

FOOTBALL RULES



Central Murray & Golden Rivers Leagues



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PART 1

CENTRAL MURRAY & GOLDEN RIVERS RULES

1. LAWS OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

All games shall be played in strict accordance with the "Laws of Australian Football" as adopted by the AFL Vic Country and modified by the League and set out in these By-Laws.

2. CONSISTENCY

Where any provision in the AFL Rules is inconsistent with any provision contain in these laws, the provision in the AFL Rules shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

3. COMMUNITY CLUB SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

To assist in achieving the objectives of the Community Club Sustainability Program, the Central Murray & Golden Rivers Leagues has adopted both the Player Point System and the Player Payment Rule as advised by AFL Victoria.

- a. The Player Point System as published by the AFL Community Club Sustainability Program sub-committee (CCSP Committee) shall be adopted by the CM & GR Leagues with the following adjustments:
- b. If a player transfers within the Central Murray or within the Golden Rivers league an additional two (2) point penalty will apply. (This does not include Development Community Player)
- c. Prior to the next season the points for each club will be circulated by the Board, on behalf of the Commission.

4. REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS AND COACHES

- a. Each club shall register with the League the given and family names of each player, with his place of residence, previous to the commencement of the first match that he plays on the appropriate AFL Vic Country or CM & GR Leagues form.
- b. Players in the Under 17.5's competition shall be under the age of 18 as at the 1st of July, in the year of play. Where a club plays a player outside the prescribed age group, premiership points in the games that player has played are to be taken away or in the event of the team having no premiership points a fine of 20 units per game in which the player participates to be imposed on the club, and the club and player dealt with as the Board sees fit.
- c. All Under 17.5's, U14.5 and U12 players shall before registration produce a registration form countersigned by one of his/her parents or guardians.
- d. Each club shall register with the League, the given and family names of each coach with his place of residence on the appropriate AFL CM form, prior to April 1st of each new season. All coaches must be accredited as per the AFL rule. If a coach continues in his role having not obtained the necessary accreditation the penalty is to be loss of match points for any matches won by the team whilst the unaccredited coach continues to coach. In the event of no match points being received the league may impose a fine of 20 units per game.

5. CLUB PENALTIES

- a. Penalties for non-compliance with the reasonable administrative expectations of the CM & GR Leagues are documented in the Club Excellence Award.
- b. Penalty for playing ineligible (and)/or unregistered players and/or omitted players:
- c. See AFL Rules and Regulations: Penalty for playing ineligible (and)/or unregistered players.

- i. A club that plays a player under a false name, shall be fined 50 units, shall lose the match and the points will be awarded to the opposition. The player will be automatically suspended for two (2) matches. Player and club have the right of appeal to the Independent Tribunal. Penalty: 50 units
- ii. A club that has a player, who is unintentionally omitted from a team sheet, shall be fined for every instance. Penalty: 5 units
- iii. Team sheets are to include any player or club official intending to take part in the game or to be seated in or near (within 3 metres) the coach's box and inside the fence. If an official/spectator is not listed on the team sheet he/she should not be sitting inside the fence near the coach's box. Coaching staff and team officials are to be sighted well back from the boundary line behind the line drawn in front of the coach's box at least 3 metres from the boundary line.
- iv. Attendance at a CM&GR Leagues meeting of football coaches, requested club officials and umpire representatives prior to the commencement of the season is compulsory.

6. MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

- a. The Board shall arrange the program of matches for the season. When a match arranged by the Board between two affiliated clubs is fixed for any given date, no other associated club shall take part in a match without first obtaining the consent of the Board.
- b. Footballs (Seniors, Reserves, Under 17.5's) Two new CM & GR Leagues branded footballs are to be provided by the home Club in each senior match. Two suitable CM & GR Leagues branded footballs in good order and condition are to be provided by the home Club for each Reserve and Under 17.5's match. In finals, CM & GR Leagues branded footballs will be provided by the League.
 - i. The Central Umpires shall where able, submit the two footballs to the captain of the away team, who shall select the ball to be used; and
 - ii. Unless the captains of each team otherwise agree, the football selected by the captain of the away team shall be the football used for the Match.
- c. Helmets – Central Murray: All 16 and under players in any grade, must wear approved protective helmets for all games. Golden Rivers: All Under 14.5 players in any grade must wear approved protective helmets for all games.
- d. Balls (U14.5 & U12) Each home team will provide footballs in good condition for matches
 - i. Mandatory size for Under 14.5's - Size 4 Leather Ball
 - ii. Mandatory size for Under 12's - Size 3 Dimple or Synthetic Ball
- e. These sizes will be supplied by the Leagues for play in the finals.
- f. The principles underpinning under 12s is to provide a fun, safe and positive experience rather than competition and winning. Consequently U12's will not play for premiership points. There will be no official ladder and individual best players or goal scorers will not be documented. During the match progress scores will not be displayed either officially or unofficially.
- g. The Under 14.5 competition is to be played for premiership points. Finals for the Season will be a Final 5 in all grades, determined by match ratio.

7. MODIFIED RULES FOR UNDER 12'S AND UNDER 14.5'S COMPETITION

- a. Bouncing Ball Under 12's: A Player may bounce the ball only once (1), before disposing of it by hand or foot and not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player. The penalty will be a free kick to the opposition player closest to the incident.

- b. Bouncing Ball Under 14.5's: A Player may bounce the ball (Central Murray = 3 x times, Golden Rivers = once) before disposing of it by hand or foot and not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player. The penalty will be a free kick to the opposition player closest to the incident.
- c. Distance penalty: A player can be awarded 25 metre advancement towards his or her goals if after a mark or free kick the umpire is of the opinion an opposing player hinders that player. This could include acts such as overstepping the mark, wasting time, and using abusive language and behaviour.
- d. Out of Bounds: When the ball goes out of bounds from a kick, a kick shall be awarded to the nearest opponent. If in doubt, ball up 10 metres in from boundary. When the ball goes out of bounds off hands or body, a ball up will occur 10 metres from the boundary.
- e. Kicking off the Ground (Under U14.5's and Under 12s): A player is not permitted to deliberately kick the ball off the ground.
- f. Staying in Position: The umpire shall send players back to their positions prior to any ball-up.
- g. Coaches: The team coach of any team in the Under 12's and Under U14.5's competitions is allowed on the playing field (in the wing area) to instruct and encourage their own players. A team runner is allowed on the ground to deliver messages but cannot stay on the ground. The team coach shall not come within 15 metres of the play. The Umpire has the power to remove the coach from the playing field if the coach is abusive to the umpire or players.
- h. Encouragement of Players: The Umpire shall encourage players to move the ball along and to knock the ball out of packs. The Umpire should consider himself more of a field coach and adviser than as an umpire.
- i. The centre square rule in Under 12's and Under U14.5's shall be observed as far as practicable during home and away matches and strictly observed during Finals.
- j. The centre line rule will be observed: The centre square rule reads – not more than 4 players of either team shall enter the centre square until the ball touches the ground in the act of bouncing or is thrown up by the umpire. A runner or trainer would be deemed to be one of the 4 players if he is in the square at the bounce of the ball
- k. During the U14.5 finals in both leagues, the coach is not allowed on the ground.
- l. Umpires are requested to apply the order off rule as it applies to:
 - i. Any player who disputes an umpire decision on the field during the match;
 - ii. Any player who uses obscene language or abuses or interferes with an umpire or an official of the League executing his duties;
 - iii. Any player who wilfully wastes time or is guilty of misconduct, said player shall be liable to disqualification or to be otherwise dealt with at the discretion of an Independent Tribunal.
- m. The Central Umpire(s) may order a player from the field for 10 minutes playing time and shall advise an appropriate club official of the length of time involved for any of the above offences.
- n. The player sent off, shall NOT be replaced by an interchange player. It shall be left to the discretion of the Umpire whether the player sent off is reported. For the second offence during a game, the player MUST be sent off for the duration of the game and MUST NOT be replaced and MUST be reported.
- o. The Central Umpire(s) are encouraged to report any breaches of the Code of Conduct by players, club officials or spectators.

8. INTERLEAGUE SENIOR FOOTBALL

- a. Central Murray and Golden Rivers has a long tradition of participating in interleague football. This level of competition is an important part of defining our identity within the football community.
- b. The Interleague Representation Policy (See Policy Framework) forms part of this Rule.
- c. Players who fail to train or make themselves unavailable for selection may face a maximum suspension of three (3) matches. This suspension will be in accordance with the Rules of Football.
- d. Clubs who fail to support interleague football or fail to support their players may face a fine of up to \$1000.
- e. Penalties are at the discretion of the Board.
- f. If a player or club wishes to dispute the decision made by the Board they can appeal the decision to the independent tribunal. If they are subsequently found guilty, the maximum penalty will be imposed along with any other penalties the Independent Tribunal may impose.

9. ORDER OFF RULE

- g. Order-off rules are to operate for all grades. Seniors, Reserves and Under 17.5's operate as per AFL Victoria Country Rule 11.0 & AFL Laws of Australian Football Rule 20.
- h. A Red card indicates the player or official is ordered off for the remainder of the match and can be replaced after 20 minutes of actual match time.
- i. A Yellow card indicates the player or official is ordered off for 15 minutes of actual match playing time and cannot be replaced within that time.
- j. It is the responsibility of the Interchange in the Central Murray or Timekeeper in the Golden Rivers to ensure that players ordered from the ground under a yellow card, remain off for fifteen minutes of actual playing time and those ordered from the ground under a red card are not replaced for 20 minutes of actual playing time.
- k. The Interchange Steward/Timekeeper must therefore:
 - i. Identify the umpire's signal (a yellow or red card), which indicates a player has been ordered off;
 - ii. Acknowledge the umpire's decision;
 - iii. Record the relevant amount of actual playing time from the moment the player crosses the interchange area in the space provided on the interchange sheets; and
 - iv. Signal the conclusion of the fifteen or twenty minute penalty
- l. The onus remains with the clubs to ensure that this procedure operates effectively.
- m. In the event of more than one player being off at any given time, the onus is on the Club to confer with the interchange stewards to determine which player is eligible to come on.
- n. Any player ordered off under a red card is not permitted to take any further part in the game.
- o. In the event a Club believes an opposition player has been replaced early, that Club must call a team count to verify the number of players on the ground and the score at that particular time. The Umpire will record the result of the count on the Umpire's Match Report. Where a Team has more than the permitted number of players on the playing surface, the following shall apply:
 - i. A field umpire shall award a Free Kick to the captain or acting captain of the opposing team, which shall be taken at the Centre Circle or where play was stopped, whichever is the greater penalty against the offending team.

- ii. A fifty (50) metre penalty shall then be imposed from the position where the Free Kick was awarded; and
- iii. The Goal Umpires shall write the current scores as at the time of the Head Count on their Score Card
- iv. The matter will be referred to the League to investigate and ultimately determine the outcome as they see fit - note that the offending team does not lose all points scored in the Match up to the time of the count on match day.

10. REPORTS RESULTING FROM MATCH REVIEW

- a. The designated authority of the Match Review Panel is documented in the MRP Charter.
- b. The Match Review Panel shall have the power to lay a report following the analysis of the official CM & GR Leagues video footage.
- c. No member of the Match Review Panel can be called as a witness, nor attend any Tribunal cases where their recommendations are being heard.
- d. Where a club wishes to tender a Club or non-official video as evidence, the Club must notify the Operations Manager no later than 9.00am on the scheduled day of the Tribunal hearing. The video must be accompanied by a signed statutory declaration confirming that the footage provided is true and correct and has not been altered in any way (excluding slow motion).

11. AGE OF UMPIRES

In general the minimum age for umpiring participants at any level is they are 13 years of age in the year they intend to umpire. The CM & GR Leagues have a responsibility to its umpires, as well as, the players who may be participating in a game where youth umpires are officiating. By establishing a minimum age limit and specific criteria for umpiring we are meeting our duty of care and OH&S obligations. It is important that youth umpires are not potentially placed in a situation where they could be involved in physical and verbal clashes between mature players.

- a. If an umpire is younger than the recommended age he or she must be assessed by the CM & GR Leagues Operations Manager and Director of Umpiring or their nominees over a two week period.
- b. Where appropriate the assessment will determine whether the youth umpire is capable of umpiring at senior or junior level.
- c. This assessment will evaluate fitness and ability to meet the demands of the specific umpiring discipline.
 - v. For Central, Goal & Boundary Umpires: The capacity to make and give decisions in a tense situation is paramount;
 - vi. For Boundary Umpires: The length and height of throw-ins is sufficient to allow the boundary umpire to quickly remove themselves from within the playing surface and avoid any potential conflict with players;
 - vii. In all cases new youth umpires will be mentored and given feedback on a weekly basis.

12. REPORTABLE INCIDENTS

- a. Umpires shall be provided by the League with two different report sheets: AFL Victoria Country Notice of Report; and the CM & GR Leagues Notice of Report - Breach of the Code of Conduct
- b. They shall enter particulars of any charge or charges they make against players, officials, spectators or Clubs. The Central Umpires are responsible for the management of the reporting process.

- c. For any on-field incidents the report shall be completed immediately after the match and submitted in the Match Day envelope. A report shall be completed and if a player of each side is reported in relation to the same charge, then each copy shall be signed by the umpire or umpires making the charge.
- d. The field umpire shall take charge of a copy of all report sheets submitted to him at the completion of a match by boundary and/or goal umpires.
- e. As soon as practical after the completion of a match in which a player or club report has been made, the field umpire shall hand a copy of every report sheet to the appropriate official of the team of which the reported player is a member. For this purpose, each club shall be responsible for the attendance of an official at the umpires' room 15 minutes after the end of each match.
- f. In the event of no official attending, the field umpire shall be deemed to have complied with the duty imposed on him/her by this Rule.
- g. Umpires shall lodge, or cause to be lodged, the remaining copy of any report sheets they have completed with the home club secretary for inclusion in the Match Day envelope.

13. AREA PERMITS

- a. All regulations that apply to clearances as embodied in the Constitution of AFL Victoria Country shall apply to the CM & GR Leagues.
- b. All applications for permits shall be in writing on prescribed forms and shall furnish such particulars as required on League permit forms, and the player desiring a permit shall, if so desired, appear before the Operations Manager and furnish legal documents, such as birth certificates as the Operation Manager so demands.
- c. Any local area agreements are negotiated annually and clubs will be notified prior to the commencement of any season of these agreements and their conditions.

14. MATCH DAY PROCEDURE

- a. Team lists must be lodged on the AFL Footyweb-Fox Sports Pulse database by 8pm each Friday prior to each match.
- b. Team sheets are to include all players and their allocated numbers, all club officials intending to take part in the game.
- c. A completed team shall be handed to the field umpire 30 minutes before the commencement of the match in the home and away season, 1 hour before the commencement of the match in the finals season.
- d. Team Sheets are to be signed by the Secretary, Team Manager or Team Captain of each team.
- e. Club personnel, parents or spectators not listed on the team sheet are not permitted to sit inside the fence near the coach's box. PENALTY: 5 units

15. TIME OF STARTING ALL MATCHES

Clubs that are unable to meet the scheduled match times will be penalized according to the Club Excellence Award scheme.

- a. Timekeepers at the completion of the previous match shall sound the bell, siren or gong. All teams are to be on ground at the first siren of the new game, ready to start at the commencement time.

- b. All matches shall be four quarters. The controlling body may in an emergency reduce such time. Lengths of quarters, changeover times and warm up periods are listed in the Appendices.
- c. During the time allowed between the first and the second quarter's coaches, trainers, selection committee and runner shall be permitted to enter the playing arena.
- d. At half time the senior players and umpires may exit the ground, all others remain on the ground but the game MUST recommence not later than the designated time after the end of the second quarter; the time keepers to notify the field umpire by sounding the bell, siren or gong when that time has elapsed. The time between the third and fourth quarter's coaches, trainers, selection committee and runner shall be permitted to enter the playing area.

16. LATE STARTS (HOME AND AWAY MATCHES)

- a. Any Under 17.5's or Reserve grade match starting more than five minutes later than the starting time, timekeepers shall deduct evenly from the last two quarters that amount of time which will allow the following match to commence at the appointed time.
- b. If either club is not ready to commence the match within thirty minutes of each appointed time, the match shall be awarded to the opposing side, unless in each instance a satisfactory reason for the delay is given to the Board, which shall have the power to order that the match be played on a subsequent day or otherwise to finally decide the matter.
- c. If the umpire is late entering the arena, the teams should be on the ground at the same time as the umpire. Timekeepers should record on the time cards, the following times: warning siren time, team enters the arena and match commences,

17. DRAWS IN THE FINALS – ALL GRADES

Where the result is tied at the end of the fourth quarter in a finals match the following will occur:

- i. After a break of 5 minutes, extra time consisting of two 5-minute halves with time on will be played until a result is achieved;
- ii. No break is to be taken between halves nor is any coaching to be made;
- iii. Teams will continue to kick in the same direction as they did in the fourth quarter in the first five-minute extra half and then change direction for the second five minute half;
- iv. This method will continue until a result is achieved.

18. TEAM OFFICIALS

a. UMPIRE ESCORTS/INTERCHANGE STEWARDS

In line with AFL Vic Country policy all CM & GR Leagues clubs will provide umpire escorts by expanding the current duties of Interchange Stewards to include responsibility for completion of the following for each match:

- i. All clubs are required to provide an adult umpire escort for all matches their club is involved in during a season. The Umpire escort must wear the league approved identification, which identify the Club of each official. The Umpire escort shall be required to escort and assist the umpires at all breaks in play to ensure that any incidents are controlled in a reasonable manner.
- ii. As well Clubs are to ensure that:
 - The official is listed on the team sheet;
 - The official is to remain neutral whilst performing this role. This translates to non-barracking during the game, or calling out from the interchange position;
 - The official is able to assist the umpires if an incident arises;

- The official introduces himself to the umpires at the rooms prior to the game OR once he has obtained the vest from the official from the previous game, speaks to the umpires during the pre-game warm up;
- The official accompanies the umpires on and off the ground and stands with the umpires at all scheduled breaks in play;
- The official moves quickly to the umpires at the end of each quarter;
- The official does not give comment on the umpires' performance; nor seeks clarification on rule interpretations or specific incidents occurring during the match;
- The official in the event of an incident involving the umpires, remains with the umpires and ensure their safe departure from the ground;
- The official notes any issues which the umpires might want addressed by a club and passes it on to the Club president or secretary;
- Breaches of this by-law will be referred to the Operations Manager for Investigation with any penalties to be determined by the independent tribunal.

b. RUNNERS

For all grades of football, clubs are permitted a maximum of two (2) runners. Their role is to pass on instructions from the coach(s).

i. Eligibility to act as runner

- A person who is not a registered player or an official of any club, other than his home club, nor who is under disqualification or suspension by his home club or League, shall act as an official runner in any competition match;
- All runners shall be minimum 16 years of age;
- All runners over 18 years of age shall have a Working-with-Children Check and details shall be recorded in the club WWCC Register prior to the start of the match;
- No coach or assistant coach of a CM & GR Leagues open age team shall act as a runner in a match in which a team of his club is participating;
- No coach or assistant coach of a CM & GR Leagues team shall act as a runner, trainer or water carrier in a match in which the team that he coaches is participating.

ii. Duties of Runners

- Team runner (s) shall not have affixed to his or her person any communication device, which includes but is not limited to headsets, microphones or earpieces;
- Where two (2) club runners are used, runners shall enter and exit the playing arena via the interchange area. Only one runner from each club is permitted on the playing surface at any given time. Failure to adhere to these restrictions prohibits the offending runner from entering the playing surface for the remainder of the game. Should a club use one (1) runner only, the runner may enter and exit the playing area from any point of the ground;
- The sole duty of the runner shall be to confer with the player or players of his/her club and to immediately leave the playing arena.

iii. Runners' uniforms

All runners are to wear CM & GR Leagues approved uniforms. Runner tops must carry the club name and the word "Runner". Where a Club uses two Runners in the Senior, Reserves or Under 17.5's grade the uniforms must be numbered to distinguish the runners. Runners Uniforms are to be the

same colour matching shorts and tops. Uniforms for additional runners in the two (2) runner system will be at the expense of the club. Failure to wear the correct uniform will incur a penalty of 10 units.

c. WATER CARRIERS

- i. A maximum of eight (8) water-carriers is permitted in any game;
- ii. The minimum age for water carriers is they must be 12 in the year they officiate;
- iii. No coach or assistant coach of a CM & GR Leagues team shall act as a water carrier in any CM & GR Leagues match;
- iv. Water-carriers are to wear the CM & GR Leagues approved uniforms and be correctly numbered and identified with their team affiliation. Black or blue shorts or tracksuit pants will accompany the shirts. Failure to wear the correct uniform will incur a penalty of 5 units;
- v. Water-carriers may enter the arena at any time during the match or intervals but only to provide water to players and umpires and for no other purpose whatsoever and to immediately leave the playing arena once the drink has been delivered;
- vi. Water carriers are not permitted to operate constantly from the Coaches box area but must be around the boundary area against the fence while not delivering water.

d. TRAINERS

- i. Each Club must have a minimum of one approved sports trainer present during the full course of each match in which a team is fielded by the Club;
- ii. An approved sports trainer must be registered as such with the CM & GR Leagues. No approval shall be given unless the person seeking it is :- Qualified as a Level 1 Accredited Trainer of Sports Medicine Australia; or Qualified by a Sports Medicine Centre authorised by Sports Medicine Australia;
- iii. All trainers shall be minimum 16 years of age;
- iv. The duty of a Trainer is to render medical assistance and convey water as required;
- v. No team shall be permitted to have more than a combined total of 8 trainers and water carriers;
- vi. No sports trainer shall enter the playing arena unless:
 - The sports trainer is dressed in the CM & GR Leagues approved uniform and in white/black trousers, dress or overalls;
 - The sports trainer is required for medical treatment of an injured player, the replacement of damaged attire of a player or other like purpose or the first or third quarter intervals are in progress;
 - No sports trainer shall communicate provoke or in any way interfere with the umpire or any player from the opposing Club during any match.
- vii. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prevent a trainer attending to assist an injured person

e. TEAM MANAGERS

- i. All team managers shall be registered with AFL Victoria Country;
- ii. Team managers are required to have a Working-with-Children Check and details shall be recorded in the club WWCC Register prior to the start of the season. PENALTY: 10 units.

f. CLUB UMPIRES

- i. All club umpires shall be registered with AFL Victoria Country;
- ii. A club boundary umpire shall be minimum 12 years of age;
- iii. A club goal umpire shall be minimum 16 years of age;
- iv. A club central umpire shall be minimum 18 years of age;

- v. Clubs shall supply umpires when requested to do so by the Operations Manager or Umpire Manager;
- vi. Club umpires shall be paid at the discretion of the club;
- vii. Club umpires over the age of 18 years shall have a Working-with-Children Check and details shall be recorded in the club WWCC Register prior to the start of the season;
- viii. Club Central, Boundary and Goal umpires shall wear League approved apparel as uniform;
- ix. All club central umpires umpiring senior football matches shall have completed, as a minimum standard, AFL Umpire Introductory Course accreditation or have written permission from the Central Rivers Umpire Manager. PENALTY: 10 units

PART 2

CENTRAL MURRAY

19. INTERCHANGE STEWARDS FOR UNDER 17.5'S, RESERVES AND SENIORS

- a. The role of the Interchange Stewards/Umpire Escorts is documented in the appendices. The expectation is that clubs familiarize their Interchange Stewards with their role.
- b. The Interchange Forms provided by the CM & GR Leagues will be correctly followed and completed by an Interchange Steward from each club.
- c. At the start of every quarter each club's interchange players are to be noted on the Interchange sheet. Where no interchange players are available this is to be noted.
- d. Interchange stewards are required to sign both completed sheets at the conclusion of each match. (Two signatures on each sheet)

20. STRUCTURE OF TEAMS (RESERVES, UNDER 17.5'S, U14.5 & U12)

- a. Teams must adhere to the **Equalization Policy**.
- b. Under 12's and Under 14.5's shall consist of 18 players on the field, unless by mutual agreement this number can be expanded to a maximum of 22. (This is to cater for surplus players and some larger grounds)
- c. Players for *Under U14.5's* must be under the age of 15 on the first day of July in the year of play.
- d. Players for *Under 12* must be under the age of 12 on the first day of January in the year of play. Players must be over the age of 9 on the first day of January in the year of play, unless a team has insufficient numbers, in which case players over the age of 8 on the first day of January in the year of play, may play to make the number of players up to 22 once the Club has sought permission from the League and nominated the underage players.
- e. If a team in the Seniors, Reserves, Under 17.5's or U14.5's does not have 12 registered players available to play, that team must forfeit the game. The teams can then agree to share players to play a match, but the score will not be recorded.

21. MERCY RULE

- a. Mercy Rule (U12's and U14.5's): Junior players lose interest in football when the margin between two teams on any one day is excessive.
 - i. When the score differential between teams equals or exceeds 60 points prior to three-quarter time the Goal Umpires will inform the Field Umpire;
 - ii. The field umpire will signal the end of the game to the timekeepers who will blow the siren twice to signal the end of the game;
 - iii. The Field Umpire will instruct the Goal Umpires & scoreboard attendants to cease further scoring for the remainder of the match;
 - iv. The opposing coaches will have three minutes to even up the sides to the best of their ability, for the betterment of all players from both sides.
- b. When the Mercy Rule is applied, the match shall continue for the remainder of the allocated time of play. The scoring and recording of goal kickers will cease and the field umpires are to decide their best players irrespective of any team changes.
- c. The official recorded result for the match shall be:
 - i. Losing team - the score of losing team, at time the Mercy Rule was applied;

- ii. Winning Team - the score of the losing team, at the time the Mercy Rule was applied, plus 60 points.
- d. When the mercy rule is invoked, both coaches MUST then do their best to mix the teams in a sportsmanlike manner to ensure an even contest. If this is not done, at the discretion of the CM & GR Leagues Board;
 - i. The premiership points may be forfeited; and/or
 - ii. The club fined; and/or
 - iii. The coaches brought before the Independent Tribunal and charged with a breach of the Code of Conduct.

22. MATCHES – SEASON - FORFEITS

- a. The football season shall commence and terminate respectively on such dates in each year as the Board may determine.
- b. Each club shall prior to the commencement of each season register its playing ground.
- c. Should any club on any of the days appointed for the playing of a match (except where such match has been cancelled prior to the date appointed for the match, by written consent of the secretaries of the competing clubs and the Operations Manager) fail to put in an appearance for the purpose of playing the match, such Club shall lose the match and it shall count as a win to the other side. The other side will receive percentage under AFL Country Victoria regulations.
- d. In the event of a forfeit occurring before Friday 6pm prior to the scheduled match, the club forfeiting the match must notify the Operations Manager. Failure to do so will result in a 20-unit penalty.
- e. In the event of a forfeit occurring the forfeiting club should by the following Wednesday after the scheduled match, list the reasons in writing for such a forfeit to the Board. Failure to do so shall result in a 20-unit penalty.
- f. The Board may deal with a club in the event of a forfeit as it thinks fit and may fine the club up to 50 units for failure to meet its commitments.
- g. In the event of severe inclement weather, the captains of the competing teams shall decide the fitness of the ground. In the event of their being unable to agree the field umpire/umpires shall decide.
- h. Should a match be commenced, such a match must not be stopped except on the account of inclement weather and in exceptional circumstances and by the consent of both captains, but in the event of the captains disagreeing, the field umpire shall be constituted the sole referee.
- i. Should any match be stopped or not commenced on account of inclement weather or exceptional circumstances, the game may be played on a date fixed by the Board.
- j. A list of the names of players, in alphabetical order, their allotted numbers and their points and other required officials shall be handed to the field umpire before the commencement of the match, such list should be signed by the Team Manager or Secretary or Captain of the competing team. Clubs must also provide opposing teams with a copy at least 10 minutes prior to the stipulated starting time.

23. PREMIERSHIP CONDITIONS

- a. The Home and away competition shall consist of a fixture of matches as created by the Board. The proposed fixture and the draw will be made available to clubs by the AGM of the preceding season.

- b. In all matches four points shall be counted for a win, and two points to each team for a draw. There shall be NO points allocated for a bye.
- c. The finals shall be played as follows: A final five system will operate. The Elimination final will be contested between the fourth and fifth teams. The Qualifying final is played between the second and third teams. The First Semi-final will be played between the winner of the Elimination final and the loser of the Qualifying final. The Second Semi-final will be played between the winner of the Qualifying Final and the team finishing on top of the Premiership ladder after the conclusion of home and away matches. The Preliminary final is played between the winner of the first semi-final and the loser of the second semi-final. The grand final will be played between the winner of the second semi-final and the winner of the preliminary final.
- d. The Board shall have complete charge, and control all arrangements at all grounds venues on which matches between affiliated clubs are played throughout the season.
- e. The monies paid at the gate for entry to home and away games shall be the property of the home club.
- f. The Board shall determine each year by the February Board meeting the levy to be paid by each club to meet the budgeted expenses of the League.
- g. The gate takings from the finals shall be collected by the Leagues and all expenses paid by the Leagues.
- h. Allocation of finals is the prerogative of the Board. An equitable rotation system has been implemented so that each club has the opportunity to host a minor final at their home ground. This rotation system is explained on the Leagues' website. The Board shall call for expressions of interest for the hosting of a particular final or Grand Final but reserves the right to determine the final allocations. All venues on which finals matches are played come under the control of the Board as from the final home and away games and all senior clubs in the finals shall have equal rights to the use of the ground at least one night per week by application to the Board.
- i. There shall be up to 4 interchange players in the Senior and Reserve, competitions making a total of 22 players on the team sheet. (This assumes that 18 players have taken the field) Where the Equalization Policy has been applied the team can field as many interchange players, as is needed, to complete the total of 22 players on the team sheet.
- j. In the Under 17.5's competition up to 7 interchange players, as is needed, to complete the total of 25 players on the team sheet can be used. If a team wishes to promote an U14 or U12 player, then only 18 players and 4 interchange players to complete the 22 are allowed.

24. FINALS ELIGIBILITY

- a. A player to be eligible to play for their club in any final must have played of least (4) four home and away games in the same season for their club;
- b. Reserves: To play in any Reserve Grade Final a player must have played at least four (4) home and away games in the Reserves, in that season;
- c. Reserves: Any player who plays more than 10 home and away games for their senior team shall not be eligible to play in any finals game with their Reserve team, unless the senior and reserve teams are playing on the same day or in the same final;
- d. Definition of playing in a game: A player must be in attendance, in playing attire to take the field and be on the field in the club's designated interchange area for the duration of the match;

- e. TAC Cup: For the purpose of Finals qualification and player eligibility, the TAC Cup under 18 competition shall be considered the equal of AFLVIC (CM & GR Leagues) senior competition and TAC Cup Under 18 matches shall be considered matches of the players senior AFLVIC (CM & GR Leagues) team for the purpose of eligibility to play in AFLVIC finals as per AFLVIC regulations, e.g. Fred Smith plays three (3) TAC Cup Under 18 matches in the current season and one CM & GR Leagues match for his club, and then he is eligible for CM & GR Leagues finals as per CM & GR Leagues Rules.
- f. Playing more than one game on the weekend:
 - i. If a player plays in an AFL/VFL/TAC game and a Central Murray game on the same weekend, the Central Murray game does not count for finals eligibility purposes;
 - ii. For the purposes of finals eligibility, if a player plays in two or more matches for his club on the same week-end (or round) the higher level game will only be counted toward eligibility;
 - iii. During the finals players may participate in more than one game on the same day.
- g. Protests: In the event of a protest under this rule, the onus of proof shall be upon the player or club protesting.
- h. Fines: A club playing an ineligible player in a finals game will forfeit the match in the event of it scoring more points than the opposing team. In addition to the sanctions imposed by the Board, the Club will be subject to a fine of up to 50 units.

25. PROTESTS

- a. All clubs preferring protests, complaints, charges or disputes in connection with any League match shall forward particulars of the matter to the Operations Manager no later than twelve noon on Tuesday following the match in respect of which such protest, complaint; charge or dispute is preferred, together with a fee of \$500. Such fee is to be returned if the protest, charge or dispute is considered not to have been frivolous.
- b. The Operations Manager shall immediately on such protest, complaint, charge or dispute being lodged, will notify the Secretary of the protested club, who shall furnish a reply within 72 hours of receipt of such notice by him or will notify the Investigation Officer who will inform both clubs of the investigation procedures. The Operations Manager shall thereupon after consultation with the Chairman of the Board, proceed to call a special meeting of the Board to deal with the protest, charge or dispute or call on the League's Investigation Officer to investigate the matter. Upon receipt of the Investigation Officer's report within 21 days, the Board will determine how the matter shall be dealt with.
- c. If any club, knowing that any player of an opposing club is ineligible to play, does not prior to the match notify the captain of the club with which such player intends to play, of the fact, a protest by such first mentioned club in respect of such player will not be entertained by the League.
- d. Any player knowing that he is ineligible to play, and who does not notify the captain of his own club shall be liable to disqualification or otherwise as the Board or Tribunal may think fit.
- e. Clubs preferring complaints against players, officials and umpires under the AFL VC Rule for Unbecoming Conduct must follow the prescribed procedures as laid down in the relevant AFL VC Handbook.

26. GENERAL FIELD PENALTIES

- a. On field Penalties for off field offences: A free kick is to be awarded against a player, official and/or spectators in proximity of a coach's box who uses abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards an umpire.

- b. In all finals matches set penalties for reportable offences will be doubled. That is, if the Operations Manager accepts the club's submission for a set penalty, this penalty will be twice the penalty applied in the home and away games.

27. BEST & FAIREST AWARD

- a. Any player found guilty by the Independent tribunal on any charge shall be ineligible for the award of Central Murray League's Best & Fairest during the current season, except where the charge related to time wasting.
- b. In the event of a tie in the best and fairest voting in any section, two or more awards shall be made. Where the highest vote getter has been ruled ineligible, the second higher vote getter will be declared the winner. In the event that more than one player finishes second on votes, the winner will be decided on a count back based on most three votes; most two votes; and most one votes.
- c. Where teams in a scheduled fixture (Reserves, Under 17.5's, U14.5) share players for the purpose of equalization, Best & Fairest votes and goals kicked for the opposition team will be counted toward the player's personal Best & Fairest and Goal Kicking awards.
- d. Any votes or goals gained by a player who is playing for an opposition club during a bye shall not have these votes or goals recorded.

28. ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

The Rookie of the year is given annually to a standout young player in the CM & GR Leagues who is in their first full year of participation in their club's senior XVIII.

- a. The purpose of the Rookie of the Year Award is to recognize and distinguish a new footballer in the senior ranks who has shown outstanding performance in his/her current position as selected by the CM & GR Leagues Board. The player has only one opportunity to win the award.
- b. A player must be younger than 20 years of age on 1 January of the award year,
- c. The nominee has played not more than 10 games (with their senior team) before the beginning of the award year.
- d. Has played at least 10 games with their senior team in the award year.
- e. A player who is found guilty by the tribunal of any offence during the season is not eligible to win the award but is still eligible for nomination.
- f. Selection Criteria
 - i. Playing Performance in current CM & GR Leagues season;
 - ii. Performance in representative football, in Under 17.5's or in seniors;
 - iii. Role and playing position(s) at club level;
 - iv. Games played at senior level;
 - v. Does the nominee show proper consideration for fairness, ethics, respect, and a sense of fairness with peers, competitors and umpires?
- g. Selection Method
 - i. Toward the end of the home & away season each club will be requested for one nominee who satisfies the "Rookie of the Year" criteria;
 - ii. This nomination will be on a CM & GR Leagues Nomination Form;
 - iii. The selection panel shall consist of the CM & GR Leagues Board and the Operations Manager;
 - iv. The Board can request further information from any sources in order to assist with their deliberations;

- v. The nominations and Rookie of the Year will be announced at the Annual Presentation Night;
- vi. The Board is not obliged to give reasons for their selection.

29. MATCH CONDITIONS

- a. Coaches and Players: All Club coaches, appointed or incumbent, must be notified to CM & GR Leagues, with relevant contact and accreditation details, by 30 March each year. AFL Victoria Country Rules & Regulations explain the accreditation criteria for all coaches.
- b. The non-playing coach of any team (see Modified Rules for U12's and U14.5's) is not allowed on the playing arena during the progress of the match except at the quarter intervals. During the progress of the match the non-playing coach, interchange players (other than in warming up) and other officials must be in the restricted area as marked by the coaches' box.
- c. The team captain of the day shall only be permitted to speak to the Field Umpire at the intervals during the progress of the match (other than if requesting the umpire for a count of players on the playing surface). Any breach of this rule shall be reported by the Umpire and be referred to the League Independent Tribunal.
- d. Coaches' Box: A line 12 metres in length and at least three metres from the boundary line shall be marked parallel to the boundary line in front of each of the coaches' boxes. Coaches, runners, interchange players and other game officials must remain within this area when not on the playing surface.

30. HOME & AWAY MATCH TIMES

Central Murray Match Times						ONE GROUND TEMPLATE						
Grade	Change-over time	First Siren Players on field	Warm-up	Match Start Ball-up	Match End	Quarter Lengths inc. time on	¼ Time Break	Half Time Break	¾ Time Break	Time-On	Game Length HOURS	Game Length MINUTES
Seniors	2	2:27:00 PM	3	2:30:00 PM	4:52:00 PM	28	5	20	5	Yes	2	22
Reserves	2	12:47:00 PM	2	12:49:00 PM	2:25:00 PM	20	3	8	5	No	1	36
Under 17.5's	2	11:07:00 AM	2	11:09:00 AM	12:45:00 PM	20	3	8	5	No	1	36
U14.5	2	9:50:00 AM	2	9:52:00 AM	11:05:00 AM	15	3	5	5	No	1	13
U12		8:45:00 AM	2	8:47:00 AM	9:48:00 AM	12	3	5	5	No	1	1

One Ground times will be used by mutual agreement between opposing clubs.

Central Murray Match Times						TWO GROUND TEMPLATE						
Grade	Change-over time	First Siren Players on field	Warm-up	Match Start Ball-up	Match End	Quarter Lengths inc. time on	¼ Time Break	Half Time Break	¾ Time Break	Time-On	Game Length HOURS	Game Length MINUTES
Seniors	2	2:27:00 PM	3	2:30:00 PM	4:52:00 PM	28	5	20	5	Yes	2	22
Reserves	2	12:47:00 PM	2	12:49:00 PM	2:25:00 PM	20	3	8	5	No	1	36
Under 17.5's	2	11:07:00 AM	2	11:09:00 AM	12:45:00 PM	20	3	8	5	No	1	36
U14.5	2	9:50:00 AM	2	9:52:00 AM	11:05:00 AM	15	3	5	5	No	1	13
U12		11:15:00 AM	3	11:18:00 AM	12:19:00 PM	12	3	5	5	No	1	1

The Seniors, Reserves, Under 17.5's & U14.5's will play on the Main Ground, U12's will play on the Second Oval.

PART 3

GOLDEN RIVERS

31. GROUND ENCROACHMENT

- a. Except for the quarter intervals, no persons other than runners, trainers, medical staff and water carriers may enter the playing field.
- b. No team officials or other persons may stand sufficiently close to the boundary line to impede or hamper the Boundary Umpires in the execution of their duties.
- c. The officiating umpires are empowered to order off officials if they are not correctly attired or are deemed to be exceeding their duties.
- d. The officiating umpires are empowered to order off unauthorised person(s) or request a club official to remove that person(s).
- e. The non-playing coach of any team (Except U14.5's coach) is not allowed on the playing field during the progress of the match except at the quarter intervals.
- f. Coaches' Box: A line 12 metres in length and one metre from the boundary line shall be marked parallel to the boundary line in front of each of the coaches' boxes. Coaches, runners, interchange players (other than those warming up) and other game officials must remain within this area when not on the playing surface.

32. MATCH DAY SECRETARY

- a. Each club shall appoint a Match Day Secretary.
- b. Each Match Day Secretary must be registered on AFL Footyweb-Fox Sports Pulse with their club prior to the start of the current season.
- c. The Match Day Secretary shall have a Working-with-Children Check and details must be recorded in the club WWCC Register prior to the start of the season. PENALTY: 10 units

33. STRUCTURE OF TEAMS

- a. Where it applies, teams must adhere to the Equalization Policy.
- b. All Senior Grade teams are to be made up of eighteen players on the field with up to three (3) interchange players permitted per team.
- c. All Reserve Grade teams are to be made up of eighteen players on the field with up to four (4) interchange players permitted per team; except where either Club invokes the Equalization Rule.
- d. All Under 17.5's Grade teams are to be made up of eighteen players on the field with up to four (4) interchange players permitted per team; except where either Club invokes the Equalization Rule.
- e. Players for Under U14.5's must be under the age of 15 on the first day of July in the year of play.
- f. Players for Under U17.5's must be under the age of 18 on the first day of July in the year of play.
- g. Players must be over the age of 9 on the first day of January in the year of play, unless a team has insufficient numbers, in which case players over the age of 7 on the 30 April in the year of the competition, may play. The Club must first seek permission from the League and nominated underage player's parents. A registration form can be obtained from the Football Development Manager.

- h. If a team in the Seniors, Reserves, U17.5's or U14.5's does not have 12 registered players available to play on match day, that team must forfeit the game. The teams can then agree to share players to play a match, but the score will not be recorded.
- i. Permit players are not eligible to play finals.

34. INELIGIBLE PLAYERS

Players participating in any junior or senior match deemed ineligible by the Operations Manager shall be subject to the following penalties. To be read in conjunction with AFL Vic Country Handbook Rule.

- i. Reversal of match points, if won
- ii. Removal of points for scored in that game
- iii. Junior match – fine up to \$250
- iv. Senior match – fine up to \$500
- v. Further penalty if determined by the Board

35. FORFEITS

To be read in conjunction with AFL Vic Country Handbook – Forfeiture of Match

- a. Any club giving a forfeit is to provide 36 hours' notice to the other club.
- b. In the event of a home side not providing notice to a visiting side, the home side is responsible to reimburse the visiting side five times the local umpire travel fee.
- c. A team sheet is to be lodged by the team receiving the forfeit and submitted with match day paperwork.
- d. The team sheet will be taken into consideration when determining eligibility of players.

36. FINALS ELIGIBILITY

- a. Under 17.5, Reserves and Senior players must have played four (4) games with their respective club on different days during the home and away season. Any Player who plays four games with a GRFNL club, irrespective of grade, is then qualified to play senior finals with that club. However:
 - i. To be eligible to play in any finals series matches for the Reserves, Under 17.5's and Under 14.5's players must have played at least three games in the home and away season with that grade.
- b. Long term injury: if a player is seriously injured while training or playing for his club (practice matches included), then a club may apply in writing to the Board for special consideration to allow that player to compete in a finals series without obtaining the minimum eligibility criteria. This application must be made five (5) weeks prior to the commencement of the finals series. The Board may require evidence as to the nature of the long-term injury before ruling on the club's application.
- c. If a player plays more than 9 games with a Senior team (any club) during the home and away season he is ineligible to play in the Reserves Finals.
- d. If an Under 17.5 player plays more than 9 games outside the Under 17.5 games, he must play five games in the Under 17.5 competition to qualify for Finals.
- e. In the event of a club fielding both Senior and Reserve teams in finals matches on the same day; the 9 game limit does not apply for the Reserves. The eligible player cannot compete in both matches. Team sheets for both teams to be handed in prior to the commencement of the Reserves match.
- f. Suitably qualified Under 17.5 players are eligible to play Under 17.5 and senior finals on the same day.

- g. Team sheets for both teams to be handed in prior to the commencement of the Under 17.5 match.

37. FOOTBALL AWARDS

- a. Grand Final Matches: The Leagues shall provide medallions for all winning teams in Grand Final matches. The Umpires shall nominate a Best-on-Field player in Grand Final Matches.
- b. Best and Fairest Awards
- i. In League Vote Counts for all grades, where eligible players receive equal votes for Best and Fairest Awards, the League shall present trophies to equal winners;
 - ii. The senior best and fairest award shall be known as the E.G. Hunt Medal;
 - iii. Players having appeared before the Independent Tribunal and found guilty are ineligible for awards in League Best and Fairest voting;
 - iv. Junior players playing under an overage permit arrangement are ineligible for awards in League Best and Fairest voting.
- c. Rookie of the Year Award
- i. The Rookie of the Year Award shall be known as the Keith den Houting medal;
 - ii. Each Club shall submit to the Board nominations for the Rookie of the Year Award;
 - iii. Nominations to be submitted on the Rookie of the Year Nomination Form by date set by the Operations Manager. No incorrect or late nominations will be accepted;
 - iv. All eligible nominations will receive a medal;
 - v. Nominations shall state name of player and include a resume of his playing career;
 - vi. To be eligible for nomination players:
 - Must be a registered Golden Rivers footballer, who is not more than 18 years of age as at the 1 July in the year of judging;
 - Must have played a minimum of 8 senior games to qualify as a senior player in the year of judging;
 - Can be nominated multiple times, but if declared a winner cannot be nominated again.
 - vii. TAC games count as senior games. However senior games outside the GRFNL will not qualify;
 - viii. No limit on Senior Grade games in the current season, maximum 8 games played in previous season(s);
 - ix. Should a Club have no eligible nominee then no nomination may be made;
 - x. The Board shall assess nominations to determine Club Rookie and League Rookie.
- d. Les Pay League Identity Award
- i. Each Club may submit nominations for the Les Pay Memorial League Identity Award;
 - ii. Nominations to be submitted to Operations Manager on Club letterhead signed by authorised representative and received by prescribed date. No incorrect or late nominations will be accepted;
 - iii. Nominees for this award shall be persons who have over their career contributed significantly to the League and Australian Rules Football;
 - iv. Nominees shall be currently contributing to the advancement of Australian Rules Football within the League;
 - v. Judging of nominations to determine the winner will be undertaken by the Board or a sub committee appointed by the Board.
- e. Tim Brockwell Champion Club Award
- i. The Champion Club Trophy will be known as the Tim Brockwell Champion Club Trophy;

- ii. Points awarded will be 2 points for a win and one point for a draw in any participating competitive grade;
- iii. In the event of clubs being equal on points at the end of the home and away season, the winner will be decided on a count back, i.e. most wins in Seniors, then Reserves, etc., down to the lowest junior grade.

38. MATCH TIMES

a. Home & Away

Grade	First Siren	Match Start	Match End	Quarter Lengths	Quarter Time Break	Half Time Break	¾ Time break	Time On
Seniors	2.30pm	2.35pm	5.10pm	20 min	5 min	20 min	5 min	Yes
Reserves	12.50pm	12.55pm	2.30pm	20 min	3 min	5 min	3 min	No
Under 17.5	10.10am	10.15am	11.40pm	17 min	3 min	5 min	3 min	No
Under 14.5	11.15am	11.50am	12.50am	12 min	3 min	5 min	3 min	No

b. Minor Finals

Grade	First Siren	Match Start	Match End	Quarter Lengths	Quarter Time Break	Half Time Break	¾ Time break	Time On
Seniors	2.20pm	2.35pm	5.10pm	20 min	5 min	20 min	5 min	Yes
Reserves	12.30pm	12.35pm	2.15pm	20 min	5 min	10 min	5 min	Yes
Under 17.5	9.55am	10.00am	11.25am	17 min	5 min	10 min	5 min	Yes
Under 14.5	11.25am	11.30am	12.30pm	12 min	5 min	5 min	5 min	No

c. Grand Final

Grade	First Siren	Match Start	Match End	Quarter Lengths	Quarter Time Break	Half Time Break	¾ Time break	Time On
Seniors	2.25pm	2.35pm	5.00pm	20 min	5 min	20 min	5 min	Yes
Reserves	11.55am	12.00pm	2.10pm	20 min	5 min	10 min	5 min	Yes
Under 17.5	8.50am	9.00am	10.30am	17 min	5 min	10 min	5 min	Yes
Under 14.5	10.40am	10.45am	11.45am	12 min	5 min	5 min	5 min	No

39. FINALS ROTATION SCHEDULE

Year	Minor Finals			Grand Final
2017	<i>Nullawil</i>	<i>Murrabit</i>	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Wandella</i>
2018	<i>Ultima</i>	<i>Wandella</i>	<i>Quambatook</i>	<i>Moulamein</i>
2019	<i>Murrabit</i>	<i>Macorna</i>	<i>Moulamein</i>	<i>Ultima (swapped with 2020 Nullawil)</i>
2020	<i>Quambatook</i>	<i>Wandella</i>	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Nullawil</i>
2021	<i>Nullawil</i>	<i>Moulamein</i>	<i>Macorna</i>	<i>Murrabit</i>
2022	<i>Ultima</i>	<i>Wandella</i>	<i>Quambatook</i>	<i>Hay</i>
2023	<i>Moulamein</i>	<i>Murrabit</i>	<i>Nullawil</i>	<i>Macorna</i>
2024	<i>Macorna</i>	<i>Ultima</i>	<i>Hay</i>	<i>Quambatook</i>