



AFL North West By-laws – Key Substantive Amendments to Local Variations February 2023

Provision	Change to/by Local Variation	Rationale
8.7.1 Club Uniform Obligations	In 2023, Under 10 and Under 12 teams can play in matching shirts and/or bibs. N.B. Forwards in Under 10 need to wear a different coloured bib.	Lessens the immediate financial impact on Clubs who are fielding additional teams. Allows teams made up of Players from different Clubs to be easily recognised as one team.
9.3.4 No Dual Team Official Role	On field Coach in Under 10 is unable to act as a Club Umpire.	Ensure Coaches can focus on that role, and encourage clubs to find people to step into Umpiring.
9.3.5 Coaching in an Under 10 Match	Outlines the responsibilities of an Under 10 Coach including being allowed on the field.	Provide clarity on what a coach can and can't do while on the field and overview of interactions with Players and Umpires.
9.5.5 Runners/9.5.6 Water Carriers	Inclusion of new Local Variation saying that in Under 10 matches there are no Runners or Water Carriers.	Coach on field removes the need for a Runner. Short duration of matches means Players can get a drink in breaks.
9.5.6 Water Carriers	Listing a minimum age to perform the role in each grade.	To increase safety of on field players and officials.
10.3 Appointment of Umpires	Creation of a deadline of noon on a Thursday for the League to provide affected Clubs with a notice where insufficient League Umpires are available.	To allow clubs additional time, particularly at training on a Thursday night, to find a Club Umpire to fill the vacancy.
	Clubs to show cause why match result shouldn't be a forfeit where they have not provided a Club Umpire if given sufficient notice.	To act as a deterrent against Clubs not providing a Club Umpire when needed.
10.4 Number of Field Umpires for a Match	Removal of Local Variation that outlined what should happen if one Umpire was unable to complete a Match and suitable substitute Umpire was unavailable.	These requirements have been included in the generic Rules.
	Junior matches are permitted to be officiated by one League appointed field Umpire.	The goal is to have two umpires but allows for situations where two (2) Umpires can't be appointed for a Junior match.
	Matches in the Under 14, Under 17, and Youth Girls 17 age groups must have at least one (1) adult field Umpire.	Mature adults required to control Matches with older Players as aggression level increases.
10.6.1 Club Field Umpires	Umpires for non-competitive matches will be appointed by Clubs, not the League.	Encourages clubs to find Umpires who can start in a non-competitive environment.
	Umpires for non-competitive matches are not required to complete post-match paperwork.	Clarifying responsibilities for Club Umpires after a non-competitive match.
	Payment of Club Umpires for non-competitive matches is at the discretion of the home Team. Payment of Umpires in Women's and Junior competition by the League.	Encourages Clubs to support Umpires and ensure retention. Payment by League reflects the practice implemented in 2022.

10.6.2 Club Goal and Boundary Umpires	Clubs no longer required to provide boundary umpires.	Removes the need for Clubs to have to find Boundary Umpires for each home match. Addresses the issue of repeated short boundary throws.
	Local Variation asking Player from home team to throw the ball in if boundary umpire not provided removed.	
	Field Umpires shall adjudicate on boundary line decisions.	
	Except for where a free kick is awarded, play resumes with a ball-up performed by the Umpire.	
10.13 Approaching Umpires	In the Junior competition and non-competitive matches, scope provided for Coaches to raise Player safety concerns via the Ground Manager.	Places Player Safety as a priority while maintaining that Coaches are not to approach Umpires.
11.2.2 Dispensation to Play Up	Players granted an age dispensation to play up a Junior age group will be required to wear a coloured sleeve.	Identifies those Players that may require additional consideration from Umpires in contact situations.
12.4.2 Bouncing the Ball	In an Under 10 match a Player can bounce the ball once and only inside their own zone.	To ensure more competent Under 10 Players share the ball with team mates.
12.4.3 Kicking off the Ground	Players in Under 10 and Under 12 age groups not allowed to kick the ball off the ground.	Encourage Players in younger age groups to learn to bend down and pick the ball up.
12.4.4 Marking	No minimum distance in Under 10 Match for a mark to be paid provided the Player shows control.	Distances more reflective of actual distances that young Players can kick the ball.
	Minimum distance for a mark to be paid in an Under 12 match is ten (10) metres.	
12.4.5 Modified Contact	Identifies what is considered a legal and illegal tackle for all players wearing a coloured sleeve (varies depending on age group).	Clarity and consistency of what is considered a Modified Tackle depending on individual Player's circumstances.
	Defines which Players can wear a coloured sleeve and which Players must wear a coloured sleeve.	Provides clarity and consistency on the situations where coloured sleeves are to be worn.
	An Umpire can deem a Player is no longer eligible to wear a coloured sleeve if they choose to engage in full contact.	Prevents Players who are wearing a sleeve from using that to gain an advantage in circumstances where they are comfortable with full contact.
12.4.6 Minimum Game Time	In each Under 10 match, all Players are to be on the ground for a minimum of fifty (50) percent of the match.	To ensure all Players in an Under 10 match spend a significant portion of each match on the field.
12.4.7 Under 10 Zones	Explanation of the three Zones on the field for an Under 10 match, how many players in each zone and situations where a Player may briefly leave their zone.	Establishes the progression from Auskick to structured footy.
12.4.8 Ball ups	In Under 10 matches two Players of similar size/height will be chosen by the Umpire to contest a Ball Up. Explanation of what a Player can and can't do while contesting a Ball Up.	Ball Up contests in Under 10 encourage more players to be involved in stoppage situation rather than just the Players contesting the Ball Up.
12.4.9 Rushing a Behind	Player in an Under 10 match will not be penalised for deliberately rushing a behind.	Avoid heavy penalties for Players who are likely to be making their first foray into footy.

12.5 Competition Grades	Table 13 has been amended to include new age groups.	To show additional age group including the Under 10 non-competitive age group.
14.4 Number of Players in a Team - Senior Competitions	Removal of Local Variation regarding on-field playing numbers if one team has less than minimum number.	If a team has less than the minimum numbers, the match is a forfeit.
14.5 Number of Players in a Team - Junior Competitions	Table 16 updated to include Player numbers for an Under 10 and Under 12 Team.	To reflect the minimum and maximum player numbers required for new age groups.
14.10 Number of Players in a Team - Junior Competitions	Inclusion of new Under 10 age group in Table 17.	Even-up rule for the Under 10 age group is the same as all other underage age groups.
15.2.2 50 Metre Penalties	Distance penalties in the Women's grade increased to fifty (50) metres.	To bring further parity between the two Senior competitions and help to open up the game further. Also reflects the increased standard of Women's football in the region
	Under 10, Under 12 and Youth Girls 17 added to list of age groups where distance penalty is 25 metres.	To reflect addition of new age groups.
15.2.6 Out of Bounds	Introduction of Ball-Up ten (10) metres to fifteen (15) metres in from the boundary in all grades to re-start play unless a free kick has been paid for out on the full or insufficient intent.	To make it easier for a game to restart and remove the issue of play being stopped for a shallow throw-in needing to be repeated.
15.2.8 Mercy Rule – Junior Competitions	Mercy Rule introduced for all Junior home & away matches.	The purpose of the Rule is to instill in Junior Coaches and Players that it serves no beneficial purpose to inflict massive losses on the opposition.
	As scores won't be kept in Under 10 matches there won't be a Mercy Rule in this age group but the principle of evening up should be applied where it is apparent that one team is stronger than the other.	To ensure that even though match scores are not being kept in Under 10 matches, coaches still ensure that the players in this age group take part in a match that is an even contest.
15.7.1 Team Sheets	Amendment in Table 26 that there is no need prior to an Under 10 match for Clubs to prepare a Team sheet via PlayHQ.	Team sheets not required as there are no Finals and eligibility does not need to be established.
15.8.2 Match & Quarter Duration	Inclusion of Under 10 and Under 12 into Table 28 with length of quarters and breaks at end of each quarter.	To stipulate length of Under 10 and Under 12 matches.
	Length of quarters can be reduced on gala days.	To allow flexibility when Players participating in multiple matches or when matches of different age groups running concurrently.
15.9 Ground Closures	Deadline created for a Club to advise the League of a possible or definite Ground Closure (4.00pm Friday for Seniors and noon on Saturday for Juniors).	To ensure if Match/es need to be moved to a different venue due to Ground Closures, notification is given in a timely manner.
15.10 Postponed Matches	Clubs have two weeks to reschedule postponed matches and must give the League at least three business days' notice of new date.	Provides a definitive timeline for clubs to reschedule a Postponed match.
16.2 Ladder	No ladder will be kept for Under 10 age group.	Maintaining that the age group is a non-competitive age group.

16.5.1 Notice of Forfeit	Clubs will need to notify of a forfeit in a Senior match by 9am on a Friday.	To allow all affected parties such as time to communicate and adjust accordingly.
17.1 Finals Structure	Addition of Local Variation to explain that there are no finals for the Under 10 age group.	To show that as a non-competitive age group, there will be no Finals for Under 10.
17.5 Drawn Finals Match	The method of Extra Time for Junior Finals that end in a draw changed to be the same as for Senior Finals.	Consistency and equity with Senior Finals approach.
24.1.1 Yellow Cards	A Player in an Under 10 match spends three (3) minutes off the ground after being given a yellow card and is taken off the field by the Coach to provide feedback.	To ensure immediate feedback is given to the Player at this important stage of their football development, the Coach of the team is required to leave the field with the Player to do so.
	In an Under 10 match, a player given a yellow card can be replaced immediately.	Being a development age group, keeping matches as even as possible is vital to ensuring the players get maximum enjoyment from their footy.
	A Coach in an Under 10 match is to be issued a yellow card if they pressure, instruct or make comment to or about Umpires or about any member of the opposition team.	To ensure a proper example is provided to developing players regarding the Zero Tolerance Policy to Umpire Abuse.
	Host club is to email a copy of the timesheet to the League in the case of a Player and/or Coach being issued a yellow card.	As there will be no Team Sheets created or final scores entered into PlayHQ for Under 10 matches, a separate action is required to record when a Player and/or Coach is issued a yellow card.
24.1.2 Red Cards	Action is to be taken by the Coach of the team should a Player in an Under 10 match be given a red card.	To ensure immediate feedback is given to the Player at this important stage of their football development, the Coach of the team is required to leave the field with the Player to do so.
	A Coach in an Under 10 match is to be issued a red card on a second offence if they pressure, instruct or make comment to or about Umpires or about any member of the opposition team.	To ensure a proper example is provided to developing players regarding the Zero Tolerance Policy.
	Host club is to email a copy of the timesheet to the League in the case of a Player and/or Coach being issued a red card.	As there will be no Team Sheets created or final scores entered into PlayHQ for Under 10 matches, a separate action is required to record when a Player and/or Coach is issued a red card.