

Rules of the Victorian Football Association, 1877

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1. The distance between the goals should not be more than 200 yards, and the width of playing space to be measured equally on each side of a line drawn through the centre of the goals not more than 150 yards. The goal posts shall be seven yards apart; of not less than 12ft in height. The ball to be used shall be the No. 2 size Rugby (26 inches in circumference).
2. The captains of each side shall toss for choice of goal. The side losing the toss or goal has the kick-off from the centre-point between the goal. When half the time arranged for play has expired, the players shall change ends, and the ball be thrown in the air by the field umpire in the centre of the ground.
3. A goal must be kicked by one of the side playing for goal between the posts, without touching either of them (flags excepted), or any player after being kicked. Should any of the spectators standing between the goal-posts interfere with or stop the progress of the ball going through, a goal shall be scored.
4. Two posts, to be called the 'kick-off posts', shall be erected at a distance of twenty yards on each side of the goal-posts in a straight line with them.
5. In case the ball is kicked behind goal by one of the opposite side within the kick-off posts, any one of the side behind whose goal it is kicked may bring it ten 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 behind and in a line with his mark and the centre of his opponents' 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, unless the player strikes it against the ground 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 must at once drop the ball.
8. Tripping, hacking, rabbiting, and slinging are prohibited; pushing with the hands or body is allowed only when a player is in rapid motion within five or six yards of the ball. Holding a player is allowed only while such player has the ball in hand, except in cases provided for in Rules 5, 6 and 7.
9. When the ball goes out of bounds it shall be brought back to the spot where it crossed the boundary line, and thrown in by the umpire 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 or handed to a player.
11. In case of infringement of any of the above rules, any player of the opposite side may claim a free kick from the place where the breach of the rule was made, the player nearest the place of infringement being the only one entitled to the kick.
12. Before the commencement of a match, each side shall appoint an umpire who shall be the sole judge of goals and of cases of the ball going behind goal. A field umpire shall also be appointed, who shall decide in all other matters, and may appeal to the goal umpire.
13. The field umpire on being appealed to may either award a 'free-kick', call 'play on', or stop the play and throw the ball in the air, and stop all attempts at scrimmages. In every case his decision shall be final, and the club disputing same shall lose the match. But in the event of an umpire refusing to decide upon any matter in dispute, clubs may, according to Rule 8 of the Association, appeal to that body, whose decision shall be final.
14. No one wearing projecting nails, iron plates, or gutta percha on any part of his boots or shoes shall be allowed to play in a match.
15. No player shall play with more than one club during one season, except he permanently change his residence from town to country, or vice versa. For the purpose of this rule, schools or universities shall not be considered clubs. In the event of a club disbanding, its members may be at liberty to play with any other club, with the consent of the Association.
16. None of the above laws shall be altered or rescinded, nor shall any rule be added during a season, nor shall any rule be repealed, altered, amended, or adopted without the concurrence of a majority of the Association at a meeting specially called for that purpose.