**AFL Scotland National League (SARFL) Rules  
Amended March 2015**

# Foreword

# These rules have been updated in line with requests made at the 2015 SARFL AGM.

Further to this, the committee would like to bring two particular points of emphasis to the attention of participants:

1. Officials are to be respected at all times. These rules, and those of AFL Europe, provide for the umpire to remove a player from the field of play for a period of time for foul and/or abusive language, and the committee encourages umpires to use this provision should they feel necessary to diffuse a situation. It is the recommendation of the committee that the player be interchanged for a period of ten minutes, or to the end of the quarter, whichever is soonest.  
   For a second offence, the player may be interchanged then excluded for the remainder of the game. It is the view of the committee that where such situations arise they should be penalised, but not (initially) at the detriment to the overall game on the day.  
   Should the participant persist to breach the laws of the game, further sanctions can and will be applied by the committee, potentially for both the participant and their club. The official may also, as set in rule 9.1, exclude a player for any period of time they see fit without interchange; that is, a team would continue with 8 players.  
   To clarify a point which has been raised during preseason games – of course participants may converse with the umpire during the game, and seek clarification on decisions or interpretations. However there is a subtle difference between seeking clarity, and questioning a decision. Where in doubt, communicate with the umpire as you would your boss at work. Likewise participants should be shown a similar level of respect in return.  
   Finally it is recommended by the committee that all umpires speak with each side pre-game, to clarify for them how the official intends to interpret the laws of the game – for example whether they are likely to err towards allowing play-on as much as possible, or to blow up quickly.
2. In recent years the AFL have emphasised a strong stance against contact below the knee or with the head and the AFL Scotland committee would express the same. In particular as amateur participants, striking the head or contact below the knee can have serious repercussions for participants being able to return to their work.  
   With this in mind whilst the act of sliding or diving at the ball is not explicitly prohibited, it is strongly recommended that caution is exercised when a group of players are in the vicinity. Any contact below the knee or head, accidental or otherwise, will be paid a free kick and the player advised against similar actions.   
   An overarching principle of AFL is that ‘the player who makes the ball his sole objective shall be given every opportunity to gain possession of the ball’ and this should not change as a result of the above.

# Match Rules & Regulations

## 1. General

**1.1** These rules are to be read in association with the Laws of Australian Football (Europe).

**1.2** The interpretation and application of these rules shall be at the discretion of the AFL Scotland Committee and for the development of the game in Scotland in mind.

**1.3** Any application of these rules can be appealed by the party or parties concerned to the Committee, upon which the Committee will discuss and respond to the relevant party through their Club Secretary or designated club point of contact.

## 2. Competition Format

**2.1** The AFL Scotland competition (branded SARFL) is to be a National League format.

**2.2** Within the national league, the teams shall play each other a minimum of once each year. The full format and number of fixtures will depend on the number of member clubs, and are to be decided upon at the annual AGM in planning for the forthcoming year.  
**2.3** Finals are to be played in a McIntyre format; where 6 or more clubs participate in the season, the top 2 clubs will play a qualifying final, with the winner progressing directly to the Grand Final. The loser will be placed into a Preliminary Final. The clubs finishing 3rd and 4th will play in an Elimination Final; the winner will progress to the Preliminary Final, the loser is eliminated. The winner of the Preliminary final will progress to the Grand Final, the loser will be eliminated.  
This format provides the winner of the Qualifying final with a bye.

Where less than 6 clubs participate in the season, the top club will receive a bye to the Grand Final, whilst the clubs finishing 2nd and 3rd in the regular season will play a single Preliminary Final to determine who progresses to the Grand Final.  
The venues for Finals matches will be arranged by the management committee, however clubs are encouraged to ‘bid’ to host these in advance of the competition.

## 3. Match Duration and Rule differences for 9-a-side league

**3.1** All AFL rules will be abided and followed by umpires as far as possible barring any of those listed below

**3.1 A)** A National League match shall consist of four quarters. Each quarter shall be 20 minutes with no time added on.

**3.1 B)** In the event of the ball going into touch via a bounce or by hand then a ball up 10yards in from the touchline will be played.

**3.1 C)** All infringements that would normally result in a 50 metre penalty under standard AFL rules will result in a 25 metre penalty.   
3.1 D) There is no requirement for a goal square to be marked on the field of play.

## 4. Number of Players per Team

**4.1** Prior to each match, the competing clubs shall fill out a team sheet and hand it to the pitch manager. Only players whose names appear on this list shall be allowed to participate in the match. The match will not commence until both teams representatives and the umpire have signed both sheets. A register of players having played matches will be created and circulated to all clubs after each game within 1 week.

**4.2** The maximum number of players allowed on a club’s team sheet is 15. For the purposes of meeting the criteria for finals qualification, a player does not need to step on the field, simply taking up a space on the team sheet is sufficient.  
**4.3** There must be a minimum of three Scottish and two non-Australian (see note below) players on the team sheet. If this is not possible the game will continue and finish, but the game will be given with a 50 point winning margin to non-offending team.

Note: A Scottish player shall be determined as meeting all of the following criteria;

a) Born in Scotland

b) Holds a current UK Passport

c) Spent the majority of his time between the ages of 10 yrs old and 16 yrs old in Scotland.

d) Has lived in Scotland for 10 years minimum

Players who meet less than all four criteria may make an application to the Committee to be considered as being Scottish for the purposes of the league. The Committee will decide and inform the individual of the outcome.

**4.4** In all games, the maximum number of players allowed on the field shall be 9.

**4.5** Only registered players are allowed to play an official league match.

## 5. Player Eligibility

**5.1** All National League players must correctly fill out and sign an AFL Scotland Registration Form, and their club must have submitted their details to the AFL Scotland secretary on the team register.

**5.2** Membership forms may be handed to the club manager on the day of their first game, providing the player’s details have already been provided to the AFL Scotland secretary on the electronic team register.

**5.3** A person must be at least 16 years old to play in an open-age AFL Scotland National League (SARFL) match.

**5.4** A player registered for a particular club may make a guest appearance for another club if that club’s opponents do not object. This is expected to be used in an emergency situation only, and the management committee may apply a restriction of two or one player per club should they deem necessary to maintain the integrity of the competition.  
**5.5** Only registered players who have been named on their club’s team sheet for at least a quarter of the club’s league matches are eligible to participate in finals.  
**5.6** Once the first competitive match of the season has taken place, and until the Grand Final, players wishing to transfer from one club to another must first obtain approval from the first club to do so. If such approval is not granted, the Committee shall step in and arbitrate the matter.   
Note that in the event of any debt supposedly owed by the player to the club, either financial or in kind, this must be documented in a way which shows the player both understood and accepted the agreement, then failed to meet it.

**5.7** The AFL Scotland National League is unable to support mixed-gender games due to current insurance restrictions. Therefore all participants in the competition should be male. All-female competitions are also sanctioned by the governing body.

## 6. Umpires and Officials

**6.1** The Committee shall attempt to provide a field umpire for all matches. While 1 umpire is adequate 2 umpires would be the preferred option.

6.2 Clubs are required, as a stipulation of league membership each year, to provide 2 umpires to the Committee who would be suitably prepared to umpire a league match to an acceptable standard. It is recommended such representatives have a minimum of 3 years experience of the sport.

**6.3** The field umpire rate is set at £30 per game, this should be paid to the umpire either via the governing body or on the day prior to the game, depending on the arrangements put in place at season start.  
**6.4** In all matches the home club must supply two (2) competent goal umpires where possible.

## 7. Match Result

**7.1** The winner of a match shall receive four (4) match points.

**7.2** In a drawn match, each club shall receive two (2) points.

**7.3** If a club is unable to field a side at the commencement of a match, then that club shall forfeit that match.

**7.4** When a match is forfeited, the non-offending club receives four (4) match points. The offending club shall receive zero (0) points and a 150 point win will be given to non-offending team

## 8. Best and Fairest Awards

**8.1** At the conclusion of each home and away match, the field umpire(s), in collaboration if there is more than one, shall award 3, 2 and 1 votes respectively to the three players who in their opinion were the fairest and best in the match. This is to be marked on the team sheets, also a tick placed in the best Scottish player

**8.2** The votes shall be counted at the end of the season. The player with the most votes in each division shall be awarded the league’s Best and Fairest Award and also best Scottish player award.

**8.3** If more than one player share the most amount of votes, then they player with the most 3 point votes shall receive award. If this is the same then both players will receive the award.

## 9. Reports and Ordering Off

**9.1** The SARFL and its member clubs are committed to ensuring foul play is treated seriously and the discretion of the umpire to make decisions is respected. As such a player may be reported - at his discretion - by the umpire for an incident of serious foul play and the umpire may also order that player off the field for the remainder of the quarter, the match, or any other specified time period. That player may not be replaced by another player. Such incidents, as set out in the Laws of Australian Football (Europe) are:

a. intentionally, recklessly or negligently making contact with or striking an Umpire;

b. attempting to make contact with or strike an Umpire;

c. using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an Umpire;

d. behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an Umpire;

e. disputing a decision of an Umpire;

f. use of an obscene gesture;

g. intentionally, recklessly or negligently:

i) kicking another person;

ii) striking another person;

iii) tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg;

iv) engaging in time wasting;

v) Charging another person;

vi) throwing or pushing another Player after that Player has taken a Mark, disposed of the football or after the football is otherwise out of play;

vii) engaging in rough conduct against an opponent which in the circumstances is unreasonable;

viii) engaging in a melee, except where a Player’s sole intention is to remove a teammate from the incident;

ix) kicking or otherwise causing the football to hit any part of a stadium roof’s structure;

x) spitting at or on another person; or

xi) bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front-on when that Player has their head down over the football.

h. attempting to kick another person;

i. attempting to strike another person;

j. attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg;

k. intentionally shaking a goal or behind post when another player is preparing to kick or is kicking for goal or after the player has kicked for goal and the football is in transit;

l. wrestling another person;

m. using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language;

n. failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by a field umpire;

**9.2** In particular a player engaging in extreme foul play - defined as striking with intent to injure – must be ordered off and reported. Such a player will miss at least one subsequent league match.

**9.3** A player can be reported without being ordered-off.

**9.4** A player who is reported twice in the same match for similar serious offences must be ordered-off for the remainder of the match.

**9.5** On the third and all subsequent occasions in the same season that a player is ordered off, that player shall be automatically suspended from the next match that he is eligible for.

**9.6** All reports must be considered by the SARFL Committee at the soonest possible opportunity.

## 10. Match Details and Venue

**10.1** The Home team shall inform the umpires and Away team no later than 6pm on the Monday of the corresponding weekend fixture of the following:

a) That Match will go ahead and they have a minimum of nine players

b) Match venue location

c) Match Start time

d) Any post match plans

**10.2** The Away team shall inform the Umpires and the Home team no later than 6pm on the Wednesday of the corresponding weekend fixture of the following:

a) That they will be attending the fixture and have a minimum of nine players

Note: Should either of the teams fail to meet these requirements, this will result in them forfeiting the match.

If a team cancels 'early enough' (e.g. no expense has been incurred) then the non-offending team has the option to agree to re-arrange the fixture if they choose, or the non-offending team can take the forfeit.   
**10.3** All clubs shall provide Home venues which provide proper changing and showering facilities for both teams. New teams to the league will be given 1 years allowance before requiring to provide the same level of facility.

## 11. League Fees and Bond

**11.1** Each Club shall pay the full amount of their League fees (as determined at AGM and confirmed within 28 days of AGM) by March 31st each year. Failure to do this will result in the following;

a) The League secretary will send a reminder to any club delinquent from payment on or by April 7th.

b) If the Club still has not paid by April 14th the case will be reviewed by the Committee and barring extenuating circumstances their fixtures will be removed from the league fixtures and they will not be considered an active club for the remainder of that season and their insurance cover rescinded.

c) Any Club that is removed from the League will be eligible to apply to rejoin at the end of that season but must meet the same criteria as any new Club applying to join the League.

**11.2** Each Club will pass a £100 bond to the League as a “Forfeit Bond”; the bond will be passed to the league by March 31st and shall be governed by the same rules as the league fees mentioned in 11.1. The bond will be held in the League’s bank account until the end of the season when it will then be transferred back to the club in whole or part depending on the following criteria being met.

The bond is to prevent Clubs from forfeiting matches which could result in other teams or umpires incurring an unnecessary expense.

a) If an away club forfeits a game but provides adequate notice the league will remove £50 from that Club’s bond and transfer it to the club they were due to play to cover any costs incurred.

b) If an away club forfeits a game and does not provide adequate notice (see Match details 10.2) as well as losing £50 from Club bond mentioned in 11.2 a, they will also be responsible for providing any additional expense incurred in the opposing teams or umpires travel provided those affected can produce receipts.

c) If a home Club forfeits a game but provides adequate notice the league will remove £50 from that Club’s bond and place into the SARFL account.

d) If a home club forfeits a game and does not provide adequate notice (see Match details 10.1) as well as losing £50 from Club bond mentioned in 11.2 c, they will also be responsible for providing any additional expense incurred in the opposing teams or umpires travel provided those affected can produce receipts.

e) Any team forfeiting more than 2 matches will be ineligible for finals and will be responsible for providing remuneration for those affected in the forfeited game provided they can provide valid receipts

## 12. Match Review

**12.1** At the end of each Match, more than 15 minutes after the final siren a Match Review will take place. The Umpires will lead the review; each of the 2 Clubs will provide at least 1 but no more than 2 participants. The review will give the umpires and each Club the opportunity to discuss;

a) Reported players and incidents

b) General player behaviour

c) Rules and Decision interpretation

d) Any business arising from the game specifically

The Review is to be conducted at the match venue and should be limited to 20 minutes maximum. Any decisions or changes that are discussed should be minuted and sent to the league secretary who will send notification to all nominated Club representatives via email. Should a change be recognised as being required the secretary will add it to the Agenda for the next Committee meeting where it will be discussed and voted on by the Committee.

These meetings could be as quick as agreeing that the game went well and there are no complaints.