

Rules of the Melbourne Football Club (May 1859)

§ I

The distance between the Goals and the Goal Posts shall be decided by the Captains of the sides playing.

II

The Captains on each side shall toss for the choice of Goal; the side losing the toss has the Kick off from the centre point between the Goals.

III

A Goal must be Kicked fairly between the posts, without touching either of them or a portion of the person of any player on either side.

IV

The game shall be played within a space of not more than 200 yards wide, the same to be measured equally on each side of a line drawn through the centres of the two Goals; and 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 at both ends, and in a straight line with them.

V

In case the Ball is kicked behind Goal, 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 as nearly as possible in line with the opposite Goal

VI

Any player catching the Ball *directly* from the foot may call 'mark'. He then has a free kick; no player from the opposite side being allowed to come *inside* the spot marked.

VII

Tripping and pushing are both allowed (but no hacking) when any player is in rapid motion or in possession of the Ball, except in the case provided for in Rule VI.

VIII

The Ball may be taken in hand only when caught from the foot, or on the hop. In no case shall it be *lifted* from the ground.

IX

When the Ball goes out of bounds (the same being indicated by a row of posts) it shall be bought back to the point where it crossed the boundary-line, and thrown in at right angles to that line.

X

The Ball, while *in play* may under no circumstances be thrown.