

Victorian Rules of Football, 1874

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Revised at a meeting held at Nissen's Cafe, Melbourne on 12 May 1874, when delegates attended from the Albert Park, Carlton, Geelong, Melbourne, North Melbourne, and St. Kilda clubs.

1. The distance between the Goals shall not be more than 200 yards; and the width of playing space (to be measured equally on each side of the line drawn through the centres of the Goals) not more than 150 yards. The Goal Posts shall be seven yards apart, of unlimited height.
2. The Captains on each side shall toss for choice of Goal, the side losing the toss, or a Goal, has the kick off from the centre point between the Goals. When half the time arranged for play has expired, the sides shall change ends, and the ball be thrown in the air by the Umpire in the centre of the ground.
3. A Goal must be kicked by one of the side playing for the Goal between the posts, without touching either of them or any player after being kicked.
4. Two posts, to be called the 'kick-off' posts, shall be erected at a distance of 20 yards on each side of the Goal Posts, and in a straight line with them.
5. In case the ball is kicked behind Goal, within the 'kick-off' posts, any one of the side behind whose Goal it is kicked may bring it 20 yards in front of any, portion of the space between the 'kick-off' posts, and shall kick it towards the opposite Goal.
6. Any player catching the Ball directly from the foot or leg, on or below the knee of another Player, may call 'Mark'; he then has a free kick from any spot in a line with his mark and the centre of his opponent's Goal Posts; no player being allowed to come inside the spot marked, or within five yards in any other direction.
7. The Ball may be taken in hand at any time, but not carried further than is necessary for a kick, and no player shall run with the Ball unless he strikes it against the ground in every five or six yards. In the event of a player, with the Ball in hand, trying to pass an adversary and being held by him, he shall at once drop the Ball, which shall not be again taken in hand by any player till after it has been kicked.
8. Tripping, Hacking and Rabbiting are prohibited. Pushing with the hands or body is allowed only when any player is in rapid motion. Holding is allowed while a player has the Ball in hand, except in the cases provided for in rules 5 and 6.
9. When the Ball goes out of Bounds (the same being indicated by a row of posts), it shall be brought back to the point where it crossed the Boundary-line, and thrown in at right angles with that line, but shall not be playable until after it touches the ground within Bounds.
10. The Ball, while in play, may under no circumstances be thrown.
11. In case of infringement of any of the above Rules, any player of the opposite side may claim that any one of his party may have a free kick from the place where the breach of Rule was made. The Umpire's decision shall in every case be final, and the Clubs disputing the same shall lose the match.
12. Before the commencement of a match each side shall appoint an Umpire, and they shall be the sole Judges of Goals and of cases of the ball going behind Goal. A Field Umpire shall also be appointed, who shall decide all other matters, and may appeal to the Goal Umpire.
13. No player shall play with more than one Club during one season. For the purposes of this rule, schools be not considered clubs.

Definitions:

- A drop kick or drop is made by letting the Ball drop from your hands on to the ground, and kicking it the very instant it rises.
- A place kick or place is kicking the Ball after it has been placed on the ground.
- A punt consists in letting the Ball fall from your hands, and kicking it before it touches the ground.
- A scrummage commences when the Ball is on the ground, and all who have closed round on their respective sides begin kicking at it.
- Rabbiting is one player stooping down so as to cause another to fall by placing his body below the other's hips.