

LAWS OF THE Australasian Game of Football

As adopted at a Conference of Intercolonial Delegates held November 1888



1. The distance between the goals should not be more than 200 yards, and the width of the playing space not more than 150 yards to be measured equally on each side of a line drawn - through the centre of the goals. The goal posts shall be seven yards apart, of not less than twenty feet in height. The ball to be used shall be the No. 2 size Rugby (26 inches in circumference.)

2. Two posts, to be called the "kick-off posts," shall be erected at a distance of ten yards on each side of the goal posts, in a straight line with them; the intervening line between such kick-off posts shall constitute the "goal line."

3. Matches shall be played with not more than twenty a side, unless where handicaps are conceded. Any club found playing more than the number arranged for shall have all goals kicked prior to the detection of same annulled and the offending club may be fined: in a sum not exceeding £10 if detected on the ground. In the event of a club commencing play with less than 20 men, that club shall be allowed to complete its team at any stage of the game.

4. The captain of each side shall toss for choice of goal. The side losing the toss for goal has the kick-off from the centre point between the goals. When quarter, half, or three-quarters of the time arranged for shall have expired, the players shall change ends, and the ball be thrown in the air by the field-umpire in the centre of the ground. At half time the players may leave the ground for not more than ten minutes. Each club shall appoint a timekeeper, whose duty it will be to ring a bell at the times indicated. At the first sound of the bell the ball shall be dead. An alarm clock or any other suitable apparatus may be substituted for a bell.

5. The game shall be won by the side kicking the greatest number of goals. The field umpire to report to the association the result of each match.

6. That all matches shall be commenced and played out to the time arranged, and shall not be stopped except by the consent of both Captains, but in the event of the Captains disagreeing, the Field Umpire shall be constituted sole referee, and the side disputing his decision shall lose the match but in the event of adverse weather preventing the match being played out it shall be considered a drawn game. No arranged match shall be cancelled except by the written consent of the two secretaries and the written consent of a majority of the permit committee or of the local Association. All matches played in May, June or July to be played fifty minutes each way and in August and September to be played sixty minutes each half. The football season shall commence on the first Saturday in May and terminate on the 30th of September

7. A goal must be kicked by one of the side playing for goal, kicking the ball between the posts without touching either of them (flags excepted,) or any player, after being kicked. Should any of the spectators, standing between or immediately in front of the goal posts, interfere with or stop the progress of the ball going through, a goal shall be scored, unless the goal umpire is of the opinion one of the players whose goal is attacked would have touched it, or that it would not have gone between the goal posts if not interfered with or stopped.

8. The Goal Umpires shall be sole judges of goals, and of cases of the ball going behind goals and their decisions shall be final; but in cases of doubt may appeal to the Field Umpire. The Field Umpire shall decide in all other matters during the progress of the game, and may appeal to a Goal Umpire. Goals and behinds shall be indicated by flags in addition to which the goal umpire shall notify the field umpire whether it be a goal or a behind.

9. In case the ball is kicked behind the goal line by one of the opposite side (except when a goal is kicked, in which case the ball is kicked off from the centre of the ground,) any one of the side behind whose goal it is kicked may bring it ten yards in front of any portion of the space within the goal line, to be indicated by a white mark ten yards in front, and shall kick it towards the opposite goal.

10. That if the ball strike any of the goal or kick-off posts it shall be counted as behind goal.

11. In the event of a player kicking or forcing the ball willfully behind his own goal line, it shall be thrown in by the Field Umpire at right angles from the point where it crossed the said goal line.

12. Any player catching the ball directly from the foot of another player two yards away may call 'mark'. He then has a kick from any spot behind, and in any direction, even if he have to go out of bounds or behind his goal, no player being allowed to come inside the spot marked, or within five yards in any other direction. Should a player having a mark or kicking off from behind fail to take his kick within a reasonable time the field umpire to bounce the ball.

13. 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 at least once in every seven 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.

14. Tripping, Hacking, Rabbiting, Sliding, unfairly interfering with a player after he has made a mark, or catching hold of a player below the knee, are prohibited. Pushing with the hands or body is allowed only when a player is running within five or six yards of the ball. Pushing from behind shall not be allowed under any circumstances. Holding a player is allowed only while such player has the ball in hand, except in cases provided for in Rules 9, 12, and 18. Any player infringing these rules shall be reported to the Association by the central umpire. A player disputing the decision of an umpire on the field shall be disqualified for such term as the local association think fit. A player assaulting another player on the field shall be disqualified during the pleasure of the association. A player assaulting or otherwise mis-conducting himself towards the field umpire, and such case being proven, another player shall be disqualified during the pleasure of the association.

15. When the ball goes out of bounds, it shall be brought back to the spot where it crossed the boundary line, and be thrown in by the Umpire at right angles with that line, but shall not be playable until it touch the ground within bounds.

16. If any player willfully touch the ball before it reaches the ground when thrown in from out of bounds, the Umpire may allow a mark to the opposite side from the spot where the ball was so willfully touched.

17. If any player wilfully kicks the ball clear out of bounds when kicking off, after the ball has gone behind, or wilfully kicking or forcing it out of bounds while in play, the umpire shall allow a mark to the opposite side from the spot where the ball went out of bounds.

18. The ball while in play may under no circumstances be thrown or handed to a player.

19. 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, enforce as strictly as possible the running, pushing, and holding clauses of Rules 13 and 14, and 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 appeal to the local Association, whose decision shall be final.

20. No one wearing projecting nails, or iron plates on any part of his boots or shoes shall be allowed to play in a match.

21. 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.

22. No member of an senior, or junior associated club shall play with more than one senior or junior associated club during one season except he permanently change his residence from town to country or colony to colony or vice versa, and has first obtained the permission of the local Association; but in the event of a member not having played with his Club for two consecutive Saturdays immediately prior to his application for a permit, he shall be allowed, with the consent of the Committee of his Club and the approval of the Association, to join one other senior or junior associated club during the season. Should the Committee of his Club withhold its consent the Association shall have power to grant a permit without such consent. No permits shall be granted after the 15th day of July. Schools and universities are not to be considered Clubs within the meaning of this rule. Any man obtaining a permit illegally or playing in any way contrary to Rule 22, shall be dealt with as the local Association may think fit.

23. That any senior or junior associated club playing a member of another senior or junior associated club shall lose the match in which it plays such member, and shall, in addition, for the first offence, be fined £5, for the second £10, and for the third shall be disqualified from playing any of the senior or junior associated clubs during the remainder of the season.

24. In the event of a senior or junior club disbanding, its members may be at liberty to, play with any other senior or junior associated club, with the consent of the local Association. But no Club shall be considered to have disbanded after the 1st day of July.

25 Any player receiving payment directly. or; indirectly for his services as a footballer shall be disqualified .for, any ,period the, association may think fit and 'any club paying a player either directly or indirectly for, his' services as a footballer shall be fined £10 and,' in addition, lose the match and be disqualified' for the remainder of the season. A local association may disqualify players for any team such association may think fit. The several associations represented on this conference shall enforce the decisions of all the other associations whether made under the laws of the game or or articles of constitution of such associations.

26. None of the above laws shall be altered or rescinded, nor shall any Rule be repealed, altered, amended, or adopted, without the concurrence of an absolute majority of intercolonial delegates, at a meeting specially called for that purpose.

DEFINITIONS.

1. A KICK (for goal) must be made direct from, a player's foot or below the knee.
2. A DROP KICK or. DROP is made by letting the ball drop from the hands on to the ground, and kicking it the very instant it rises.
3. A PLACE KICK or PLACE is kicking the ball after it has been placed on the ground.
4. A PUNT consists in letting the ball fall from the hands, and kicking it before it touches the ground.
5. RABBITING is one player stooping' down so as to cause another to fall by placing his body below the other's hips.
6. SLINGING is the act of catching a player by or round the neck, and throwing him or attempting to throw him to the ground.

UMPIRES.

That in any match played between Associated Clubs, or under the control of the local Associations, the field and goal umpires shall be chosen by the Special Committee appointed under the Rules, and shall be paid £1 and travelling- expenses to the field umpire, and 10s. and travelling expenses to the goal-umpires, such payments to be made by the competing clubs and the club on whose ground the matches are played.