



RULES OF THE GAME (Men)

Updated: 30 May 2026

Umpiring

- All field umpires are to have a minimum of AFLQ Club qualification.
- Without exception, the umpire has complete authority during the game. Club delegates are to work with the umpires to ensure the Footy For Fun principle is maintained and any umpire requests are carried out, including equalisation - even numbers for both teams.
- Dissent, abuse, insults and aggression will not be tolerated. Umpires can at any time direct unacceptable behaviour through the club delegate for their remedy. Should an umpire deem it necessary, they can report any unacceptable player behaviour through the opposition team sheet or by direct correspondence to a member of the AFLMQ Executive Committee. There is no need to make a direct report at the time. AFLMQ will then conduct an investigation by phone/email to determine any relevant penalty, and unless an error of identification has occurred, will side with the umpire.

Underage Players

- Clubs are only allowed an underage player to make up team numbers. They cannot be used when over-aged players are available or just to make a team more competitive.
- No more than three underage players can be on the field at any one time in either of the 35s or 45s competitions.
- In order to take the field the player MUST already be 33/34 for the Over 35s (there is no dispensation for a player turning 33 later in the year to take the field for a game).
- All underage players must be identified on the team sheet and communicated to the opposition delegate and the umpires. Should an underage player display unfair ability or aggression, the opposing delegate has the authority to restrict the player's time on the ground and/or position or can even exclude them from the game.
- Playing underage is a privilege and not a right, and the interests of appropriate age players will always be a priority.

Rucking

- Only one player from each team to contest all ruck contests, knee lifting is not allowed and a free kick to the opposing ruck may be awarded. A free kick shall be awarded against a team that has two players involved in the ruck contest.
- At all times the ball shall be thrown up and not bounced.
- At centre bounces the white line (or imaginary line) shall be used.
- One ruckman from each team shall approach the throw up from opposite sides of the white line. Over 35s games are to contest from the outer circle. Over 45s games are to contest from the inner circle.
- At boundary throw-ins only one player from each team to contest the ruck. If there is no boundary umpire, the field umpire will throw up the ball 10 metres in from where the ball went out. (Care: refer "Umpire Instructions" below for additional rules).

Marking

The player in front of the pack competing for a mark is to be given every protection and opportunity to take the mark. Any unnecessary or deliberate interference by an opponent player/s in attempting to mark or prevent the player in front of the pack from taking the mark shall result in a kick being awarded to the player in front of the pack. The interference could take the form of a knee or boot being put into a player's body.

Holding the Ball/Barging

- The player in possession of the ball is to be given a most reasonable time and every opportunity to dispose of the ball.
- A player attempting to barge, charge through or break a tackle can do so only if they have not had prior opportunity to dispose of the ball failing to do so shall result in a free kick to the tackling player.
- When a player is fairly bumped in the side and the ball falls from their hands - the call is play on. Likewise when a player is either knocked on the arm causing them to drop the ball or has their arm pinned to their side causing them to drop the ball - play on.

AFL Masters Queensland Inc (AFLMQ)

ABN 96 012 900 262

C/- 61 416 744 888

All correspondence to admin@aflmastersqld.com.au



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Player Protection

- All players making the ball their objective are to be given the utmost protection by the umpire.
- Any contact other than a legal side bump or legal tackle (between knee and shoulder) to be deemed unduly rough play and a free kick to be awarded.
- Slings players to the ground whether the player is in possession of the ball or not is illegal and a free kick may be awarded against the tackling player, remember this is footy for fun and at no stage should an aggressive tackle be necessary.
- Late contact, in any form, when the ball has been disposed of, will result in a relayed free kick being paid down the field.
- Chopping with a clenched fist will result in a free kick being awarded.
- A player can only be tackled front on by being grabbed with both hands; any attempt to bump or hit a player front on will result in a free kick awarded and the umpire may elect to card the offending player.
- Once a tackled player has been brought to the ground, no other player shall become involved in this tackle. If this occurs, a free kick will be awarded to the tackled player.

50 Meter Penalty

A 50 metre penalty only, shall be applied in all instances.

Advantage

Advantage will be paid under the umpires discretion.

Standing on the Mark

The standing still on the mark rule does not apply.

Scoring

To be on the following basis:

- Behind - Kicked by any type of kick score 1 point.
- Goal - Kicked by punt kick or kicked off the ground score 6 points.

Umpires Coloured Cards

- YELLOW CARD - Automatic send off for remainder of the quarter plus an additional 15 minutes. Player CAN be replaced.
- RED CARD - Automatic send off for remainder of the game. Player cannot be replaced.
- A player who is carded 3 times in a season could incur expulsion from AFLMQ

Order Off Rule

Players can be ordered off for the following indiscretions.

1. VERBAL ABUSE - Yellow Card or Red Card

- Verbal abuse or dissension to any person on field (i.e. Umpire, opposition player or team mate) or any self abuse using abusive language.

2. UNDULY ROUGH PLAY - Yellow Card or Red Card (Umpire's discretion)

- Unduly Rough Play (shirt front, charge, or any unnecessary tackle or challenge likely to cause injury)

3. FIGHTING - Red Card

- Striking by fist, elbow or foot.
- Second offence of Yellow Card will automatically attract a Red Card.
- Any player who receives a Red Card is automatically sent off for the remainder of the game and cannot be replaced.
- Plus a referral to the AFLMQ Executive Committee for further action.

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New 2026 AFL Rules

The below seven new rules were introduced by the AFL for Season 2026. **AFL Masters Queensland Inc. have adopted 6 of the 7 new AFL rules, but do not use number 7, the Stand Rule.** The Last disposal between the arc's is now part of our rules but deliberate out of bounds has not been previously and is currently not part of AFL Masters Queensland Inc.

1. Last Disposal Rule

A free kick will be awarded against players who dispose of the ball (kick or handball) that goes out of bounds between the 50m arcs. This rule aims to eliminate confusion around the "insufficient intent" rule, which will still apply inside the 50m arcs.

2. Centre Ball-Up Changes

The traditional centre bounce has been abolished. At centre ball-ups, a competing ruckman cannot cross the centre circle line and engage with their opponent before contesting the ball.

3. Goal Square Starting Positions

There will no longer be a requirement for a player to start in the goal square at each centre ball-up, allowing for more fluid gameplay.

4. Shrugging in a Tackle

A shrug while being tackled will now be considered a prior opportunity, meaning players cannot evade tackles in a way that leads to high tackles.

5. Kick-In Times

The time allowed for players to bring the ball back into play after a behind will be standardized to eight seconds, aligning it with the time allowed for set kicks around the ground.

6. Ruck Nominations

Umpires may restart play without a nominated ruck being present, streamlining the game.

NOT USED IN AFL MASTERS QUEENSLAND INC.

7. Protected Area Rule "the Stand Rule"

Players must stand if they are within the protected area (within five meters) when a mark or free kick is paid, enhancing player safety and game flow.

Sources

- 2026 Laws of Australian Football: <https://play.afl/sites/default/files/2026-02/Laws%20of%20Australian%20Football%202026.pdf>
- 2026 Laws of the Game: <https://play.afl/clubhelp/resources/laws-game#article-0>
- 2026 New Laws & Interpretations: <https://play.afl/video-gallery?tags=713>

AFL Masters National

AFLM National has already confirmed all 7 new rule changes will take effect for the 2026 National Carnival, so players will need to be aware if we don't adopt any of these rules during our season, they will need to adjust to them come the carnival.

Judicial Proceedings

Should any umpire submit a written report following the send-off of a player, the AFLMQ Committee will meet to decide any additional penalty to be imposed.

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Local Playing Rules

- To be read in conjunction with playing rules, the Men's 35's and 45's competition will be played with 18 players on field with even numbers on the bench
- All teams must always have an even number of players on the field and if the opposing team has an excessive number of players, then players will be advised to play for the opposition team to ensure equal numbers.
- If player numbers are lower than 18 per side, a minimum of 12 player per team is required to commence the game and if this occurs, coaches, and/or each club representative and umpires will discuss the duration of each quarter prior to the game commencing, any changes to the 20 minute per quarter will only be made if both club representatives and the umpire agree. If there is no agreement, the rules of the game apply.
- Players are permitted to wear a soft brim hat during the game, baseball style peak hats are not permitted.
- Players can wear skins or similar under the paying kit and preference is that these are skin coloured or match their team jersey colours.
- If a player is injured and leaves the field and the player's team does not have a replacement the other side shall offer one of their interchange players to take their place or if they also have no replacement player shall take one of their own players off to keep the sides even.

Carnival Participation

To participate in the National Carnival for Queensland, preference will be given to registered and active club members.

Umpiring Instructions

- Pay the first kick or use the advantage rule.
- Give the utmost protection to the player in front or going the ball.
- Give reasonable time to dispose of the ball (less emphasis on the tackler).
- Free kick against players raising a leg when marking or spoiling from behind.
- Strictly enforce the verbal abuse and complaints with the Yellow and Red Card send off rule. All send-offs must be recorded by the Home Team on their Official Scoring Sheet.
- 50 metre penalties apply
- Ensure that the Water carriers and Runners are clearly visible in a brightly coloured top or bib and are over the age of 14 years and are wearing appropriate covered footwear.
- Umpires are to ensure that players remove all jewellery or have suitably taped and protected prior to the game commencing.
- Ruck can come from any direction but only one from each team to contest the knock or throw in. At centre throw ups, the white line shall separate the ruckmen.
- Umpires and teams to assemble in the centre of the ground prior to the start of each game for a game conference outlining the principals of Masters Footy
- Umpires to advise both verbally and by sign what a penalty kick is given for.
- All Red Card send offs to be recorded by umpires in the form of a report and sent to AFLMQ Administration Officer at admin@aflmastersqld.com.au
- Boundary umpires when available - throw in is in force.
When not available the following procedures are to operate:
 - Ball out of bounds by foot on the full - kick in by opposing team.
 - Ball out of bounds by foot (but not on the full), or by hand - throw up 10 metres in by field umpire, there is no deliberate out of bounds rule.
 - Umpires to throw up ball, not bounce in all ruck contests.



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Club Delegates

- The Club Delegate shall ensure that the Club for which they represent shall uphold the decisions of the AFLMQ Executive Committee.
- The Club Delegate and Club Registrar shall ensure that every player is registered and has completed an AFLMQ online registration form prior to playing any AFLMQ game and registration forms and payments shall be given to the Registrar.
- The Club Delegate shall ensure that all match fees are paid to the AFLMQ Treasurer by the required date.
- The Club Delegate shall ensure that a team sheet generated from PlayHQ is completed on game day and that all players are recorded on and have signed the team sheet and that no unregistered player shall take the field.

Player Insurance

- AFLMQ advises it takes no responsibility for loss or injury whatsoever to any participant in the Association.
- You are reminded that it is YOUR responsibility for any loss or damage for both personal property or injury.

Both Club Delegate Match Day Requirements

Each club (both home and away) must provide the following at every game regardless of venue.

- An esky with at least (2) bags of ice
- At least (3) calico (or zip lock) bags for ice pack treatment
- One field umpire (must be a qualified and registered in 2024 and allocated to OfficialsHQ in AFLMQ umpiring panel)
- Water runner in a clearly identified and bright coloured top or bib.
- No person under the age of 14 is to be on the field of play in any capacity i.e. water carrier or runner while a match is in progress; this is a responsibility of the clubs. Should this be noticed or brought to the attention of the umpires, they are directed to stop play immediately and instruct the Club to have them removed from the field of play. Play is not to commence until this has been done.

Host Club Requirements

- Protective padding on Goal & Point posts
- Qualified CPR and First Aid Qualified trainer in attendance (not playing)
- Stretcher
- Working defibrillator
- No person under the age of 14 is to be on the field of play while a match is in progress in any capacity i.e. water carrier, runner, goal umpire etc while a match is in progress (all zones)
- Under no circumstances can any match commence or continue without the four above standard requirements. Umpires have been instructed to not start or continue matches by the management Committee.