



Return to Play

**2020 REGIONAL QLD
SENIOR & JUNIOR
COMMUNITY FOOTBALL
GUIDELINES**

**Mackay, Capricornia, Townville
& Darling Downs**

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1. GENERAL

1.1 Overview of Document

- (a) This document has been established to provide AFL Queensland and its Townsville, Mackay, Capricornia, and Darling Downs stakeholders with Guidelines for the recommencement of senior and junior community club football following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (b) These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the following pre-existing documents:
 - (i) AFL Queensland Senior Community Competitions Rules and Procedures 2020
 - (ii) National Transfer Guidelines
 - (iii) State and Territory Tribunal Guidelines
- (c) In the event there is a conflict between the pre-existing documents outlined in 1(b), these Guidelines shall prevail.
- (d) These Guidelines may be subject to change at any time, by the AFL or AFL Queensland.
- (e) This document is intended as a guideline for the administration of afl community club competitions in Townsville, Mackay, Capricornia, and Darling Downs and is not intended to be exhaustive. To the extent that these Guidelines are silent in relation to a matter, the State Manager - Senior Football or nominee, may determine such matter at his or her absolute discretion.

1.2 Definitions

In these AFLQ Guidelines, unless otherwise stated:

AFL means Australian Football League ACN 004 155 211 being a Company limited by guarantee, incorporated in Victoria and previously known as Victorian Football League.

AFL Competitions means any competition solely managed by AFLQ.

AFLQ means AFL (Queensland) Ltd ACN 090 629 342.

Competition Manager is the person appointed to manage the day to day operations of a competition or AFL Affiliate League.

Guidelines means the overarching parameters in which AFLQ will determine the ability for the recommencement of competitive football and the associated competition structures and rules.

Laws of Australian Football means the AFL's Laws of Australian Football document, which is updated annually.

2. AFL COMMUNITY FOOTBALL POSTPONEMENT

2.1 Background

- (a) The AFL, in consultation with the Australian Government, World Health Organisation and the AFL's Chief Medical Officer, made a recommendation in March to postpone all AFL community club competitions currently operating and those scheduled to begin.
- (b) The postponement took effect from 20 March 2020 and is in effect until at least 31 May 2020.

- (c) The decision to postpone community football was made to protect participants, spectators, coaches, umpires, and volunteers and to help mitigate risks of COVID-19 spreading in public environments.
- (d) On Friday May 8, the Queensland Government outlined a staged timeline that determines activities and restrictions relating to a return to training and playing.
- (e) The postponement is in effect for the following:
 - (i) State League Competitions
 - (ii) Senior Community Football
 - (iii) Junior and Youth Community Football
 - (iv) AFL Schools Competitions
 - (v) NAB Auskick Centres
 - (vi) All AFLQ participation programs

3. SEASON RECOMMENCEMENT OR CANCELLATION

3.1 Triggers for the recommencement of community football

- (a) If achievable, AFL Queensland is committed to conducting community football competitions in 2020.
- (b) A recommencement of play for community football will be dependent on the following key factors:
 - (i) Federal and State Government social distancing and group gathering guidelines.
 - (ii) Federal and State Government health regulations.
 - (iii) The AFL providing a National approval to recommence.
 - (iv) The appropriate time required to achieve currently formatted competitions in a shortened form, hereinafter referred to as a “Traditional Season”, or conducting an alternate community club competition, hereinafter referred to as the “Spring Series”.
- (c) Guiding Principles for conducting a Traditional Season
 - (i) A Traditional Season is deemed as occurring sometime between March and early October.
 - (ii) As a minimum, the ability to play an eight (8) game home and away season, followed by a minimum three (3) week finals series.
 - (iii) Ensure clubs are not unduly disadvantaged by way of the following:
 - (A) The unavailability to play home games or host finals due to venue lease arrangements.
 - (B) The unavailability to train due to venue lease arrangements.
 - (C) The unavailability of players due to commitments to other sports, work or other scheduled activities outside of the period as stated above in 3.1(c)(i).
- (d) Guiding Principles for conducting a Spring Series
 - (i) Inability to conduct a Traditional Season in accordance with 3.1(c)(i) above.

- (ii) Support the wellbeing of players, coaches, volunteers, and umpires by creating an engagement and participation opportunity, thus allowing people to socially reconnect with their clubs, friends, and teammates.
- (iii) Create an opportunity for clubs to recommence operations and generate revenue.
- (iv) Other than being as a reference point as to the level or standard of competitions, all existing competition structures and formats are abolished.
- (v) Ability for clubs to opt in or out of the Spring Series, with the minimum requirement to participate being one (1) team. Similarly, the ability for clubs to enter multiple teams.
- (vi) Minimise the barriers to participation by localising competitions and creating an affordable community club and participant fee structure.
- (vii) Creating opportunities for clubs to maximise revenue opportunities by scheduling multiple games at one venue.
- (viii) Where possible, being creative with fixturing to support those clubs who may have limited access to their traditional venue during October and beyond.
- (ix) No player payments. Completely amateur competitions.

3.2 Recommencement Timelines and Competition Structures

(a) Traditional Season

- (i) In accordance with 3.13.1(b) above, the recommencement of a Traditional Season will occur as soon as practically possible. The Queensland Government have indicated that the earliest commencement date would be July 10. However, the latest date the season can commence is Saturday 18 July 2020.
- (ii) Clubs will receive at least two (2) weeks' notice of the season recommencement.
- (iii) AFLQ will prepare fixtures based on team nominations received prior to the postponement of community football. It is the responsibility of clubs to advise AFLQ if they wish to withdraw teams. Notification to withdraw a team must be received by no later than the 10th of June 2020.
- (iv) If the latest start date of 18 July 2020 is achieved, it provides the ability to stage a minimum of an eight (8) game home and away season followed by a minimum three (3) week final series. All senior clubs will host a minimum of four (4) home matches and play a minimum of four (4) away matches. In the event an earlier start date is achievable, the length of the home and away season may be extended if the specific competition structure allows for it. *Refer Appendix 1 for Traditional Season Fixture Overviews.*
- (v) In recognising the shortened season length, and to ensure consistency across the State, the finals series for all competitions with six (6) teams or more shall be a top six (6) played over three (3) weeks. Grand Finals are to be held by no later than the first weekend in October. *Refer Appendix 2 for Top Six Finals Structure*
- (vi) As a minimum all teams will play each other once during the home and away season, however, where there is a requirement to play some teams twice but not all, fixturing will be based on geographical location.
- (vii) AFLQ reserves the right to make any changes to these Guidelines and its existing 2020 Community Competitions Rules and Procedures as deemed appropriate under the circumstances.
- (viii) Normal finals eligibility rules shall apply, however, the minimum games required to be finals eligible has been amended to two (2).

(b) Spring Series

- (i) If a Traditional Season is not achievable, a Spring Season will be formed and will commence with two (2) weeks' notice prior to the first available date following the easing of restrictions as listed in 3.13.1(b) above.
- (ii) Once a return to play date is confirmed, clubs will be given seven (7) days to nominate a team/s in the Spring Series.
- (iii) Junior competition grades (relevant to each region) will be advised once it has been established that a Traditional Season cannot occur.
- (iv) There will be only one open men's competition and one open women's competition in each region.
- (v) There will be no senior men's and reserves competitions, however clubs can elect to enter one (1) or two (2) teams in the open men's competition. All teams entered, including those from the same club, will be competing against each other. If clubs elect to enter two teams, they are encouraged (in the spirit of fairness and goodwill) to enter two evenly balanced teams to ensure an evenly balanced competition.
- (vi) As soon as a player plays in two (2) games for one team, he/she will not be eligible to play finals with any other team.
- (vii) As soon as a player play three (3) games with a team, he/she cannot play for any other team.
- (viii) Players will need to have played two (2) Spring Season matches to be eligible to play in the final series.
- (ix) A Spring Season will comprise of a minimum of six (6) games and a maximum of eight (8) games, with a maximum three (3) week finals series.
- (x) Subject to ground availability, all clubs will host a minimum of three (3) game days, with a focus on multiple games being played at one venue to maximise club revenue opportunities.
- (xi) Each final series will be determined by the number of teams in each competition.

3.3 Competition Structure

- (a) All home and away matches shall be played in accordance with the fixture and competition structure determined by, and at the absolute discretion of AFLQ.
- (b) Four (4) premiership points shall be awarded for a win or win by forfeit, and two (2) points shall be awarded for a draw. No points shall be awarded for a loss. Where Clubs have an equal number of byes in the fixture, no premiership points or player qualification shall apply when a Club has a bye.
- (c) In the event of two (2) or more clubs finishing level on points at the end of the home and away season, the relevant rule within the Laws of Australian Football shall apply in determining which clubs advance to the finals.
- (d) The Spring Series in an amateur competition and player payments are not permitted.
- (e) A player may transfer between clubs to play in the Spring Series, such transfer will be via Type 2 permit.

3.4 Triggers for a Cancellation of Community Football

- (a) A full cancellation of the 2020 Community Football season (both the Traditional Season or Spring Series) may be made at a point in time in which a recommendation to cancel has been made by the AFL in consultation with the Australian Government, World Health Organisation and the AFL Chief Medical Officer.

- (b) This decision may also be made if the recommencement of community football is untenable or not feasible due to the guidelines and regulations at 3.13.1(b)(i) and 3.13.1(b)(ii) at the time a final decision is required.
- (c) It is anticipated that if a Spring Series cannot commence by 19 September 2020, then all community football will be abandoned for 2020, and clubs will be able to return to 2021 pre-season training and planning once final approval has been provided in line with 3.1(b).
- (d) In the event community club football cannot commence prior to 19 September 2020, all other participation options will be explored, e.g. AFL9's or AFLX.

4. FEE STRUCTURES

4.1 Revised Fee Structures

- (a) Umpire Payments:
 - (i) Traditional Season – A reduced per game umpire payment system will be in place. In some cases, Club umpires may be required where they may not have been previously.
 - (ii) Spring Series – Umpires will be required, and discussions are occurring in respect to the appropriate fee structure. In some cases, Club umpires will be required.
- (b) Footballs:
 - (i) Traditional Season – the home club will be responsible for providing footballs, the minimum requirement for senior men and women is two (2) Sherrin balls that are no greater than one game old. Clubs will be supplied and invoiced for a new Sherrin for every second home senior men's and/or women's game.
 - (ii) Clubs can purchase additional footballs from AFLQ if they require them.
 - (iii) Clubs are responsible for providing Sherrin balls for all junior and youth games. All balls should be in good condition.
 - (iv) Spring Series - the home club or team nominated as being the home team at a neutral venue, will be responsible for providing footballs, the minimum requirement is two (2) Sherrin balls that are no greater than one game old.
 - (v) Footballs can be purchased from AFLQ.
- (c) Club Insurance:
 - (i) Traditional Series – AFLQ have cancelled all Platinum Level personal injury cover (currently \$640 plus GST for senior teams). If a club wishes to resume this cover, they must notify AFLQ prior to training recommencing, otherwise Bronze level cover will be in place. Due to the significant impact of COVID-19 on our community football clubs and the fact all competitions will play a reduced season, AFLQ have been able to gain the support of the AFL to absorb all senior insurance fee costs for 2020. However, should a club wish to upgrade their cover to Platinum, they will be required to pay the upgrade fee.
 - (ii) Spring Series – The same as a Traditional Season will apply.
- (d) Award Nights:
 - (i) Traditional Season - There will be no formal Award Nights in 2020. Alternative formats will be explored, however, at no cost to clubs.
 - (ii) Spring Series – There will be no formal awards presented other than the Premiership Cup.

- (e) Team Levies & Affiliation Fees:
 - (i) Traditional Season – All team levies, comp manager fees and affiliation fees will be reduced by 50%.
 - (ii) Spring Series – Currently working through what a team nomination fee would entail.

5. RULE MODIFICATIONS

5.1 Traditional Season

- (a) The Traditional Season will be played under the existing 2019 AFL Laws of Australian Football Laws of the Game and AFLQ Senior Community Competitions Rules and Procedures 2020, with the following exceptions:
 - (i) Game duration – game lengths have been shortened to reflect the interruption to player preparation, thus trying to minimise the effects of fatigue injuries.

Competition	Time of Quarters	Time of Breaks (quarter time / half time / three quarter time)
Senior Men	17 minutes plus time on	5/15/5
Reserves Men	17 minutes no time on Finals 15 minutes plus time on	5/15/5
Women	15 minutes no time on Finals 12 minutes plus time on	5/15/5
Juniors	TBC	

5.2 Spring Series

- (a) The Spring Series will be played under the existing 2019 AFL Laws of Australian Football Laws of the Game and AFLQ Senior Community Competitions Rules and Procedures 2020, with the following exceptions:
 - (i) Game duration - game lengths have been shortened to reflect the interruption to player preparation, thus trying to minimise the effects of fatigue injuries

Competition	Time of Quarters	Time of Breaks (quarter time / half time / three quarter time)
Senior Men	15 minutes plus time on	5/15/5
Reserves Men	17 minutes no time on Finals 15 minutes plus time on	5/15/5
Women	15 minutes no time on Finals 12 minutes plus time on	5/15/5
Juniors	TBC	

- (ii) Interchange size
 - (A) All Men's competitions will be 18 on the field and up to a maximum of six (6) players on the interchange bench.
 - (B) All Women's competitions will be 16 on the field and up to a maximum of six (6) players on the interchange bench.
 - (C) All junior competitions will be advised in due course.

6. CLUB COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTS

6.1 Licence and Affiliation Agreements

- (a) Affiliation/Licence agreements must be signed by the League/club president and lodged with AFLQ upon the announcement of a season recommencement if they have not already been issued to AFLQ.
- (b) AFLQ and/or its Affiliate League, at their absolute discretion, will require submission of all or some of the following documents:
 - (i) audited finances
 - (ii) club constitution
 - (iii) incorporation certificate
 - (iv) JLT insurance
 - (v) office bearers
 - (vi) current lighting audit
 - (vii) player contracts; or
 - (viii) registered players.
- (c) All clubs must adhere to and abide by the conditions set out in the licence agreement, as well as these AFLQ Rules and Procedures.
- (d) No club shall be included in the fixture of home and away matches in any season unless it has entered into an affiliation/licence agreement with AFLQ or its Affiliate League in a form approved by AFLQ.

7. REGISTRATION, TRANSFERS AND PLAYER MOVEMENT

7.1 Registration / Permission to Play

- (a) With regard to registrations and permissions to play, all existing AFL Queensland Senior Community Competition Rules and Procedures are will be enforced, along with the existing AFL National Player Registration Transfer Regulations, and the Australian Football Player and Official National Deregistration Policy (posted on the AFLQ website, Policy, AFLQ Rules and Procedures section).

7.2 Transfers

- (a) The National Transfers System will be re-opened on May 15th. The closing date will be June 30th.

8. HEALTH & HYGEINE

8.1 Return to Play Framework

- (a) Please refer to the official [Return to Play Hub](#) on the AFLQ website for all return to training and return to play information, including the AIS health and hygiene requirements.

APPENDIX 1 – Traditional Senior Fixture Overview

Region	AFL Mackay	AFL Townsville	AFL Capricornia	AFL Darling Downs
Number of Rounds	10	10	10	9
Season Commencing	11/7	11/7	11/7	11/7
Semi Finals	19/9	19/9	19/9	12/9
Pre-Finals	26/9	26/9	26/9	19/9
Grand Final	3/10	3/10	3/10	27/9

Note: The rounds depicted in the above table ensures all clubs receive a minimum of 4 home and 4 away games – subject to ground availability.

APPENDIX 2 - Top Six Finals Structure

<u>Week 1 – Semi Finals</u>	<u>Week 2 – Preliminary Finals</u>	<u>Week 3 – Grand Finals</u>
<u>Game A</u> 3 rd vs 6 th	<u>Game C</u> 1 st vs Winner Game B	<u>Game E</u> Winner Game C vs Winner Game D
<u>Game B</u> 4 th vs 5 th	<u>Game D</u> 2 nd vs Winner Game A	