

**LAWS  
OF THE  
Australasian Game of Football**

*As adopted at a Conference of Intercolonial Delegates held November 1891*



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 seven 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 team detected during the progress of the game playing more than the number arranged for shall have all goals kicked prior to the detection of same annulled. 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 players shall then take their proper position on the field and the game shall be commenced by the field umpire bouncing the ball in the centre of the ground. When a goal has been obtained, the players shall again take their positions as above and the ball shall be bounced in the centre.

- (a) When one-fourth, one half, and three-fourths of the time arranged for shall have expired, the players shall change ends, and the ball shall be bounced 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 keep time and ring a bell, approved of by the Association, at the times indicated above (An alarm clock or any other suitable apparatus may be substituted for a bell. At the first sound of the bell the ball shall be dead, but in the event of a player having marked a ball before the bell has rung, he shall be allowed his kick, and, should he obtain a goal from it, it shall be reckoned. A goal obtained from a ball in transit before the bell has rung shall also be reckoned. .

5. The game shall be won by the side kicking the greatest number of goals.

6. All matches shall be commenced and played out to the time arranged (unless interfered with by adverse weather), and shall not be stopped or cancelled immediately previous to the time arranged for starting 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

- (a) Should a match be cancelled (immediately previous to the time of starting), or be stopped through adverse weather the game shall be reckoned a drawn one
- (b) No arranged match, other than those provided for above 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
- (Also see under heading "Cancelling matches").

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. All matches played in May, June or July to be played fifty minutes each way and in May, 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 30<sup>th</sup> of September

7. All matches played throughout the season shall be played 25 minutes each quarter

8. 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.

9. 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.

- (a) Goals and behinds shall be indicated by flags.
- (b) The goal umpire must consult with the field umpire prior to waving the flags. A goal given in accordance with the above and Rule 8 cannot be annulled.

10. 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 bounced the centre of the ground,) any one of the side behind whose goal it is kicked may bring it seven yards in front of any portion of the space within the goal line, to be indicated by a white mark seven yards in front, and shall kick it towards the opposite goal.

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

12. When the ball goes out of bounds it shall be brought back to the spot where it crossed the boundary line and bounced by the field umpire at least five yards within the playing ground.

13. 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 a line with his mark and the centre of his opponent's goal posts, 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 four yards in any other direction.

- (a) A free kick shall be treated as an ordinary mark
- (b) Should a player having a mark or kicking off unduly delay the play the field umpire shall bounce the ball.

14. 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.

15. If any player, when the ball is in play, wilfully kick or force it out of bounds the umpire shall give a mark to the opposite side from the spot where the ball went out of bounds.

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

17. Tripping, Hacking, Rabbiting, Slinging, 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.. Holding a player is allowed only while such player has the ball in hand, except in cases provided for in Rules 13 and 14.

- (a) Pushing a player shall not be allowed under the following conditions
  - 1. Pushing from behind shall not be allowed under any circumstances.
  - 2. From the front when a player is standing
  - 3. When a player is in the air going for a mark
- (b) A player reported by the field umpire for unduly rough play shall be dealt with as the Association thinks fit.
- (c) Slinging, deliberately charging or throwing a player after he has clearly made a mark, or when the ball is out of play will be considered as unduly rough play and the offender shall be reported by the umpire to the Association.

(d) A player disputing the decision of the umpire, or unduly interfering with or assaulting him during the progress of the game, or within the enclosure on the day of the match shall be dealt with as the association may think fit

(e) A player assaulting another player or using foul language on the field shall be reported to and dealt with as the Association may think fit..

18. The Field Umpire shall either award a "mark," call "play on," or stop the play and bounce the ball, stop all attempts at scrimmages, enforce as strictly as possible the running, pushing, and holding clauses of Rules 14 and 17, 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.

19. In the cases of Rules 14, 15, 16, and 17 a player of the opposite side shall be awarded a 'mark' 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.

20. The field umpire shall, prior to the match, examine the boots of players, and no one wearing projecting nails or iron plates thereon shall be allowed to play.

(a) If, during the progress of the game, any player is detected infringing the above rule, such player shall be disqualified for the remainder of the match and be reported by the umpire to the Association.

21. Local Associations may disqualify players for any term.

(a) 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 articles of constitution of such associations

22. 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, or a majority of the associations (in writing) represented on the 1890 conference..

#### 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.

7. HACKING is intentionally kicking an opponent

#### UMPIRES.

Field umpires shall carry out the rules in their integrity; strictly enforce the 'little mark', 'holding' and 'pushing' clauses; stop all attempts at scrimmages or anything that might be likely to lead to rough play. They shall report to the secretary of the Association, the results of matches, as also infringements of Rules 3 and 20. Care should be taken that field and goal umpires are in perfect accord before a goal is registered.

## **PERMITS TO PLAYERS**

1. No player of a senior, associated club shall play with more than one senior associated club during the season unless as hereafter provided.
2. No player of a junior or country associated club registered with this association shall play with more than one senior associated club during the season
3. A junior or senior associated player from another colony shall not be allowed to play unless –
  1. He has resided for at least two weeks in the colony in which he wishes to play
  2. He can produce his clearance from his association
  3. He has obtained the consent of the association under which he intends to play
4. Permits to local senior players to play with one other senior club shall be granted on the following conditions:
  1. That the player has not played with nor been chosen as one of the team by his club for two consecutive Saturdays
  2. That he furnishes the Permit Committee with the written assurance that the committee of his club do not desire to play him again.
5. Players from associated junior or country clubs registered with this association must stand out two Saturdays, produce clearance from their club, and receive permission from the Permit Committee of this association, before being allowed to play with a senior club.
6. No permit shall be granted to a senior associated player after the first day of June each year.
7. No permit whatsoever shall be granted after the first day of July.
8. The Permit Committee shall report to the association the names of all players to whom permits have been granted.
9. Any player feeling aggrieved at being refused a clearance by the committee of his club shall have the right of appeal to the permit committee who shall decide in the matter.
10. Any senior club playing a player of another senior or registered associated club, without having first obtained his permit, shall lose the match in which such player played, provided the opposing club lodge their claim to the match with the secretary or at the office of the association before 6pm on the Thursday following the day on which the match in question took place. If the claim be not made by the above hour and day, it shall not be entertained.
11. Any player obtaining a permit illegally or playing in any way contrary to the rules regulating permits shall be dealt with as the local association may think fit.
12. In the event of a senior or junior registered associated club disbanding its members may be at liberty to play with any other senior or associated junior associated club, with the consent of the local association, but no club shall be considered to have disbanded until notice of such disbandment shall be in the hands of the secretary of the association on or before the first day of July.
13. 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.. Caretakers of cricket or football grounds, having received permission annually from the permit committee or local association shall be permitted to play.

### **TOUTING FOR PLAYERS**

Any man who played for a senior club during any portion of season 1891 subsequent to the 1st of June shall not be allowed to play with another senior club except:

- (a) He furnishes the permit committee with the written assurance that the committee of his club do not desire to play him again. Any player feeling aggrieved at being refused a clearance by the committee of his club shall have the right of appeal to the permit committee who shall decide the matter.
- (b) That he has permanently changed his residence from colony to colony, town to town, from country to town or town to country, such being vouched for by the committee of his club
- (c) Players must apply in person for permits

Permits under the above to hold good to the 1<sup>st</sup> June

Permits from country and junior associated as before.

### **CANCELLING MATCHES**

1. A committee consisting of the Permit Committee and three other members of the Association, three to form a quorum, shall be appointed. Such committee shall have power to cancel all associated matches on account of adverse weather.
2. In the event of unfavourable weather on the morning of any associated match the secretary shall call a meeting of the committee for 12 noon, at the office of the association, to decide whether the weather be adverse or otherwise.
3. If weather be declared 'adverse' all associated matches shall be cancelled.
4. No points for premiership shall be deducted for matches so cancelled.
5. A match so cancelled shall if necessary be reckoned in the 18 required for the premiership.
6. Matches played by associated clubs on days declared to be adverse shall not be reckoned for the premiership.