or before 31 October for the following year or years may nominate for the Telstra AFL National Draft.

Minimum Payments Apply

A player who nominates without specifying payments, or nominates payments below the minimum or fixed payments applying under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, is entitled to payments in accordance with that agreement.

Arbitration Process

A player who nominates without specifying required football payments is bound by AFL Rule 21 (Arbitration).

Varying Financial Terms

A player may vary nominated financial terms or withdraw the nomination by lodging a new nomination with revised terms, which revokes the earlier nomination, or by lodging a written request with the AFL General Counsel.

Exceptional and Compelling Circumstances

A selected player may apply to the Appeal Board to be released from the selecting club where exceptional and compelling circumstances make it harsh and unconscionable for the player to remain bound to that club.

Academy Players Rule

Eligible clubs must lodge a list of draft-eligible Academy players they wish to consider for their Primary or Rookie List. At the National Draft, clubs may bid for an Academy player. If the Academy club matches the bid, it forfeits one or more later selections to the required points value. If it declines, the bidding club uses its selection to secure the player.

Telstra AFL Pre-Season and Rookie Draft

Telstra AFL Pre-Season Draft

Monday 23 November 2026

Draft Nomination

Delisted Primary List players must lodge a Draft nomination via play.afl/draftnominations and stipulate if the nomination is to be held over for the Pre-Season Draft. All other players must have nominated and been eligible for the AFL Draft.

Players Eligible to be Drafted

A nominated player may be selected at the Pre-Season Draft if the player has attained, or will attain, 18 years by 31 December and:

- has been deleted from a club Primary List;
- is listed but uncontracted and has nominated for the Pre-Season Draft; or
- was eligible and available at the immediately preceding Draft Selection Meeting and was not selected.

Total Player Payments

A club may not select a player at the Pre-Season Draft unless it demonstrates to the AFL that the player's nominated football payments can be accommodated within its Total Player Payments.

Telstra AFL Rookie Draft

Monday 23 November 2026

Rookie List Eligibility

A player is eligible for a club's Rookie List only if the age requirements are met and the player:

- is an Australian citizen, resides in Australia and was nominated for but not selected at a Draft Selection Meeting;
- has not been registered or played in an Australian Football competition for three years before inclusion; or
- is an International Player.

Category B Rookies

In addition to the ordinary Rookie List maximum, each club may include up to three extra players who are:

- former International Scholarship List players at that club who have been nominated;
- for a Sydney- or Brisbane-based club, a player satisfying the applicable Rookie criteria;
- International players;
- players not registered or playing in Australian Football for three years;
- Academy players; or
- NGA players.

Age Requirement

A player must have attained, or will attain, 18 years on or before 31 December 2026.

Minimum Payments

A Rookie player is paid the payments, medical benefits, superannuation entitlements and other benefits contained in the Collective Bargaining Agreement or otherwise determined by the AFL.

New South Wales and Queensland-Based Clubs

A club based in the Sydney or Brisbane metropolitan area may include eligible players on its Rookie List between the Pre-Season Draft and the start of the Rookie Draft, provided the requirements are met.

Listing Prior to Rookie Draft

A club may include on its Rookie List:

- International players;
- players who have not been registered or played in Australian Football for three years immediately before inclusion, with written consent from the General Counsel obtained no more than 14 days before the Rookie Draft; or
- an International Scholarship player from the club who was available but not selected at the AFL Draft.

Rookie Player Not Bound

A Rookie player is not bound to a club if listed but no Contract of Service is entered into. The player may play in a competition other than the AFL and may be selected at the next AFL Draft if previously or again nominated.

Retention of Rookie List Players

A club may retain a Rookie List player for a second, third, fourth or fifth season if nominated at List Lodgement (1) and the player agrees, subject to the applicable games threshold for the fourth and fifth seasons.

Father-Son Pre-Selected Rookie Nominations

A club may include eligible Father-Son players on its Rookie List between the Pre-Season Draft and the start of the Rookie Draft, provided the requirements are met.

Academy and NGA Pre-Selected Rookies

A club may include eligible Academy and NGA players on its Rookie List between the Pre-Season Draft and the start of the Rookie Draft, provided the requirements are met.

Primary List Promotion

A club may apply to transfer Rookie List players to its Primary List on the relevant list lodgement day before the Draft or between the National Draft and the next Primary List lodgement where an uncontracted listed player was deleted.

Relocation of Interstate Player

If a club includes a first-year interstate player on its Rookie List, the club will relocate the player and pay or reimburse reasonable relocation costs.

Father-Son Rule

Father-Son Rookie Listing

Father-Son players not nominated for the bidding system may be pre-selected by that club before the Rookie Draft if they nominated for, but were not selected at, the National or Pre-Season Draft.

Victorian-Based Clubs

Provided the player has not previously been registered with an AFL club, a club may include a player on its Primary List if the player's father played 100 or more senior home-and-away or finals matches with that club.

West Australian and South Australian-Based Clubs

- West Coast Eagles: the father played 150 or more senior matches for Claremont, East Perth, West Perth or Subiaco before 1987.
- Fremantle: the father played 150 or more senior matches for South Fremantle, East Fremantle, Perth or Swan Districts before 1995.
- Adelaide: the father played 200 or more senior matches for Norwood, Glenelg, Sturt or South Adelaide before 1991.
- Port Adelaide: the father played 200 or more senior matches for Port Adelaide Magpies, Woodville, West Torrens, North Adelaide, Central District or West Adelaide before 1997.

New South Wales and Queensland-Based Clubs

- A Sydney Swans player may qualify through his father's matches for the South Melbourne Football Club.
- A Brisbane Lions player may qualify through his father's matches for the Fitzroy Football Club.

No Prior Registration

A person cannot be included on a club's Primary List under the Father-Son system if the person has ever been registered with the AFL as a player with any club.

Bidding System

A club may nominate an eligible Father-Son draftee. At the National Draft, clubs may bid for the player. If the Father-Son club matches the bid, it forfeits one or more later selections to the required points value. If it declines, the bidding club uses that selection to secure the player.

International Scholarship Program

Primary List

Subject to age requirements, a club may apply to transfer International Scholarship List players to its Primary List on the day its Primary List is lodged before the Telstra AFL Draft Selection Meeting.

Rookie List

Subject to age requirements, a club may apply to transfer International Scholarship List players to its Rookie List if the club nominates the player before advising the AFL of its Primary List and the player consents.

Player Agents

Accreditation is Mandatory

All AFL player agents who represent AFL players must be accredited through the AFL Players' Association accreditation system.

Accreditation ensures that agents:

- who negotiate a player contract with an AFL club are accredited. A player may represent himself or be represented by a parent or legal guardian, although an experienced accredited agent may assist;
- sign clients to a Standard Player Agent Agreement, providing consistent management terms and conditions;
- are knowledgeable, competent and operate ethically in players' best interests; and
- are bound by strict rules and regulations monitored by the Agents' Board.

Incoming agents must complete the compulsory three-day accreditation course held at the beginning of each year. Accreditation requirements include:

- passing the comprehensive agents' exam;
- attending course lectures relevant to player management;
- demonstrating thorough knowledge of AFL Rules and Regulations, the Standard Player Contract, the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Players Code of Conduct and Agents Regulations/Code of Conduct;
- demonstrating acceptable educational qualifications, negotiation skills and contract experience;
- passing a national criminal history check; and
- maintaining professional indemnity insurance annually.

For further information, contact Bridget Hodgetts, AFLPA Accredited Agents Manager, on (03) 8651 4300 or agents@aflplayers.com.au.

Accredited Player Agents

For an up-to-date list, visit aflplayers.com.au/accredited-agents-list/.