

Victorian Football League.

Laws of the Australasian game of football, as adopted by the Australasian Football Council. 1925

1: The distance between the goal-posts shall be not more than 200 yards, nor less than 150 yards, and the width of the playing space not more than 150 yards, nor less than 100 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. Two posts shall be placed at a distance of seven yards one on each, side of the goal posts, and in a straight line with them. The intervening line between such posts shall be called the goal line. The ball to be used shall not be less than $23\frac{1}{2}$ nor more than $24\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference laterally, and not less than $29\frac{1}{2}$ nor more than $30\frac{1}{2}$ inches longitudinally. The ball to be approved by the field umpire.

2. Matches shall be played with not more than eighteen 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 the points kicked prior to the detection of the same annulled. The field umpire shall have power at the request of either captain to stop the game and call the players into line at any time for the purpose of counting them. Previous to calling the players into line the field umpire, shall notify the timekeepers, who shall make an allowance for the time so taken. In the event of a club commencing play with less than the number arranged for, that club shall be allowed to complete its number at any stage of the game.

3. The captain of each side shall toss for choice of goal. A circle 8 ft. in diameter shall be drawn in the centre of the ground and the field umpire shall bounce the ball in this circle at the start of each quarter and after each goal has been scored. A free kick shall be given any player who encroaches within the circle until the ball is bounced. The ball shall be in play as soon it is bounced.

4. All matches throughout the season shall be played twenty-five minutes each quarter. When one-fourth, one-half, and three-quarters of the time arranged for play have expired, the players shall change ends, and the ball shall be bounced in the centre of the ground as in Law 3. At half-time the players, may leave the ground for not more than fifteen minutes. Each club shall appoint a timekeeper, whose duty it shall be to keep time, and ring a bell approved of by the controlling body at the times indicated above. 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 or a behind from it shall be reckoned provided no breach of the laws shall have been committed by the side kicking for goal. A goal or behind obtained from a ball in transit before the bell has been rung shall be reckoned. Should the ball be touched after the bell has rung it shall be dead. When a goal is kicked by a player, no infringement by a player on the opposite side while the kick is being made or the ball is in transit can interfere with the due scoring of such goal. The field umpire shall be the sole judge of the first sound of the bell, and shall notify the timekeepers that he has heard the bell by blowing his whistle and holding up his hand; the timekeepers to continue ringing until the field umpire signals as aforesaid.

5. A goal shall be won when the ball is kicked by a player of the attacking side between the goal posts without touching either of them or any player after being kicked. A behind shall be won when the ball passes between the goal posts after being touched by any player or touches either of the goal posts, or is kicked or forced between the behind post and the goal post. Should the ball touch a behind post it shall be out of bounds.

6. The side kicking the greatest number of points shall win the match. A goal shall count six points and a behind one point.

7. When the ball goes out of bounds, it shall be brought back to the spot where it crossed the boundary line and be there thrown in by the umpire towards the centre of the playing space. Immediately the ball leaves the umpire's hands it shall be in play. Should the ball drop out of bounds from a kick-off, a free kick shall be given to the opposite side at the spot where the ball went out of bounds. In case the ball is kicked behind the goal line one of the opposite side (except when a goal is kicked, in which case the ball is bounced in the centre of the ground), any one of the side, behind whose goal it is kicked shall kick it off from within any part of the space to be indicated by two lines running parallel in a straight line from the goal posts for a distance of ten yards, and a horizontal line at the end of the said distance, joining the two parallel lines. Such lines to be marked white. Should the ball be kicked off beyond such white lines the ball shall be bounced on the white lines at the spot nearest where such infringement took place. No player of the opposing side shall be allowed to come within ten yards of the kick-off space when the ball is being kicked off from behind.

8. Any player catching the ball directly from a kick of another player not less than ten yards distant, shall be allowed a kick in any direction from any spot behind where he caught the ball, no player being allowed to come over that spot, or, within ten yards in any other direction. In kicking for goal from a free kick or mark only one player of the opposing side shall be allowed to stand on the mark. In kicking for goal the player must kick, over his mark, and should a player in the opinion of the umpire make any attempt to kick other than over his mark, or to run, the ball shall be immediately in play. Should a goal be obtained from a free kick or mark it shall be reckoned, notwithstanding any infringement of the above law by an opposing player.

9. Should a player wilfully waste time the field umpire shall instruct the timekeepers to add such time on and besides award a free kick to the opposing player nearest to the spot where the offence, takes place. The offending player or players shall be reported to the controlling body, which shall deal with the matter. Should a player unduly interfere with a man while kicking for goal, he shall be reported to the controlling body.

10. 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 ten 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. While being held, if the player does not drop the ball, free kick shall be given to the man who holds him. If the player be deliberately held back or thrown after he has dropped the ball he shall be awarded a free kick.

11. If any player when the ball is in play kicks or forces it out of bounds the umpire shall give a free kick to the nearest player of the opposing team from the spot where the ball went out of bounds. If in doubt the ball to be bounced five yards inside boundary.

12. The ball while in play shall under no circumstances be thrown or handed to a player. A free kick shall be given against the player infringing this law to the nearest opposing player.

13. Tripping, hacking, rabbiting, slinging, striking a player with either fist or elbow, throwing a player after he has made a mark, when the ball is out of play, or catching hold of a player below the knee are prohibited. Charging a player when he is standing still, or when in the air for a mark is prohibited. Pushing a player from behind or while he is in the air, is prohibited under any circumstances. A free kick shall be given against the player infringing this law.

14. The controlling body shall appoint for each match a field umpire, who shall have full control of the play, and shall inflict penalties in accordance with the laws. In cases of doubt, and in scrimmages, he shall bounce the ball where the occurrence took place. A player disputing the decision of an umpire, or unduly interfering with or assaulting, or using abusive, threatening or insulting language towards him during the progress of the game, or within or without the enclosure on the day of the match, shall be dealt with as the controlling body may think fit. A player assaulting another player or using abusive, threatening or insulting language or otherwise misconducting, himself during the progress of the game, or within the enclosure on the day of the match, shall be reported by the umpire to and dealt with as the controlling body may think fit. Goal umpires and boundary umpires shall have the same power of reporting to the controlling body any player as that conferred on the field umpire under this law, and dealt with as the controlling body may think fit. The controlling body is empowered to appoint a steward or stewards, who shall have the same power of reporting to the controlling body any player as that conferred on umpires under this law, and be dealt with as the controlling body may think fit.

15. The field umpire shall, prior to, and may at any time before the conclusion of the match, examine the boots of the players, and no one wearing nails or iron plates shall be allowed to play until a change be made to the satisfaction of the umpire.

16. Two goal umpires shall be appointed for each match. They shall be sole judges of goals and behinds, and their decision shall be final, except in cases where the ball has become dead, either by ringing of the bell or decision of the field umpire. Goals shall be indicated by two flags, and a behind by one flag. The goal umpire must, before raising his flag or flags, to register a goal or behind, ascertain from the field umpire whether the ball had not been touched or any infringement of the laws has taken place. A goal or behind given in accordance with the above cannot, be annulled.

17. The goal umpires shall keep a record of all goals and behinds kicked in any match, and furnish a report to the secretary of the controlling body within three days.

18. The controlling body may disqualify players for any term who have been reported for breaches of the laws.

19. Should the field umpire appointed for a match, before or during the progress of a game, become incapable through sickness or accident to perform his duties, a substitute shall be appointed by mutual arrangement between the captains of the opposing sides, failing which any delegate or delegates present shall decide in the matter.

Definitions.

1. A kick must be made direct from a player's foot or below the knee.

2. A drop kick is made by letting the ball drop from the hands on to the ground and kicking it. the instant it rises.

3. A place kick 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. A mark shall be either given from a place, drop, or punt kick.

6. Rabbiting is one player stooping down so as to cause another to fall by placing his body below the other's hips.

7. Slingsing is the act of catching a player by or around the neck, and throwing or attempting to throw him on to the ground.

8. Hacking is intentionally kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.

9. A free kick carries the same privileges as that of a mark.

10. Handball, is when the ball is clearly held in one hand and knocked with the other hand clenched

Boundary Umpires.

In matches where boundary umpires are appointed, the following Laws shall come into operation:

1. Two boundary umpires shall be appointed for each match. The boundary umpire shall be sole judge of when the ball is out of bounds. He shall bring the ball back to the spot where it crossed the boundary line and immediately throw it in, to the satisfaction of the field umpire.
2. The boundary umpire shall throw the ball from out of bounds over his head not less than ten yards, and not more than twenty-five yards, towards the centre of the playing space, except when the ball goes out of bounds within 20 yards of either behind post, when the ball shall be thrown not more than 5 yards towards the centre of the playing space and not less than 10 feet high in all cases.
3. The boundary umpire shall signal to the field umpire when the ball is out of bounds by waving a white flag (to be attached to his wrist) above his head, and the field umpire shall immediately blow his whistle to indicate that the ball is out of play.
4. When the ball is in play the boundary umpire shall not encroach upon the playing space to in any way interfere with the play.
5. When the ball is repeatedly forced out of bounds, at or about the same spot, the boundary umpire shall come in five yards from the boundary line and bounce the ball, if directed by the field umpire.
6. Boundary umpires shall follow the ball from goal to goal, and be always, ready to throw in without delay.
7. That those parts of the Laws of the Game imposing certain duties on the field umpire, and which will devolve upon the boundary umpires, be rescinded as far as regards the field umpire.

Interpretations

Law 3

When a goal is scored the field umpire must bring ball the back to the centre. Do not wait for the ball to be kicked or handed to you; and do it as quickly as possible. If there is any delay in getting the ball back when out of play, instruct timekeepers to add time on.

Law 4.

The games shall be started at 3 p.m. or at- such - time as may be agreed to suit local conditions. At half-time the players may leave the ground for not more than 15 minutes. The field umpire must consult timekeepers as to time, captains as to readiness to start game, and club not ready to start at appointed time must be reported.

When a ball is in transit, having been' kicked after the final bell has rung, and infringement takes place and the ball goes between the goal posts without being touched, what decision?

Answer: If infringement is made by a member of the same side as the kicker, goal umpire not to the given the signal, " All clear," but if infringement made by an opponent "All clear" signal must be given to goal umpire and goal allowed

If the ball is touched and goes through goal after the bell has rung, what decision? Answer: No decision; the ball is dead.

The question whether the time-bell has or has not been rung at any period of the game is no concern of goal umpires. It is their duty to register a goal or behind, as the case may be, upon receiving "All clear, from the field umpire, without making any comment. The field umpire is the sole judge as to the first sounding of the bell.

Law 5

If a player is allowed a free kick and is unable to take advantage of same through accident, what decision? Answer: Ball to be bounced.

If a player has his hand on the ball, ball being on the ground, and the ball is kicked through the posts, what decision? Answer: Ball touched. Behind to be registered upon receiving "All clear" from field umpire.

If the ball strikes the goal umpire when going through, what decision? Answer: A goal.

If ball, after being kicked, bounces from field umpire through goal without being touched by any player, what decision? Answer: A goal.

Behind to be allowed if ball wilfully forced or kicked through goal.

Law 7.

(Which also includes laws which come into operation when boundary umpires are appointed.)

If a player in kicking off from behind goes beyond white lines indicating kick-off space, what decision? Answer: The ball must be bounced on the white line nearest the spot where the infringement took place.

Should the ball drop out of bounds from a kick-off, what decision? Answer: Free kick to nearest opposing player.

In kicking off from behind the ball must be kicked clear from hand and foot.

In kicking off from behind, how far away must opponents be from white line? Answer: Ten yards

The boundary umpire shall signal to the field umpire when the ball is out of bounds by waving a white flag (to be attached to his wrist) above his head and the field umpire shall immediately blow his whistle to indicate the ball is out of play.

When the ball is repeatedly forced out of bounds at or about the same spot, the boundary umpire shall come in five yards from the boundary line and bounce the ball, if directed by the field umpire.

If the boundary umpire has signaled ball out of bounds and an infringement then takes place, what decision? Answer: Free kick. All breaches are punishable when the ball is out of play.

In what direction should the ball be thrown in from out of bounds? Answer: Towards the centre or the playing space.

Boundary umpires must not waste time in throwing in the ball, must not unduly encroach on playing space and must follow the ball from goal to goal.

If the ball is on the boundary line what decision should a boundary umpire give? Answer: No decision, for the ball is in play. It must be over the line before being out of bounds.

Should a field umpire blow his whistle when ball is out of bounds? Answer: Yes-upon receiving signal from boundary umpire.

The boundary umpire is sole judge of when the ball is out of bounds. He shall bring the ball back to the spot where it crossed the boundary line, and immediately throw it in to the satisfaction of the field umpire.

Has the field umpire any power regarding the throw-in by the boundary umpires? Answer: Yes. The ball must be thrown in to his satisfaction.

When the ball is signaled by the boundary umpire as being out of bounds, and the signal is not seen or is disregarded by the field umpire, and play goes on, what action must boundary umpire take? Answer: Must run after field umpire and notify him at once.

What action must the field umpire then take as a result of boundary umpire's action? Answer: Must stop play, instruct timekeepers to add time on, and allow ball to be thrown in where it crossed boundary line.

What distance and height, and how, should a ball be thrown in from out of bounds by the boundary umpire? Answer: From 5 to 15 Yards except within 20 yards from the goal post when 5 yards is the limit. Must be 10 feet in height at least upon all occasions and must be over his head.

If a player is out of bounds and marks the ball in the playing space, what decision? Answer: No decision. Ball in play.

Umpires must not be interfered with when throwing in the ball.

Law 8

If the player marks the ball at an angle, and runs around in front of the goal, say 6 yards, and kicks the ball through the posts, what decision? Answer: "All clear" signal to be given and goal allowed. In kicking for goal a man must kick over his mark, but in attempting to kick other than over his mark or to run the ball is in play.

The laws state that no player is allowed to come over an opponent's mark or within 10 yards in any other direction. What does 10 yards in any other direction mean? Answer: A 10 yards circle from where the ball was marked.

What constitutes a mark? Answer - A kick or bounce from below the knee, 10 yards distant, without being touched. Distance in height not recognised.

How long should the ball be held to constitute a mark? Answer: A reasonable time, such as a catch at cricket.

If a player considers he has made a mark, the ball being touched and he does not hear the field umpire call out "Play on," and he holds the ball when held by an opponent, what decision? Answer: If the umpire is satisfied that player has not heard his call, the ball to be bounced. But in the event of the ball being taken away from the man holding same by a player who has heard the words "Play on," what decision? Answer: No decision; the umpire's call, "Play on," holds good.

If a player goes over opponent's mark and refuses to go back, what action must field umpire take? Answer: Must stop play until man goes back, instruct timekeepers to add time on and report offender. How many opponents are allowed to stand at a Player's mark when kicking for goal? Answer: No limit; players can please themselves.

When a player receives a free kick he must go back to the spot where the breach occurred before being allowed to kick or play the ball in any other direction.

If a player from a mark kicks the ball through the posts without being touched, and an opponent jumps over the mark, and umpire blows his whistle for breach before the ball goes through, what decision? Answer: A goal; but if goal not obtained, player is allowed another kick.

If a player of a defending side obtains a mark or is awarded a free kick in front of the goal line, and in kicking from behind the goal line the ball strikes either goal-post, and rebounds without crossing the goal line, the field umpire shall give the -player another kick to put the ball in play.

When a mark has been given, keep your eyes on the mark and player. Do not turn your back.

Law 9

If a player wilfully wastes time, what action must a field umpire take? Answer: Instruct time keepers to add time on, award free kick to nearest opposing player, and report offending player or players to the League.

If a player unduly interferes with an opponent when kicking for goal, what decision? Answer: He must be reported.

How are time keepers instructed to add time on? Answer: By field umpire blowing whistle.

How long can a player hold a ball when not held by an opponent? Answer: No limit, so long as he does not carry it further than 10 yards, when ball must be struck upon the ground.

If a player is running with a ball and one of his own side is held or thrown, what decision?? Answer: If giving a free kick would penalise the side it must not be given.

In the event of a player with ball in hand being held by an opponent and drops ball immediately, but opponent, being unable to release his hold at once, throws the other player down, what decision? No decision. A player must be held back or thrown deliberately before free kick can be given.

If a player on a wet day strikes the ball on the ground every 10 yards without taking his hands from the ball, what decision? Answer: No decision.

A player may carry the ball 10 yards, which need not be in a direct line, that is, he may turn and dodge, but if held, he must immediately drop the ball.

In the event of a player lying on the ball with any part of his body, what decision? Answer: No decision. But if held by an opponent and still retains possession of the ball, free kick for holding same.

If a player runs 9 yards with the ball without striking it on the ground, hits it over an opponent's head, then catches it can he run and extra 10 yards without striking the ball on the ground? Answer: No. He must either strike it on the ground at once or take his kick immediately

Players must drop the ball immediately upon being held by an opponent. Non-compliance with this law must be punished fearlessly and free kick awarded without fail. If umpires are not strict in this regard ill-feeling is engendered.

Law 11

If any player when the ball is in play kicks the ball out of bounds without it being intercepted by any other player or players, or in the opinion of the umpire forces it out of bounds, a free kick shall be awarded to the opposing player nearest to the spot where the ball went out of bounds If in doubt the ball is to be bounced five yards inside the boundary by the boundary umpire. [All but WA interpretation]

Law 12

What constitutes a throw? Answer: When there is any doubt that the ball has not been hand-balled fairly it must be considered a throw, and a free kick awarded accordingly. Handball is when the ball is clearly held in one hand and knocked with the other hand.

Can the ball be handed from one player to another? .Answer: No. The ball cannot be handed under any circumstances.

Law 13.

If a player when standing still is pushed in the chest or side, or shouldered, the ball being not more than 5 yards away in the air or on the ground, what decision? Answer: No decision; the action being perfectly fair. But if the ball is further away than 5 yards a free kick must be awarded. Charging a player is prohibited.

What constitutes charging? Answer ; Rushing at and pushing a player when he is standing still, not in possession of the ball, or when in the air.

If a player when running with the ball, or standing still with it, is fairly met by an opponent and brought down, what decision? Answer. No decision. Being fairly met by an opponent means either by the hip or shoulder, chest, arm, open hands, or arms crossed with open palms.

Pushing an opponent in the face, what decision? Answer: Free kick.

If a player is elbowed by an opponent, what decision? Answer: A free kick awarded, and the offender reported to the League.

If a player is caught by the shoulder, and does not drop the ball, and is thrown heavily, who gets the free kick? Answer: The man with the ball.

If a player pushes an opponent from behind with his chest, what decision? Answer: Free kick.

In legitimately going for a mark, should a player interfere with an opponent from behind he must not be penalized.

Law 14

A player disputing the decision of an umpire, or unduly interfering with, or assaulting, or using abusive, threatening or insulting language towards an umpire during the progress of the game, or within or without the enclosure on the day of the match must be reported.

A player assaulting another player, or using abusive, threatening, or insulting language, or otherwise misconducting himself during the progress of the game, or within the enclosure on the day of the match, must be reported.

Have boundary umpires any power other than deciding whether the ball is out of bounds? Answer: Yes, powers of reporting foul play, etc. Goal umpires have the same power of reporting foul play as that conferred on the field and boundary umpires.

Umpires when reporting players must give particulars of the charges to delegates when making report at end of match.

If boundary or goal umpires intend to make a charge against any player or players they must do so through the field umpire during the intervals, and must give particulars, etc., of the alleged occurrence. When during the progress of the game the field umpire is struck with the ball, what decision? Answer: Play on.

Law 16

If ball marked on the goal line, what decision? Answer: The field umpire must consult with the goal umpire as to whether he wishes to give a decision; if not, the ball is in play.

Is it allowable for field umpires to come to an understanding by signaling "All clear" by nodding of head, holding up of fingers etc? Answer: Decidedly no. Must be by word of mouth otherwise goals or behinds are not correctly registered.

When the ball goes out of play so close to the behind post as to render it difficult to ascertain whether it went out of bounds or behind and the boundary umpire signals "Out" and the goal umpire says "Behind", what action must be taken to bring about proper results? Answer: Goal umpire should inform the boundary umpire not to throw the ball in, which order must be obeyed, run out on to the playing ground, get signal "All clear" from the field umpire and register behind. The goal umpire's ruling re goals and behinds, provided he gets "All clear" by word of mouth from the field umpire, is final.

If a goal umpire gets knocked down and ball goes through the goal posts without being touched, but is not seen by goal umpire, what decision? Answer: As goal umpire did not see where the ball went, he cannot give a decision, and ball must be bounced by field umpire on centre of white line in front of goal. Goal umpires, however, are particularly directed not to get in the way of players between the goal posts.

If goal umpire is unable to see who kicked the ball through the goal posts from a bunch of players including men of both sides, what decision should he give? Answer: As the goal umpire did not see who kicked the ball, he cannot give a decision; and ball must be bounced by the field umpire from the spot where the ball was kicked. Goal umpires, however, must watch the play closely, so that a true decision can be given. Should a goal umpire make a mistake by registering a behind for a goal, or vice versa, the error can be rectified if done immediately.