

DEVELOPING FOOTBALL FOR EVERYONE

SCHEDULE C: Winter Competition Rules 2025

(Regulation pursuant to clause 35 of the ESFA Constitution)

2025



EASTERN SUBURBS
FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Contents

1. DEFINITIONS	4
1.1 IN THIS REGULATION, THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND PHRASES MEAN:	4
2. ORGANISATION AND ADMISSION.....	6
2.1 SCOPE AND APPLICATION	6
2.2 CAPITALISED TERMS	7
2.3 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST	7
2.4 DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS	7
2.5 CLUB OFFICIALS MUST SUBMIT TO JURISDICTION	7
2.6 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION	7
2.7 ALTERATION	7
2.8 UNFORESEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES.....	7
3. COMPETITION MANAGEMENT.....	7
3.1 COMPETITION MANAGER.....	7
3.2 ESFA COMPETITION MANAGEMENT	8
4. NOMINATIONS AND GRADING.....	8
4.1 NOMINATIONS.....	8
4.2 FIELD AVAILABILITY.....	9
4.3 COMPETITION STRUCTURES AND GRADING.....	10
4.4 PLAYING SEASON	11
4.5 FOOTBALL NSW STATE CUP AND CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS	11
4.6 CLUB / COACHING RELATIONSHIPS	12
5. RE-GRADING PROCESS.....	13
5.1 RE-GRADING	13
5.2 POINTS FOR RE-GRADED TEAMS	14
5.3 APPEALS AGAINST RE-GRADING	14
6. OFFICIAL FIXTURE LIST, SPECIAL TIME REQUESTS, AMENDMENTS AND RESCHEDULING.....	14
6.1 OFFICIAL FIXTURE LIST	14
6.2 SPECIAL TIME REQUESTS	15
6.3 MATCH AMENDMENT FORMS.....	15
6.4 DEFERRED MATCHES AND RESCHEDULING	16
6.5 FIXTURE TIMESLOTS	16
6.6 FINALS SERIES TIMESLOTS	18
7. PLAYER REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY.....	18
7.1 REGISTRATION AND PLAYER ELIGIBILITY.....	18
7.2 REGISTRATION FEES.....	20
7.3 DEREGISTRATION.....	20
7.4 TEAM ALLOCATION.....	21
7.5 MINIROOS LEAGUE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY.....	22
7.6 YOUTH LEAGUE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY	22
7.7 SENIOR LEAGUE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY.....	24
8. INELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS AND COACHES/MANAGERS GENERAL.....	26
9. MATCH OFFICIALS	26
9.1 APPOINTMENT OF MATCH OFFICIALS	26
9.2 ARRIVAL TIMES AND PRESENTATION OF MATCH OFFICIALS	26
9.3 ASSISTANT REFEREES.....	27
9.4 NON-ARRIVAL OF REFEREES	27
9.5 CLUB REFEREE	27
9.6 REFEREE EVALUATION FORM	28
10. GROUND PREPARATION	28
10.1 DRESSING THE GROUND.....	28

10.2	ASSESSMENT OF PLAYING SURFACE	28
10.3	DAMAGE TO PROPERTY	29
10.4	CLEANING UP/ COLLECTION OF RUBBISH.....	29
11.	RTOs, MATCH SHEETS AND PLAYING TEAMS	29
11.1	REGISTERED TEAM OFFICIALS (RTOs)	29
11.2	MATCH SHEETS AND PLAYING TEAM.....	30
11.3	PLAYER AND RTO IDENTIFICATION	31
12.	PLAYING RULES	32
12.1	NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND INTERCHANGE	32
12.2	MATCH BALLS	33
12.3	DURATION OF MATCHES	34
12.4	LAWS OF THE GAME	34
12.5	PROVISION OF PLAYING STRIPS	37
12.6	GOALPOSTS.....	37
12.7	12.7 FA and FNSW PROGRAM Playing Rules.....	37
13.	DISCIPLINE AND MISCONDUCT	39
13.1	CAUTIONS	39
13.2	SENT-OFF PLAYERS	39
13.3	MISCONDUCT	39
13.4	MISTAKEN IDENTITY	40
13.5	DISPUTES	41
13.6	ABANDONMENT OF MATCHES	41
13.7	MANIPULATION OF RESULTS	42
13.8	CONTROL OF SPECTATORS	42
13.9	GRIEVANCES	42
14.	RESULTS, COMPETITION POINTS AND FORFEITS.....	43
14.1	COMPETITIVE AND NON-COMPETITIVE AGE GROUPS.....	43
14.2	NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS	43
14.3	COMPETITION POINTS.....	44
14.4	RANKING OF TEAMS	44
14.5	CLUBS REMOVED OR WITHDRAWING FROM DIVISIONS	44
14.6	MATCHES AFFECTING THE FINALS SERIES	45
14.7	FORFEITS & WALK OFFS.....	45
14.8	PENALTIES FOR FORFEITS	45
15.	FINALS SERIES AND TROPHIES.....	46
15.1	FINALS SERIES	46
15.2	POSTPONED OR ABANDONED FINALS SERIES MATCHES.....	47
15.3	FINALS SERIES VENUES	47
15.4	DRAWN FINALS SERIES MATCHES.....	47
15.5	PREMIERSHIP TROPHIES	47
15.6	GRAND FINAL TROPHIES	47
15.7	PERPETUAL TROPHIES	48
15.8	FINALS SERIES PLAYER ELIGIBILITY	48
16.	MEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE	48
17.	WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE	48
18.	KNOCKOUT COMPETITIONS.....	49
19.	FAILURE TO COMPLY	49

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 IN THIS REGULATION, THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND PHRASES MEAN:

'Age Group' means the Competitions organised for players of a certain age and gender as offered by ESFA from time to time.

'Association' means the Eastern Suburbs Football Association Incorporated.

'Away Team' means the Team playing the Match at away from their home ground and/or appearing last on the Official Fixture List in the event a Match is conducted at a neutral venue.

'Board' means the board of directors comprising the persons elected in accordance with the ESFA Constitution.

'Boys' League' means the competitions for boys who are between the ages of 12 and 18 years as organised and structured by the ESFA.

'Championship' means the highest Division of any Age Youth Age Group and age group defined competitions

'Club' means a club as described in the ESFA Constitution.

'Club Referee' means a Referee appointed by a home Club, in accordance with Rule 9.5.

'Competition' means all the Matches between all the Teams in a Knockout, Premiership or other event or tournament under ESFA's control.

'Knockout' means a knock-out competition that a Team competes in during a Season.

'ESFA' means the Eastern Suburbs Football Association Incorporated.

'Executive' means the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ESFA or his or her nominee, or other person appointed by the Board to manage competitions.

'Disciplinary Committee' means the Disciplinary Committee as defined in the Disciplinary Procedure.

'Disciplinary Procedure' means the disciplinary procedure set out in Schedule D.

'Division' refers to a group of Teams playing a Premiership and Finals Series.

'Dribl' means the Competition Management System used by the ESFA, including its website and mobile application.

'FA number' means the unique 8-digit identification number issued to registered Participants by Football Australia i.e. FA.

'FIFA' means Federation Internationale De Football Association (FIFA).

'Finals Series' means the playoff matches conducted at the end of the Premiership in accordance with the Regulations.

'FNSW' means Football New South Wales, which is the governing body for football in New South Wales.

‘Girls’ League’ means the competitions for girls who are between the ages of 12 and 18 years as organised and structured by the ESFA.

‘Grade’ means the Age Group and Division in which a Team is registered to compete.

‘Home Team’ means the Team playing the Match at its home ground and/or appearing first on the Official Fixture List in the event a Match is conducted at a neutral venue.

‘Youth’ or ‘Youth League’ means the Boys’ League and the Girls’ League.

‘Laws of the Game’ the Laws of the Game as issued by FIFA.

‘League’ means any of MiniRoos League, Boys’ League, Girls’ League, Men’s League and Women’s League.

‘Council’ means the Council referred to in the ESFA Constitution.

‘Match’ means any match played in a Competition.

‘Match Day’ means a day or days on which matches are scheduled to be played.

‘Match Official’ means a Referee, Assistant Referee, Fourth Official, any person in charge of safety or any other person appointed by ESFA or a Team to assume responsibility in connection with a Match.

‘Match Sheet’ means the sheet carrying the details of the Match, competing Teams and participating Players and RTOs as specified by ESFA from time to time as described in Rule 11.

‘Men’s League’ means the competitions for men who are 19 years or over as organised and structured by the ESFA.

‘MiniRoos League’ means the competitions for Players who are 12 years or younger as organised and structured by the ESFA.

‘Official’ means a Match Official or RTO.

‘Official Fixture List’ means the ESFA notification of Matches as described in Rule 6.1.

‘Participant’ means a Player, Match Official, RTO, Club Official or Spectator.

‘Phase’ means a MiniRoos draw for a part of a Season.

‘Player’ means any person who participates in a Match (irrespective of whether he or she is registered with FA, Junior or Senior or an amateur or professional).

‘Player ID Sheet’ means the ID sheet produced by Dribl Web or App, showing player’s name, registered team, shirt number and photo identification referred to in Rule 11.3.

‘Premiership’ means a competition made up of round-robin Matches that a Team competes in during a Season, excluding the Final Series.

‘Premier League’ means highest division of Senior Men’s and Women’s Competitions

‘Referee’ means a Referee or Assistant Referee appointed in accordance with Rule 9.1, or

in the case of MiniRoos games, a Game Leader.

‘Review Committee’ as per Section 4 as set out in Schedule D

‘Match Officials’ Fees’ means the fees payable to Match Officials as determined in accordance with Rule 9.1.

‘Round’ means to a full cycle of Matches in a Premiership where each Team plays each other once.

‘RTO’ means Registered Team Official being a manager or coach of a Team who has been nominated by a Club and has been registered by ESFA in Dribl.

‘Schedule of Penalties’ means the schedule of penalties set out in Schedule H.

‘Season’ means the period in which competitions are played.

‘Senior’ and **‘Senior League’** means the Men’s League and the Women’s League.

Spectator’ means a person who attends and watches a Match.

‘Team’ means the Players and RTOs nominated to participate in a Competition.

‘Women’s League’ means the competitions for women who are 19 years or over, as organised and structured by the ESFA.

2. ORGANISATION AND ADMISSION

2.1 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

- (A) These Regulations apply to Participants in the Eastern Suburbs Football Association Winter Competitions.
- (B) Where these Regulations are silent on any particular aspect, then all Teams, affiliated bodies and organisations will first have regard to the ESFA Constitution and Regulations, FNSW Constitution, FNSW By-Laws, FNSW Rules and Regulations, FA Rules and Regulations and where applicable Rules and Regulations of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and FIFA.
- (C) If any part of these Regulations is void, that part shall be severable and will not affect the enforceability of the remaining sections of these Regulations.
- (D) The Executive will apply all articles of these Regulations in any such way that the Executive determines, and such application of the articles shall be final and binding on the Parties.
- (E) In the case of an article of these Regulations being interpreted in two or more different ways, the Executive reserves the right to determine which interpretation is valid. Any such interpretation of the Regulations by the Executive is final and not subject to appeal.

2.2 CAPITALISED TERMS

- (A) Any capitalised terms used in these Regulations will have the meaning given to them in Section 1.

2.3 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

- (A) Prior to the commencement of each Season, ESFA will call for expressions of interest and interested Clubs must complete the Expression of Interest form prescribed by ESFA, including Club Financials and Club Constitutions and submit it by the time stipulated by ESFA.

2.4 DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS

- (A) All Teams, Players, RTOs, Match Officials, Spectators or any person participating in any manner at a Competition Match or event will submit exclusively to the jurisdiction of the ESFA Disciplinary Committee.

2.5 CLUB OFFICIALS MUST SUBMIT TO JURISDICTION

- (A) Clubs that wish to participate in a Season must ensure that all of their directors, committee members, employees and volunteers (Officials) agree to be bound by the rules of ESFA including its Competition Rules and Disciplinary Procedure.
- (B) Officials of Clubs are also required to register in the Competition Management System i.e. Play Football and Dribl

2.6 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

- (A) The Executive will have the power to consider individual circumstances outside the prescribed limits of the regulations should it be clear those special considerations are in the interests of the game.
- (B) The decision by the Executive to review and consider individual circumstances under this section is not subject to appeal or review.

2.7 ALTERATION

- (A) The Executive and/or Board will have the power from time to time to make, alter or rescind these Regulations

2.8 UNFORESEEABLE CIRCUMSTANCES

- (A) Nothing in these Regulations will prevent ESFA from approving a course of action to meet unforeseeable circumstances not covered by the Regulations, including but not limited to promotion, relegation, number of divisions and composition of teams in each division.

3. COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

3.1 COMPETITION MANAGER

- (A) The Executive shall appoint a Competition Manager to perform the day-to-day administration of the Competitions.

3.2 ESFA COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

- (A) The ESFA shall establish a Season Calendar which sets the following:
- i) closing date for final nominations
 - ii) publishing date for proposed gradings of Teams into Divisions
 - iii) final date for appeal of gradings
 - iv) release of final gradings

4. NOMINATIONS AND GRADING

4.1 NOMINATIONS

- (A) Prior to the commencement of each Season the ESFA shall call for nominations from Clubs from which satisfactory Expressions of Interest have been received for Teams to compete in such Age Groups and Divisions as it sees fit.
- (B) Nominations may be submitted for the following Age Groups:

Age	Male	Female
5	U5	G5
6	U6	G6
7	U7	G7
8	U8	G8
9	U9	G9
10	U10	G10
11	U11	G11
12	U12	G12
13	U13	G13
14	U14	G14
15	U15	G16
16	U16	
17	U17	G18
18	U18	
21	M21	W21
All-Age	AAM	AAW
30		O30W
35	O35M	
45	O45M	
55	O55M	

- (C) All nominations shall be made upon the official nomination form, which shall include:
- i) Age Group and Division for which the nomination is being submitted.
 - ii) Where two (2) or more Teams are nominated in a Division, the Club is to apply an internal ranking of the Teams.
- (D) This Nomination Form must be submitted by the date specified by ESFA when calling for nominations.

- (E) Each nominated team must have allocated to it in the Dribl at minimum the following number of players. These minimums must be maintained throughout the winter season:
- i) Ages 13-18: 12 players i.e. Youth Leagues
 - ii) Ages 19 and over: 14 players i.e. Senior Leagues
- Teams with fewer than this number of Players at any point through the season will be asked to show cause as to why they should remain in the competition.
- (F) The ESFA shall have the power to seek additional information regarding a Team's composition and previous history and this should be provided by Clubs at least 24 hours prior to the publishing date for proposed gradings.
- (G) A minimum of 10 players must be registered in Play Football per team in Youth and Senior football prior to final grading and subsequent inclusion in competitions.
- (H) Nominations received after the closing date will only be accepted at the discretion of ESFA and placed into Competitions as determined by the ESFA.
- (I) If a Club withdraws a nomination after the closing date for final nominations, but before the publishing date for proposed gradings of Teams into Divisions, there is no penalty.
- (J) If a Club withdraws a nomination after the publishing date for proposed gradings of Teams into Divisions but before Match Day 1 of the Premiership competition, there will be a \$100 penalty.
- (K) If a Club withdraws a nomination after Match Day 1 of the Premiership competition, there will be a \$500 penalty.
- (L) The ESFA shall have the power to amend final gradings at any point prior to the commencement of the Season where a previously nominated Team withdraws.

4.2 FIELD AVAILABILITY

- (A) Prior to the commencement of each Season ESFA shall call for clubs to indicate their field availability for the coming season. Each club must fill out the Field Availability Form to indicate what fields that they have applied for or had confirmed for the coming winter season. This form shall indicate the days and times of field availability for each field on which the club intends for ESFA to arrange fixtures.
- (B) This Field Availability Form must be submitted at a date specified and announced by the ESFA.
- (C) The ESFA may limit the number of Team nominations that it will accept from a Club if the Club indicates insufficient field availability to host half of the Matches expected to be played by the Teams nominated.
- (D) Affiliated Clubs not having a home ground or not having sufficient grounds to cater for their Teams will be liable to pay a fee for the use of other Clubs' grounds including grounds booked by ESFA.
- (E) It is up to Clubs to ensure that they have sufficient fields booked to cater for their Teams' Premiership and Finals Series fixtures.

4.3 COMPETITION STRUCTURES AND GRADING

- (A) The ESFA reserves the right to determine the appropriate League and Division of each nomination, by taking into account the composition of the Team, previous Season's results, playing strength of the Club and the formation of the Divisions.
- (B) The ESFA, shall conduct competitions of various Age Groups and Divisions of an appropriate number of Teams.
- (C) The ESFA will attempt to structure MiniRoos programs as follows:
- There shall be at least three (3) Phases of Matches published, running the length of the winter Season totalling at least 15 Match Days. During each Phase, results will be assessed, and the grading determined for the following Phase with the primary objective being to achieve ability matching for Players and Teams to play against other Players and Teams of similar standard. No regrading shall occur outside the three phases.
- iii) An ESFA Development League will be offered for boys in U9, U10, U11 and U12.
- (D) The ESFA will attempt to structure Youth Premiership competitions as follows:
- i) Five and six Team Divisions will play three (3) rounds totalling 15 Match Days.
- ii) Seven and eight Team Divisions will play two (2) rounds totalling 14 Match Days.
- iii) Nine and ten Team Divisions will play two one full Round and a split Round totalling a minimum of 14 Match Days.
- (E) The ESFA will attempt to structure Senior Premiership competitions with 18 Match Days as follows.
- i) Five and six Team Divisions will play three (3) rounds totalling 15 Match Days and 3 additional Match Days will be added per rule E(iii).
- ii) Seven and Eight Team Divisions will play two (2) rounds totalling 14 Match Days and 4 additional Match Days will be added per rule E(iii).
- iii) The draw system will determine opponents randomly in cases where additional rounds are required. I.e., in an 8-team competition, following 14 Match Days, the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th match day will see each team drawn against 4 different opponents for a 3rd time in the season.
- iv) Nine and ten Team Divisions will play two (2) rounds totalling

18Match days
- v) The ESFA will aim for Premier Leagues to consist of ten teams with any exception of this rule determined by the ESFA.
- vi) The ESFA Men's Top 4 Leagues (i.e., 01, 02, 03 and 04) will aim to consist of ten teams with any exception of this rule determined by ESFA. This applies to Saturday and Sunday Men's competition.
- vii) ESFA may at its discretion, through grading and competition

formation, place two or more teams from the same Club in the same league.

ESFA will aim, through grading and at its discretion, to avoid 2 or more teams from the same club competing in the top 4 Men's Leagues and top 2 Women's Leagues (unless nominated as such).

- (F) The ESFA may at its discretion schedule additional Match Days within a Premiership competition provided that all Teams shall be scheduled to play the same number of Matches.
- (G) The ESFA may not combine two Divisions or Age Groups or split a single Division into multiple Divisions at a later point in the Season without prior notice of the merger or de-merger having been given with the final gradings along with arrangements being made for competition points and the resulting competitions' Finals Series.
- (H) If a five, seven or nine Team Division is created, each Round shall have a bye.

4.4 PLAYING SEASON

- (A) ESFA will use its best endeavours to ensure that each Team will play a minimum of 14 League Matches.
- (B) The Easter weekend will not have any Premiership Matches. Senior Knockout Competitions may be scheduled on this weekend or competitions that may consist of more than 10 teams.
- (C) The **middle weekend** of both the April and July School holidays will not have any MiniRoos or Youth Matches unless required to ensure competition of season or wet weather reschedules. In 2025 the last weekend of the April school holidays (26/27 April) will not have any MiniRoos or Youth Matches.
- (D) Any team entering the Kanga Cup in Youth Football must have amended any scheduled ESFA match prior. This requires a new date, time and venue for the deferred fixture and agreed to by ESFA. All teams require ESFA permission to enter as per Kanga Cup entry of sanction by Association.

4.5 FOOTBALL NSW STATE CUP AND CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS

- (A) ESFA may nominate teams for State Cup or Champions of Champions in any Age Group for which there are eligible Teams in ESFA competition. State Cup Nominations will be limited, at ESFA's discretion to the highest graded teams in the highest graded divisions from each individual club.
- (B) Where there is a State Cup or Champion of Champions competition offered in an age group for which ESFA does not conduct a dedicated competition, a Team may still enter that State Cup or Champion of Champions competition provided that that Team complies with the relevant eligibility regulations that Football NSW sets down for that Age Group. e.g. if ESFA does not conduct W21 competitions but a Team in ESFA competition wishes to be eligible for Women's 21 Champion of Champions, that side must play as a Women's 21 side in the ESFA AAW Competition.

- (C) If a Team participating in the State Cup requires a Match to be deferred, they must make themselves available to play the rescheduled fixture on the following Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening. Fixtures will If a Saturday team enters State Cup, no deferral will be granted without ESFA consent. ESFA reserves the right to immediately reschedule Sunday fixtures upon entering of teams into State Cup on Club training grounds of the Club who entered the State Cup if opposition team does not have a field.
- (D) All teams entering State Cup and Champion of Champions must consider school holidays and the availability of players to avoid forfeits. Should a team not be able to fulfill a complete tournament in Champion of Champions, it will be at ESFA's discretion as to whether another team within the grade is offered the ability to enter.

4.6 CLUB / COACHING RELATIONSHIPS

- (A) Clubs must ensure all coaches are registered in both Play Football and Dribl and encourage all coaches to attend age-appropriate FA Community Coaching Courses organised by the ESFA. Penalties will apply if a coach in not registered in Play Football and Dribl.
- (B) Coaches will require a valid WWC number to register on Play Football paid or volunteer
- (C) Clubs are encouraged to work with the ESFA Head of Football in ensuring coaching practices are current and in line with the FA National Curriculum.
- (D) If any coach is paid for coaching services in respect of the Club or any Team, the Club must disclose to the ESFA:
 - i) Coaching qualifications (including but not limited to a transcript of records in etrainu)
 - ii) WWC number recorded in Play Football
 - iii) The nature of the service they are providing, including:
 - a) number of days per week they coach for the Club.
 - b) training venue, and
 - c) teams coached on the weekend.
- (E) Teams may be deemed to have a prohibited provider relationship if:
 - i) The Club of the nominated Team engages a private academy or other external provider in a manner that promotes or requires participation in the private academy to attain selection in any Team of the Club. (for avoidance of doubt, a path must exist for inclusion in any team that does not require payment (directly or indirectly) by a player for private academy services), or
 - ii) The Club of the nominated Team endorses or recommends a private academy or other external provider that promotes or offers Players a real or perceived “pathway” to a professional football club, either domestic or international, or
 - iii) The nominated team includes branding of a private academy or other external provider on playing strip used in ESFA competitions (or Miniroos) without the express approval of the ESFA Board, or

- iv) There is any other formal or informal activity that ESFA may determine, in its absolute discretion, as constituting a prohibited relationship between the Club of the nominated Team and a private academy or other external provider.
- (F) The same applies for items 4.6(E) should the Team engage a private academy or other external provider independently of its Club's direction.
- (G) No Team with a prohibited provider relationship will be eligible to:
- i) Enter the ESFA competitions or programs.
 - ii) Be declared Premiers or Champions.
 - iii) Participate in the Finals Series.
 - iv) Be nominated by the ESFA to participate in FNSW competitions including the State Cup or Champions of Champions.
 - v) Be approved to participate in external competitions including the Kanga Cup.
- (H) Should a Team be accepted into the Competitions and subsequently be found to breach the eligibility condition relating to prohibited provider relationships, that Team may be:
- i) Removed from ESFA competitions or programs.
 - ii) Deemed ineligible to be declared Premiers or Champions.
 - iii) Deemed ineligible to Participate in the Finals Series.
 - iv) Deemed ineligible to be nominated by ESFA to participate in FNSW competitions including the State Cup or Champions of Champions, or;
 - v) Deemed ineligible to be approved to participate in external competitions including the Kanga Cup.
- (I) The Board's decision under this rule is final and binding on any Team or Club, and not subject to any appeal.

5. RE-GRADING PROCESS

5.1 RE-GRADING

5.2 1.1 RE-GRADING

(A) Barring exceptional circumstances, re-grading will occur after 4 completed Match Days across all competition divisions i.e. Youth and Senior Leagues

(B) The ESFA will have final right to re-grade, as they believe to be in the best interest of Teams, Divisions and Age Group as a whole. This may be before all teams within a competition have completed their 4 matches if those teams are not the ones being regraded.

(C) Several factors will be considered by ESFA when considering re-grading. These include (but not limited to) all facets of the original grading, subsequent player registrations and all initial match results (results and goal difference) in the Division. Other factors and circumstances including the impact on Team numbers in each Division will also be considered. It is not necessary if 1 Team goes up that 1 Team must come down or vice versa.

5.3 POINTS FOR RE-GRADED TEAMS

- (A) Any Team that is re-graded, whether up or down, will be placed in its new league with 6 points (equivalent to 1.5 points earned for each match not played in the new division) and zero goals for and against. Should a regrade be accepted outside the 4 completed Match Days, the ladders will be adjusted according to the 1.5 points per completed match day.

5.4 APPEALS AGAINST RE-GRADING

- (A) There will be a right to appeal for all Clubs affected by re-grading.
- (B) Clubs will have until 5pm the following day of notice to appeal by email from either the Club President or Club Secretary to the Competitions Manager.
- (C) The ESFA may consider the appeal, and their determination is final. There shall be no further appeal including appeal to General Manager or the Board.

6. OFFICIAL FIXTURE LIST, SPECIAL TIME REQUESTS,

AMENDMENTS AND RESCHEDULING

6.1 OFFICIAL FIXTURE LIST

- (A) The ESFA will schedule all Matches to be played between Clubs and will notify Clubs of the schedule of Matches in each Season as soon as practicable. The schedule of Matches shall hereafter be called the Official Fixture List.
- (B) A Match may be played wholly or in part under floodlights, provided that:
 - vi) Any alteration to starting times shall have been given due approval by ESFA
 - vii) The standard of lighting shall meet the requirements of the ESFA i.e. 100 Lux minimum
- (C) The ESFA reserves the right to alter or amend any Match after it has been specified in the Official Fixture List. The alterations could be to the date, or venue or kick-off times, or a combination of all providing the Clubs involved are given five (5) days prior notice where practicable. Clubs may agree to waive the five (5) days' notice.
- (D) All Matches shall be played within the boundaries of the ESFA unless otherwise agreed to by both participating Clubs and ESFA.
- (E) If Youth Clubs wish to defer Matches scheduled for the first weekend of the July public school holidays, at least 14 days notification of amendment with new time, date and venue where match shall be played, must be provided to the ESFA. No amendment will be considered after this time. This is also required for the final weekend of the July school holidays.

- (F) Matches shall be played on the date and times as nominated in the Official Fixture List or as instructed by the Executive and these dates and times may include any weekday evening and any daytime or evening on Saturday, Sunday or Public Holidays.
- (G) Matches shall commence at the appointed time, or in the event of a Match whose commencement is dependent upon the completion of the previous Match, within ten (10) minutes of the conclusion of the previous Match.
- (H) Kick off times of all official Matches shall be as determined by the Executive and shall be detailed in the Official Fixture List.
- (I) The ESFA, in setting down kick off times, may start Matches after 8:00am for any daytime Match and after 5:00pm, which may include Saturday, Sunday or any Public Holiday
- (J) Teams involved in Football NSW or other events sanctioned by the ESFA will be entitled to have their Match deferred with prior approval of the Executive, with the exception of Saturday teams seeking deferment due to a Football NSW Sunday fixture. Rescheduling rules apply as per rule 6.3.

6.2 SPECIAL TIME REQUESTS

- (K) All Special Time Requests for Match Days must be submitted by a date determined and communicated by the ESFA. The ESFA must take into account any timeslots set in 6.2 when considering a Special Time Request and has the right to agree to any Special Time Request in whole or part or reject any request at its discretion. . Requests may be rejected in part or whole based on the entire competition draw and field availability and other reasons affecting the integrity of the game.
- (L) Any Special Time Request, relating to specific fields and kick off times must be submitted with the Team nominations referred to in Rule 4.1.

6.3 MATCH AMENDMENT FORMS

- (M) At no time may Clubs organise and agree between themselves to change Matches, unless approved by ESFA.
- (N) A request to vary the time or place of a Match during the Season shall be submitted to the Executive. The request will need to be submitted on a Match Amendment JotForm. No game amendment will be considered once the season commences and draw finalised i.e. past Round 4, unless exceptional circumstances i.e. funeral. Any request for deferral/amendment due to a wedding will not be accepted unless advised to ESFA prior to the Season.
- (O) Match Amendment Jot Forms must be submitted and approved seven clear working days prior to the scheduled Match where the Match falls on either a weekend or a weekday. This rule only refers to extenuating circumstances past round 4.
- (P) Forms submitted after the time in 6.3.C for all fixtures shall incur a \$50 administration fee for each Club plus Match Officials fees shall be paid to appointed Match Officials if the game is not rescheduled on the same day. These only refer to extenuating circumstances past round 3.
- (Q) Amendments after the time in 6.1(P) above will not be accepted. This rule

only refers to extenuating circumstances past Round 3.

- (R) The ESFA reserves the right to refuse a Match Amendment Form if a Team has already amended one (1) or more Matches (in the specified time allowed under these Regulations).

6.4 DEFERRED MATCHES AND RESCHEDULING

- (S) Matches may only be deferred for State Cup fixtures if both matches are drawn on same day or for Youth Teams to avoid clashes with school holidays if a new date and time is provided to ESFA
- (T) A request to defer a Match during the Season must be submitted to the ESFA. The request will need to be submitted on a Match Amendment JotForm. The request must specify the new field, date and time and must be submitted and completed as per 6.4 C) and D) by seven (7) clear working days. prior to the scheduled match and must be for exceptional circumstances. No game can be deferred without reason and permission granted by ESFA.
- (U) Where a Match is postponed, the Home Team's Club must within three (3) days of the date of postponement, propose two (2) alternative date(s), time(s) and venue(s) within two (2) weeks of the date of deferral or postponement. If the ESFA deems this to be appropriate, the Match shall be scheduled. The ESFA has the right to refuse a deferral if the Home Team fails to notify the Competition Manager and Away Team's Club of a proposed date within the allowed three (3) days. The Away Team has a further two (2) days to propose a reschedule of the Match.
- (V) If agreement cannot be reached within five (5) days of the date of deferral or postponement, the Executive will take responsibility for rescheduling. The ESFA reserves the right to book Club training fields for this purpose.

If a team defers more than once in a season without proposing new date as per 6.4 C) and D) a \$100.00 fine may apply for each subsequent deferral.

- (W) For Youth and Senior Leagues, where appropriate, a Match may be played as a "Double Match". Each half of the Match will be considered as an entire Match and the points allocated accordingly.
- (X) At least **three (3) days' notice** where possible of a reschedule by the ESFA will be provided to Clubs (except at the end of the Season) and if a Club does not accept the reschedule, they will be deemed to have forfeited the Match.

6.2 FIXTURE TIMESLOTS

- (A) ESFA will use its best endeavours to ensure that matches are scheduled according to set timeslots
- (B) Nothing shall prevent ESFA from exercising discretion in scheduling games at different times where required for benefit of competition, club venues and match official appointments.
- (C) The timeslots by Age Group are set out in the table above:

* Fields at Queens Park are not available on Sundays until after 11:00, so there are different timeslots for some Matches played at Queens Park on Sundays:

Age Group	Day	Kick-off time	Queens Park Kick-off Time*	Time allotted
MiniRoos				
U8	Saturday	9:00		1:00
U9	Saturday	10:00		1:00
U10	Saturday	11:00		1:00
U11	Saturday	12:00		1:00
U12	Saturday	13:00		1:00
G8/9	Sunday	9:00	11:30	1:00
G10/11	Sunday	10:00	12:30	1:00
G12	Sunday	11:00	13:30	1:00
Boys				
U12	Saturday	13:00		1:00
U13	Saturday	14:30		1:15
U14	Saturday	15:45		1:15
U15	Sunday	11:30		1:30
U16	Sunday	13:00		1:30
U18	Sunday	14:30 With flexibility for ESFA to change to suit ground availability and pairing of fixtures		2:00
Girls				
G12	Sunday	11:00	13:30	1:00
G13/G14	Sunday	12:15		1:15
G16	Sunday	13:30		1:30
G18	Sunday	15:00		2:00
Men				
O35M Championship	Friday	19:00		2:00
AAM Premier League Reserve Grade	Saturday	13:00	Or at ESFA agreed time	2:00
AAM Premier League First Grade	Saturday	15:00	Or at ESFA agreed time	2:00
AAW Premier League	Sunday	15:00		2.00

6.3 FINALS SERIES TIMESLOTS

- (A) The scheduling of Finals Series matches shall be at the discretion of the Executive.

7. PLAYER REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY

7.1 REGISTRATION AND PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- (A) A qualified or bona-fide Player is one who is registered in accordance with these Competition Rules, using the procedures advised by the ESFA.
- (B) Players in ESFA Leagues must be Amateur as defined in the FA National Registration Regulations.
- i) Registration can be affected through:
 - ii) the Player self-registering in Play Football and the Club approving the Player's registration.
- (C) The registration of a Player with a Club is effective from the date the individual is made active by the Club and allocated to a Team in Dribl.
- (D) Registrations for Match Day 1
- i) To be eligible to play in the first Match Day of the Season a Player must have registered, been made active and allocated to a Team three (3) days prior to the commencement date determined and announced by the ESFA, of each competition.
- (E) Registrations after Match Day 1
- i) To be eligible to play in Matches after the Match Day 1 a Player must have registered, been made active and a Late Registration Form lodged with ESFA indicating what Team the Player is to be allocated to at least three (3) clear days before the Match Day on which the Player commences playing. Clubs must allocate the player in Dribl only upon acceptance by the ESFA.
 - ii) The Late Registration Form must indicate each Player's most recent registered Club and Team.
 - iii) The ESFA reserves the right to refuse to allow allocation of a Player to a Team as requested on the Late Registration Form, if their most recent registered Club and Team would indicate they are unsuitable for that Grade.
 - iv) All registrations must be lodged by no later than 11:59pm of the 30 June to be eligible for that Season.
- (F) **All new Players** in age denominated competitions must provide proof of age and identity to their Club, that being a photocopy of birth certificate, passport or drivers licence and the Club shall make this available to the Association on request. This will be part of registration process in Play Football for 2025. Registrations will be reviewed by ESFA on a frequent basis to check overage youth players are not allocated incorrectly or not showing on Dribl due to the age discrepancy. Any player not showing in Dribl shall be deemed ineligible and the club may be subject to Disciplinary Review.
- (G) The eligibility of Players shall be defined by ESFA from time to time.

- (H) A Player may never play in a Team graded lower than that to which they are registered except when granted special exemption from this rule by ESFA.
- (I) No dual registration is allowed under any circumstances. Players are not allowed to register with more than one (1) Club in the 2024 Outdoor Football Season or more than one (1) Team within a Club, or with any club outside the ESFA's boundaries without deregistering from one Club. A Player's first registration will be deemed valid. Players and Clubs may be subject to Disciplinary action.
- (J) A Player should register and play in their Age Group but may play in other Age Groups in certain circumstances described in this Rule.

The following table details the birth dates applicable to the Age Groups of the Competitions. Players must be within these ranges to be eligible for re

Age group	Lower age limit – a player is eligible if they are:	Upper age limit – a player is eligible if they are:
5	Turning 5 on or before 31 st December 2025 ¹	Turning 5 on or after 1 st January 2025
6	Turning 5 on or before 31 st December 2025 ¹	Turning 6 on or after 1 st January 2025
7	Turning 6 on or before 31 st December 2025 ¹	Turning 7 on or after 1 st January 2025
8	Turning 7 on or before 31 st December 2025 ¹	Turning 8 on or after 1 st January 2025
9	Turning 8 on or before 31 st December 2025 ¹	Turning 9 on or after 1 st January 2025
10	Turning 9 on or before 31 st December 2025 ¹	Turning 10 on or after 1 st January 2025
11	Turning 10 on or before 31 st December 2025 ¹	Turning 11 on or after 1 st January 2025
12	Turning 10 on or before 31 st December 2025 ²	Turning 12 on or after 1 st January 2025
13	Turning 11 on or before 31 st December 2025 ²	Turning 13 on or after 1 st January 2025
14	Turning 12 on or before 31 st December 2025 ²	Turning 14 on or after 1 st January 2025
15	Turning 13 on or before 31 st December 2025 ²	Turning 15 on or after 1 st January 2025
16	Turning 14 on or before 31 st December 2025 ²	Turning 16 on or after 1 st January 2025
17	Turning 15 on or before 31 st December 2025 ²	Turning 17 on or after 1 st January 2025
18	Turning 16 on or before 31 st December 2025 ²	Turning 18 on or after 1 st January 2025
21	Turning 18 on or before 31 st December 2025 ²	Turning 21 on or after 1 st January 2025
All-Age	Turning 18 on or before 31 st December 2025 ³	None
30	Turning 31 on or before 31 st December 2025	None
35	Turning 36 on or before 31 st December 2025	None
45	Turning 46 on or before 31 st December 2025	None

Age group	Lower age limit – a player is eligible if they are:	Upper age limit – a player is eligible if they are:
	December 2025 ⁴	
55	Turning 56 on or before 31st December 2025	None

¹Subject to Rule 7.5(B)

²Subject to Rule 7.6(C)

³Subject to Rule 7.7(G)

7.2 REGISTRATION FEES

- (A) Players registered in Play Football will automatically pay ESFA, FA and FNSW fees in the system. No invoices will be provided to Clubs for registration fees.
- (B) Players deregistered after Match Day 1 will not be entitled to any refund of their ESFA, FNSW or FA registration fees.
- (C) Players deregistered by close of business on Match Day 1 shall have their ESFA registration fee refunded in full.
- (D) All registrations after Match Day 1 must be lodged no later than 11:59pm June 30, 2025.

7.3 DEREGISTRATION

- (A) If a Player no longer wants to play for a Club, that Player may deregister by applying to deregister in Competition Management System, which will notify the Club and ESFA of the Player's intention to deregister.
- (B) A player must be registered for at least fourteen (14) days or two (2) fixtures prior to any deregistration being accepted by ESFA if registering **after** season commencement.
- (C) If a Club no longer wants a Player to play for the Club, that Club must apply to deregister that Player in Competition Management System, which will notify the Player and ESFA of the Club's intention to deregister the Player.
- (D) Deregistration is effective from the earlier:
 - i) When the other party (i.e., Club or Player) has confirmed the notification or cancellation; or
 - ii) Seven (7) days from the date the Club or the Player requested the deregistration in Play Football, unless a grievance has been initiated with FNSW in accordance with FNSW Grievance & Disciplinary Regulations and the Player will not be deregistered until the processes promulgated by the FNSW Grievance and Disciplinary Regulations have been exhausted or terminated.
- (E) Any disputes relating to Player deregistration will be settled in accordance with the FA Grievance Resolution Guidelines and FNSW Grievance and Disciplinary Regulations.

7.4 TEAM ALLOCATION

- (A) Clubs/ESFA shall create Teams in Dribl after registration approval in both Play Football and Dribl.
- (B) Team names shall be according to the following format:
- (C) [Age Group] [Space] [Suffix (if required)]
- (D) Age groups are named as follows:

Age	Male	Female
Under 5	U5	
Under 6	U6	
Under 7	U7	
Under 8	U8	G8
Under 9	U9	G9
Under 10	U10	G10
Under 11	U11	G11
Under 12	U12	G12
Under 13	U13	G13
Under 14	U14	G15
Under 15	U15	
Under 16	U16	G17
Under 17	U18	
Under 18		W21
Under 21	M21	
All-Age	AAM PL First Grade	AAW PL First Grade
	Men 01	Women 01
	Men 02	Women 02
	Men 03	Women 03
	Men 04	Women 04
	Men 05	Women 05
	Men 06	
	Men 07	
	Men 08	
	Men 09	
	Men 01 (Sat)*	
	Men 02 (Sat)*	
	Men 03 (Sat)*	
	Men 04 (Sat)*	
Men 05 (Sat)*		
Over 35	O35M	O30W
Over 45	O45M	
Over 55 (social competition)	O55M	

*Subject to change pending team nominations and assessed strength of teams.

Example situation	Example team names
A team playing in U8 where the club has no other team in that Age Group	'U8'
A club that has three teams marked A, B and C playing in G10	'G10 Blue', 'G10 Green' and 'G10 Yellow'
A team playing in U12 where the club has no other team in that Age Group	'U12'

Example situation	Example team names
A club that has three teams marked A, B and C playing in G13	'G13 A', 'G13 B' and 'G13 C'
A team playing in AAM Division 3	'Men 03'
A club that has two teams marked A and B in Men Division 6	'Men 06 A' and 'Men 06 B'
A club that has two teams marked A and B in Men Division 4 (Saturday)	'Men 04 (Sat) A' and 'Men 04 (Sat) B'
A team playing in Women's Premier League	'Women's Premier League First Grade'
A team playing in Women's Division 3	'Women03'
A club that has three teams marked A, B and C playing in O35M	'O35M A', 'O35M B' and 'O35M C'

- (E) The Executive shall alter or amend any Team name where required because of the Team's allocated Division or if the Team name does not meet this rule or is inappropriate.
- (F) A Player may only be allocated for one Team in either Premiership or Cup Competitions at any point in time, with exception of Knockout Competitions where team grading allows (borrowed player rule).
- (G) A Player may only be allocated for one Team in a Division in one Season (*exception youth competition as per rule 7.6 G)

7.5 MINIROOS LEAGUE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- (A) MiniRoos Leagues Players are not allowed to play up more than one (1) year above their Age Group (e.g.: a 7-year-old in the 8-year-old Age Group cannot play up in the 9-year-old Age Group) except by permission of the ESFA. Permission must be initially sought with the Competitions Manager.
- (B) Any request for registration for a Player to compete in a MiniRoos League more than one (1) year above their age must be accompanied by a Playing Above Age Consent Form and the Player must be assessed by the ESFA Head of Football in keeping with FNSW Playing Above Age policy. The Playing Above Age form must be completed, signed and provided to ESFA to both The Head of Football and Competitions Manager
- (C) Players in MiniRoos Leagues are permitted to help other Teams in the same or higher Age Groups without limit to the number of occasions.
- (D) Players in the U5, U6, U7, U8, U9, U10, U11 or U12 Age Groups may be boys or girls, but only female Players are eligible to participate in the G8, G9, G10, G11 or G12 Age Groups.

7.6 YOUTH LEAGUE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- (A) Once Junior Players have registered in an Age Group, they are not allowed to play up more than two (2) years above their own Age Group (e.g.: a 13-year-old in the 14-year-old Age Group cannot play up in the 16-year-old Age Group) except by permission of the ESFA.
- (B) Players being borrowed into Division 2 or below in an older age group, cannot use Championship graded players without permission from the Executive e.g. an U14 Championship player can only be borrowed into U15

Championship.

- (C) Any request for a Player to register in a Junior League more than two (2) years above their age must be accompanied by a Playing Above Age Consent Form provided to the Competitions Manager and Head of Football and the Player must be assessed by the Head of Football of the ESFA in accordance with the FNSW Playing Above Age policy.
- (D) Subject to Rule 7.6(A) and to Rule 15.8, Players in the Boys' Leagues are permitted to freely participate in higher Age Groups or Divisions for eight (8) matches Clubs must notify ESFA on 9th occasion using the Late Registration Form to re-register the Player to the higher Age Group or Division played. Example:
- I. Club F has Teams in Division 1, 2 & 4
 - II. Player Y from Division 4 plays eight Matches for his Club's Division 1 and 2 Teams.
 - III. The said Player would be re-graded to Division 2.
- (E) Subject to Rule 7.6(A) above and to Rule 15.8, Players in the Girls' League are permitted to freely participate in higher Age Groups or Divisions (including boys/mixed divisions) for eight (8) occasions. If they play on a 9th occasion the Club must notify ESFA using the Late Registration Form to re-register the Player to the lowest Age Group or Division played. Failure to notify ESFA will deem the player ineligible and if played the player and team will be subject to Disciplinary proceedings and may incur forfeits.
- (F) Only female Players are eligible to participate in the Girls' League.
- (G) Girls wishing to play or be borrowed into any Boys' League must apply in writing for individual approval of the ESFA from the Competitions Manager, in accordance with the FNSW Girls in Mixed Competitions Guidelines annually and be assessed and approved by the ESFA Head of Football.
- (H) A Player may only play for one Team in a Division in one Season, with the exception of Youth Competition, whereby a player may play for a different team within the same division, twice in the one season. The third time requires a regrade and the player must remain in the regraded team with no further play in the original team. ESFA MUST be advised when a player is playing in the different team to allow the Executive to complete the Match Sheet correctly prior to the scheduled match.
- (I) A team must have 8 original registered players to that team, marked as playing on the match sheet, allowing up to 8 players to be borrowed. .
- (J) On rare occasions an exception to player or team eligibility requirements may be granted by ESFA General Manager and/or Competitions Manager. Any exceptions must be in writing and communicated in advance to all clubs participating in affected competitions.

7.7 SENIOR LEAGUE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- (A) Any Player that has played fewer than four Matches for their registered Team may apply in writing to the ESFA to be re-graded downwards.
- (B) Goalkeepers may play up for ten (10) games before regrading. However, this only applies if the Goalkeeper is designated on team sheet in Dribl, as GK. If the GK is playing outfield, then the borrowed player rules apply.
- (C) A Player re-graded downwards with the permission of the ESFA, will be ineligible to play up in a higher Grade on any further occasions during that Season.
- (D) A Men's Premier League Player may never play down in an All-Age Men, Over 35 or Over 45 Competition.
- (E) An Over 35 Competition is considered lower than the All-Age Competition and the Over 45 lower than the Over 35 Competition.
- (F) An Over 30 Women Competition is considered lower than the All Age Women Competition.
- (G) All Players must be seventeen (17) years of age or older to participate in a Senior League. Any registration for a Player sixteen (16) years of age or younger to compete in a Senior League must be accompanied by a Playing Above Age Consent Form and the Player provided to the Competitions Manager and Head of Football and must be assessed by the ESFA Head of Football, in keeping with FNSW Playing Above Age policy.
- (H) Subject to Rule 15.8:
 - i) Players registered for a Boys' League Team shall be eligible to play for any Men's League Team.
 - ii) Players in the Men's League are permitted to participate in higher Age Groups or Divisions on eight (8) occasions.

If the player seeks to play a ninth (9th) occasion the Club must notify ESFA using the Late Registration Form to re-register the Player to the team they were most borrowed into on those eight (8) occasions and if even numbers, the highest of those grades.

Subject to Rule 15.8:

- i) Players registered for a Girls' League Team shall be eligible to play for any Women's League Team.
- ii) Players in the Women's League are permitted to freely participate in higher Age Groups or Divisions on eight (8) occasions.

If the player seeks to play on a ninth (9th) occasion the Club must notify ESFA using the Late Registration Form to re-register the Player to the highest Age Group or Division played on those eight (8) occasions.

- (I) A Player registered in a Men's All Age Saturday or O35 Friday competition cannot play in the same or equivalent Division in the Men's Sunday All Age or O35 Sunday competition respectively. A Player registered in the Men's All Age Sunday or O35 Sunday competition cannot play in the same or equivalent Division in the Men's Saturday All Age or O35 Friday competition. However, Players may play in a higher Division on different days, subject to Rule 7.7(H) above.
- (J) Men's Premier League First Grade borrowing rules will apply as per 17 K) as substitution rule and not interchange.

- (K) Subject to Rule 15.8, Over 35 Players and O30 Player (Women) are permitted to play eight (8) Matches in a higher Division before regrading.
- (L) Subject to Rule 15.8, Over 45 Players are permitted to play an unlimited number of Matches in a higher Division and remain registered in an Over 45 Team, however, any Player who plays more Matches for a higher Division Team than an Over 45 Team may not play for the Over 45 Team in Finals Series Matches. This includes an O45 player registered in Division 2 who has played more games for Championship not being able to play in a Division 2 Finals Series.
- (M) In 2025, an O45s player must be 45 by 31 December 2024. However, 2 players only per team, may be aged between 43 and 45 i.e. 1 player only turning 43 by 31st December 2025 and/or turning 44 by 31 December 2025. **NO TEAM HOWEVER, SHALL HAVE TWO PLAYERS TURNING 43 BY 31ST DECEMBER 2024. Any team found to have more than 2 underage players as per this rule, will be deemed to have forfeited all matches and may be removed from the competition. O45s teams will be consistently audited.**
- (N) Only female Players are eligible to participate in the Women's League and only male players are eligible to participate in the Men's League except by permission of the ESFA Head of Football.
- (O) In 2025 one (1) underage player per team may be registered in Men O35 Competition however must be turning 35 by 31 December 2025 subject to approval. Individual cases will be assessed by ESFA with the number of the registered players, a key indicator.
- (P) A Women's All Age Team can play a maximum of four (4) Players registered in the Girls' League in any one Match. Borrowed Girls' League players must be 17 or complete an above age parental consent form to be approved by the ESFA Head of Football and Competition Manager.
- (Q) If borrowing players in Men's and Women's competitions from lower AA divisions or O35s and O45s (men's competitions) and O30 (women's competitions), at least nine (9) players registered to the team playing, must be on the team sheet to play. This allows 9 borrowed players on a team sheet. Borrowed players must be added to the DRIBL Match sheet to ensure eligibility. O35s playing in AA and listed as O35 teams in 2025, are able to be borrowed under the O35s borrowing rules.
- (R) For Transgender or Transitioning Players, please refer to the ESFA Inclusion and Diversity Policy as authorised by the Board.
- (S) In the O30 Women's competition each Team may register up to four (4) players aged 29 (by 31st December 2024). Until they are Over 30, these players are subject to re-grading rule 7.7 (G) above. A player re-graded under this rule cannot be replaced by another player aged 29.
- (T) On rare occasions an exception to player or team eligibility requirements may be granted by ESFA General Manager and lodged with the Competitions Manager in writing. Any exceptions must be in writing and communicated in advance to all clubs participating in affected competitions.

8. INELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS AND COACHES/MANAGERS

- (A) Ineligible players include:
- i) Unregistered Players.
 - ii) Suspended Players.
 - iii) A Player who participates in the match but is not listed on team sheet.
 - iv) A Player who is required to stand down for receiving the required number of cautions.
 - v) A Player that has been expelled from a Match on the day/s prior to a Match but after the regular Disciplinary date.
 - vi) A Player that has been expelled from a Match on the same day as the Match but played early in the day.
 - vii) A Player that is deemed ineligible due to any article of these Regulations or pursuant to ESFA Disciplinary Procedure.
 - viii) A Player that has been registered to participate in two different teams and/or Clubs and/or outside Associations
- (B) Ineligible coaches/managers include:
- i) Suspended coaches/managers.
 - ii) A coach/manager expelled from a match on the day/s prior to a Match but after regular Disciplinary date.
 - iii) A coach/manager that has been expelled from a Match on the same day as the Match but was an official early in the day.

A coach/manager who is deemed ineligible due to any article of these Regulations or pursuant to ESFA Disciplinary Procedure.

9. MATCH OFFICIALS

9.1 APPOINTMENT OF MATCH OFFICIALS

- (A) The ESFA and the ESFA Referees' Branch shall endeavour to appoint Referees and Assistant Referees to all competitive Matches within the ESFA.
- (B) Payment for Match Officials shall be in accordance with a schedule advised by Football NSW and as amended by the ESFA Board from time to time.
- (C) Each Club shall be invoiced 50% of the fees paid to Match Officials by the Association for a Match.
- (D) Where no Referee is appointed to a Match, the Home Team shall arrange an appropriate person to be the Club Referee.
- (E) A person may not be a Club Referee and a Player in the same Match.

9.2 ARRIVAL TIMES AND PRESENTATION OF MATCH OFFICIALS

- (A) The officiating Match Officials shall present themselves at the centre of the field not later than five (5) minutes prior to the commencement of the Match. Where this does not occur, Clubs shall report this occurrence to the ESFA office within 48 hours of the completion of the Match via Referee Feedback JotForm

9.3 ASSISTANT REFEREES

- (A) Where possible there shall be two Assistant Referees. If no officially appointed Assistant Referees are available, and if asked by the Referee, each Club must appoint one person to act as a Club Assistant Referee.
- (B) If one Assistant Referee only is present the home Club, if directed by the Referee, shall appoint a second person to act as a Club Assistant Referee.
- (C) Club Assistant Referees shall act strictly in accordance with the directions of the Referee.

9.4 NON-ARRIVAL OF REFEREES

- (A) In the event of the non-arrival of an appointed Referee:
 - I. if there is an Assistant Referee present, they assume the role of Referee unless the Assistant Referee is not qualified to referee that level of Match. The Assistant Referee should seek permission from the Match Review Officer or Competitions Manager prior to accepting if unsure. Referees should be knowledgeable of their grading.
 - II. if there is more than one Assistant Referee present, the most Senior Assistant Referee present shall assume the role of Referee unless the Assistant Referee is not qualified to referee that level of Match. Permission should be sought from the ESFA Referees branch using a published contact number (for Match Day appointment issues) prior to accepting and/or Match Review Officer
- (B) The Match must be played, or the result will be recorded as a forfeit against the home Club.
- (C) If the officially appointed Referee arrives after the Match has commenced, the Club Referee may elect to continue, or otherwise deem themselves unfit to continue and be replaced by the officially appointed Referee. Clubs are required to advise the Competitions Manager and Match Review Officer, via Referee Feedback Form within 48 hours of the match, should **any** official referee arrive after the match has commenced.

9.5 CLUB REFEREE

- (A) A Club Referee will have the full powers of a Referee in accordance with the LOTG, including the ability to issue cautions and send-off Players.
- (B) Should a Club Referee not have any cards available, the Club Referee should inform any Player where they have been issued a yellow or red card as well as that Player's Team captain and RTO.
- (C) In the event of a send-off the Club Referee is required to complete a send-off report (available on the ESFA web site) and submit it to the ESFA Match Review Officer by 9:00am on the Monday following the Match.
- (D) In the event of a Club Referee presiding over a Match, barring extenuating circumstances, the Club Referee must officiate the entire Match. There shall be no agreement made by teams to share refereeing duties on each half of the match and no match report (incident or otherwise) shall be accepted should this occur. Failure to use the same Club Referee for the entirety of the Match, may be subject to Disciplinary Procedure.

- (E) A Club Referee may be paid for their services if they referee the Match in uniform, and if they are a member of the ESFA Referees Branch.

9.6 REFEREE EVALUATION FORM

- (A) Feedback on the performance of Referees should be submitted using the official Referees Evaluation Form The evaluation should be delivered to the Association within two (2) days of the conclusion of the match via the JotForm provided on the ESFA website.

10. GROUND PREPARATION

10.1 DRESSING THE GROUND

- (A) The Home Team (being the Team listed first on the draw) must dress the field with:
 - i) two (2) nets,
 - ii) four (4) corner posts (minimum height 1.5m – 5ft above the ground) a
 - iii) sideline boundaries comprising either:
 - a) one (1) crowd control rope from penalty area to penalty area minimum on the side of the field where substitutes and Spectators are expected to congregate, or;
 - b) markings on the field at least 2m from the sideline in front of
 - iv) a technical area which may only be entered by each Team's RTOs (up to a maximum of two (2) RTOs) and substitutes listed on the Team sheet, indicated by either:
 - a) permanent markings, where available, or;
 - b) an area marked with cones that extends no more than 5m either side of half-way.
- (B) Referees should report any field which is not properly dressed on the Match Sheet.
- (C) Where any Club fails to properly dress the field or causes any delay to the commencement, or abandonment of any Match due to the late dressing of the field, the Club will be subject to a penalty of \$10.00.

10.2 ASSESSMENT OF PLAYING SURFACE

- (A) If a ground is closed by the ground owner for any reason including the state of the playing surface, Matches scheduled to be played on the ground shall be deferred.
- (B) If a home Club or the Referee reasonably consider the playing surface of a ground to be unfit for play, Matches scheduled to be played on the ground shall be deferred.
- (C) Once a ground is closed on a particular date, it shall not be re-opened again on that day.
- (D) Clubs may contact the Competitions Manager should they seek to move the games to an open ground and alternatively the Competitions Manager can move games on the day if no change to kick off time, advising all parties by 8:00am for 9:00am games, or later on the day of the scheduled match if the time is not changing.

10.3 DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

- (A) Any Club found guilty of causing damage to property at any ground shall be required to pay the total cost of repairing such damage or the total cost of replacement of such property and may receive further sanction in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.

10.4 CLEANING UP/ COLLECTION OF RUBBISH

- (A) Each Club must collect litter and leave grounds, spectator areas, dressing rooms, toilets and pavilions in a satisfactory condition or shall pay the cleaning costs as demanded by any competent authority. Offending Clubs shall also be liable for penalty under the Disciplinary Procedure.

11. RTOs, MATCH SHEETS AND PLAYING TEAMS

11.1 REGISTERED TEAM OFFICIALS (RTOs)

- (A) All Clubs must submit registrations for all RTOs
- (B) The registration of RTOs is effective if:
- i) The RTO self-registers in Play Football and the Club accepts the RTO's registration in both Play Football and Dribl;
 - ii) The Club allocates the RTO to a Team in Dribl, and;
 - iii) **The RTO has met the Working with Children and Child Protection requirements as communicated by FA, Football NSW and the ESFA. receives a form signed by the RTO acknowledging that they will comply with the ESFA rules (this should be included in terms and conditions of Play Football Registration for RTO) and have complied with Working with Children guidelines. An RTO may only be approved if a WWC has been completed.**
- (C) At any Match both Clubs must have an RTO, who is readily identifiable by wearing an RTO vest who must report to the Match Officials five (5) minutes prior to the kick off time of the Match.
- (D) RTOs must be registered and have their name correctly entered on the Match Sheet.
- (E) In the absence of an official RTO:
- i) For Senior League Matches, the Team captain shall be designated as the RTO. In the event of any penalties against a non-registered RTO from the Disciplinary Committee, the offending Club shall incur an additional fine as determined by the Disciplinary Committee.
 - ii) For Youth League Matches, in the absence of an official RTO, a parent or Spectator aged over 18 must be selected and identified as the RTO.
- (F) RTOs shall be responsible for:
- i) The safety of the Match Officials against the conduct of their Team's Players and Spectators. The RTO should also assist the Match Officials and opposition RTO in managing the conduct of neutral and opposition Spectators and Players from both Teams.

- (G) Referees shall report any Club which fails to identify an RTO as required by this rule.
- (H) An RTO must not enter the field of play except:
 - i) as a Player;
 - ii) if requested by the Referee; or
 - iii) if there is an immediate threat to the physical safety of the Match Officials.

The Referee shall be responsible for controlling the conduct of Players towards each other on the field of play in normal circumstances.

11.2 MATCH SHEETS AND PLAYING TEAM

- (A) Except for MiniRoos Matches, the RTOs shall prepare a Match Sheet for each Match listing each Player participating in the Match, their FA number and shirt number within Dribl.
- (B) All Match Sheets for all Matches are to be completed online in Dribl, including shirt numbers. If manually adding shirt numbers, they must be on the Digital Match Sheet prior to ID check and provided to the referee. If a shirt number is not known, the number must be added before half time and all parties informed.
- (C) No Paper Match Sheet is applicable nor acceptable and penalties will apply.
- (D) The digital Match Sheet must be complete, at least 10 minutes before the scheduled kick-off time.
- (E) The numbers on the back of the Player's jerseys will correspond to the numbers on the Digital Match Sheet available to the Referee before the commencement of a Match (or by half time) if;
 - i) A Player who will be participating in the Match but has not arrived or does not yet have a shirt number must be clearly marked on the Digital Match Sheet prior to half time.
 - ii) Once play has commenced no further names may be added to the Player list on the Digital Match Sheet (only shirt numbers) and ESFA/Referee will lock the Match Sheet at the end of halftime. A Player not recorded on the Digital Match Sheet at the start of play may not participate in the Match.
 - iii) A Player's shirt number and/or FA number may be added to the Match Sheet at half-time, or when the Player first enters the field of play, if this information was not available at the start of the Match i.e. If player is borrowed
- (F) All Digital Match Sheets must be completed by 9:00am Monday following the weekend's Match. If the ESFA does not receive the Digital Match Sheets as specified above, the Referee or Home Team's Club (as appropriate) will be fined for failing to submit their Digital Match Sheets on time (\$10 per Match Sheet).
- (G) When a Match is not completed, the Match Sheets will be endorsed accordingly by the Referee.

- (H) An RTO from both the home and away Club shall go to the Referee to complete the Digital Match Sheets at the completion of the Match to confirm the information is correct, including the Players listed, Match Officials listed, stood down Player's listed, half-time and full-time scores are correct.
- (I) Clubs must indicate all up-graded Players on the Digital Match Sheet by marking the registered Grade against all up-graded Players.
- (J) Unless otherwise stated in these Regulations, a Player listed on the Digital Match Sheet as available will be deemed to have participated in the Match.
- (K) If a Player who is registered in the relevant team in accordance with these regulations is not listed on the Digital Match Sheet prior to the Match and then participates in the Match, and fewer than the maximum number of players are listed on the match sheet, the following shall apply:
 - i) The Club will be fined \$50 for the first breach (from Match 3 of the Competitions)
 - ii) The Team will forfeit the Match for the second breach and be fined \$100;
 - iii) Any further breaches in this article will require the Club to show cause as to why the Team should not be expelled from the Competition, and the Team involved shall forfeit the Match in question and be fined \$500.
- (L) Clerical errors by either Team on the Match Sheet will result in a fine of \$10 per error. Clerical errors include, but are not limited to, failing to endorse borrowed Players (i.e. not on match sheet), duplicate shirt numbers, incorrect shirt numbers and failing to sign a Match Sheet.

11.3 PLAYER AND RTO IDENTIFICATION

- (A) Player ID will be available through the Dribl Web and App.
- (B) Photos must meet the following requirements:
 - i) Photos are for identification and should be 'passport style', clearly showing the face of the Player only, and unobstructed by hats or sunglasses. There should be no other person in the photo, and photos of animals will not be accepted. Failure to provide correct photographic identity, will result in a player deemed ineligible under these Regulations and subject to penalties under the Disciplinary procedure. ESFA reserves the right to remove a player from a team in Dribl until the photo identification is rectified.
 - ii) All players in 2025 will be required to provide a new photo in Play Football to complete their registration. All photos must comply with Rule 12.3 Bi). The photo must be provided by the Player when registering as Clubs and ESFA will be unable to edit/correct same in system and players will need to edit. If players do not meet the requirements, ESFA will remove the player from the allocated team and the player will not take to the pitch until the photo has been updated. Notwithstanding the requirements of Rule 2.1(A)ii), after 2025, Player ID photos for Youth Players must be renewed at not more than two-year intervals, and Player ID photos for Senior Players

must be renewed at not more than five-year intervals and must not include another person/s, animals, in the Player ID Photos. Clubs are responsible to advise returning players and new players of this rule.

- (C) 5 minutes before the scheduled start time for a Match, the teams will line up facing one another in the Centre Circle.
- (D) At Matches in Youth and Senior Competitions, the RTOs shall make available their Team's Player ID Sheet through Dribl Web or App to the opposing RTO to check each Player against their Player ID Sheet through Dribl Web or App, after which the Referee shall conduct the toss.
 - i) Where an individual Player registered in a participating Team is not shown on a Player ID Sheet in Dribl Web or App, that Player shall be deemed ineligible and not permitted to take the field.
 - ii) Where an individual Player registered to a lower Team but eligible to participate in the Match is unable to provide a Player ID Sheet in Dribl Web or App, that Player shall be deemed ineligible and not permitted to take the field until they are able to produce a Player ID Sheet demonstrating their eligibility.
 - iii) Any Player ID Sheet in Dribl Web or App that does not have a photo is not valid identification, and any Player who does not have a photo on their Player ID Sheet or App may not participate in the Match.
 - iv) If an RTO believes there is any doubt as to a Player's identity or eligibility, please refer to: 13.5 DISPUTES.

12. PLAYING RULES

12.1 NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND INTERCHANGE

- (A) The following Team sizes apply per Age Group:
 - i) MiniRoos Leagues:
 - a) Up to 7 Age Group – MiniRoos 4v4: 4 Players on the field. 3 Players may be included as interchange Players, with no limit on the number of interchanges.
 - b) 8 to 9 Age Group – MiniRoos 7v7: 7 Players on the field. 4 Players may be included as interchange Players, with no limit on the number of interchanges.
 - c) 10 to 12 Age Group – MiniRoos 9v9: 9 Players on the field. 5 Players may be included as interchange Players, with no limit on the number of interchanges.
 - ii) Youth Leagues: 13 to 18 Age Group – 11 Players on the field. 5 Players may be included as interchange Players, with no limit on the number of interchanges Senior Leagues and Senior Cups: 11 Players on the field, 7 Players may be included as interchange Players, with no limit on the number of interchanges. This rule does not apply to Men's Premier League competition though does apply in Cups
 - iii) Men's Premier League First and Reserve Grade: 11 Players on the field, 7 substitutes may be named, but only 5 substitutions are permitted, except that a Team may make an additional 1 substitution in Extra Time of a Finals Series Match. Should a head injury occur after the allotted substitutions have been exhausted, the Club will be

- permitted to replace the injured player. (See ESFA Concussion Guidelines regarding Removal from Play guidelines).
- iv) Women's Premier League: 11 Players on the field, 7 substitutes may be named and used as per interchange rules.
- (B) An interchange or substitution is only permitted from the half-way line, when the ball is out of play and when the Referee has indicated that a change can be made. The following is the procedure for the unlimited interchange of Players:
- v) The "Interchange zone" will be an area one (1) metre either side of the half-way line.
 - vi) An interchange is one which is made when the ball is out of play, and for which the following conditions will be observed:
 - a) the Player leaving the field is not obliged to exit at the midfield line "interchange zone" and if necessary, to prevent time wasting, the player may be directed to leave the field of play at the closest perimeter line.
 - b) the Player entering the field will also do so from the interchange zone, but not until the Player leaving the field has passed completely over the touch line and receiving a signal from the referee.
- (C) Substitutes and interchange Players cannot be used to replace any Player who has been dismissed from the Match by the Referee.

12.2 MATCH BALLS

- (A) **Each Team** shall provide one approved Match Ball to the Referee prior to kick-off.
- (B) MiniRoos Leagues
 - i) Up to 9 Age Groups play with a size 3 ball, and
 - ii) 10 to 12 Age Groups play with a size 4 ball.
- (C) Youth Leagues
 - i) 13 Age Group plays with a size 4 ball, and
 - ii) 14 Age Group and above play with a size 5 ball.
- (D) Senior Leagues play with a size 5 ball.
- (E) All ball dimensions and pressure are in accordance with FIFA Laws of the Game.

Formats	Up to 7	8-9	10-12
The number of players	4v4, no GK Max 3 subs	7v7 including GK Max 4 subs	9v9 including GK Max 5 subs
The field of play Dimensions	30m x 20m	Min: 40m x 30m Best: 45m x 35m Max: 50m x 40m	Min: 60m x 40m Best: 65m x 45m Max: 70m x 50m
Goal size	2m x 1m	3m x 2m	5m x 2m
Ball size	Size 3	Size 3	Size 4
Duration of the game	20 min halves 5 min half time	20 min halves 5 min half time	25 min halves 5 min half time
Penalty area	No penalty area	5m x 12m	10m x 20m

12.3 DURATION OF MATCHES

- (A) The duration of Matches shall be as follows:
- i) Up to 7 Age Group, two (2) equal periods of twenty (20) minutes and half-time break of 5 minutes
 - ii) 8 and 9 Age Group, two (2) equal periods of twenty (20) minutes and half-time break of 5 minutes
 - iii) 10, 11 and 12 Age Group, two (2) equal periods of twenty-five (25) minutes and half-time break of 5 minutes
 - iv) 13 and 14 Age Group, two (2) equal periods of thirty (30) minutes and half-time break of 5 minutes
 - v) 15 and 16 Age Group, two (2) equal periods of thirty-five (35) minutes and half-time break of 5 minutes
 - vi) 18 Age Group and above, two (2) equal periods of forty-five (45) minutes and half-time break of ten (10) minutes
- (B) Any Match that is abandoned after reaching at least 75% of the normal time set out in Rule 12.3(A) shall be deemed to have been completed unless ordered to be replayed by ESFA.
- (C) Where a Match starts late, the Referee must shorten the total Match time to avoid delaying the start of subsequent Matches. The Match must be played as two equal halves and at least 75% of the normal playing time must be played. The Referee shall advise both Team captains of the time to be played in each reduced half prior to commencing play.
- (D) No injury or stoppage time shall be allowed in any Division except Men's and Women's Premier League First Grade.

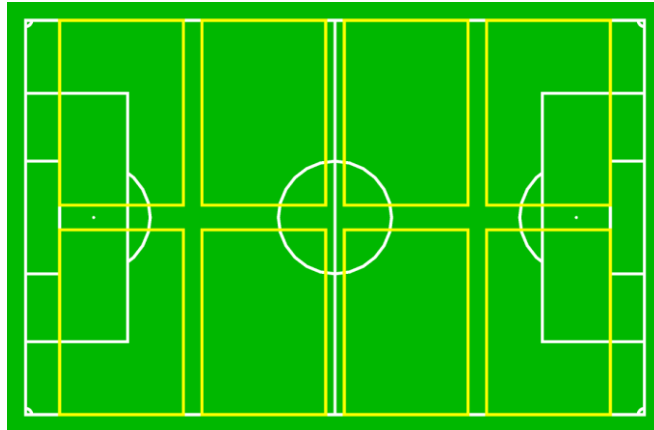
12.4 LAWS OF THE GAME

- (A) All Matches will be played in compliance with the Regulations in force at the time and in accordance with FA and FNSW By-Laws, regulations, codes and directives, and under the FIFA Laws of the Game where applicable.
- (B) MiniRoos shall play according to the Football Australia National Playing Formats and Rules as published from time to time.
- (C) The below table indicates the formats:

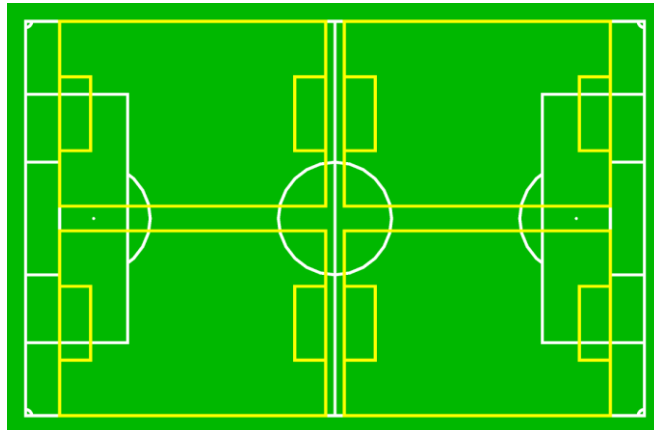
Formats	Up to 7	8-9	10-12
The number of players	4v4, no GK Max 3 subs	7v7 including GK Max 4 subs	9v9 including GK Max 5 subs
The field of play Dimensions	30m x 20m	Min: 40m x 30m Best: 45m x 35m Max: 50m x 40m	Min: 60m x 40m Best: 65m x 45m Max: 70m x 50m
Goal size	2m x 1m	3m x 2m	5m x 2m
Ball size	Size 3	Size 3	Size 4
Duration of the game	20 min halves 5 min half time	20 min halves 5 min half time	25 min halves 5 min half time
Penalty area	No penalty area	5m x 12m	10m x 20m

(D) MiniRoos field layouts are illustrated below:

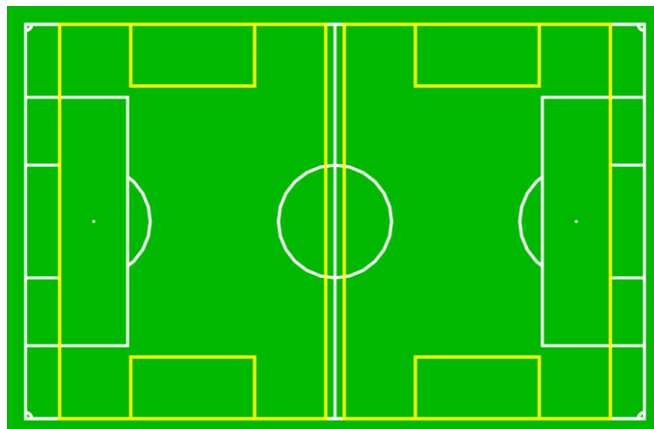
i) 4v4:



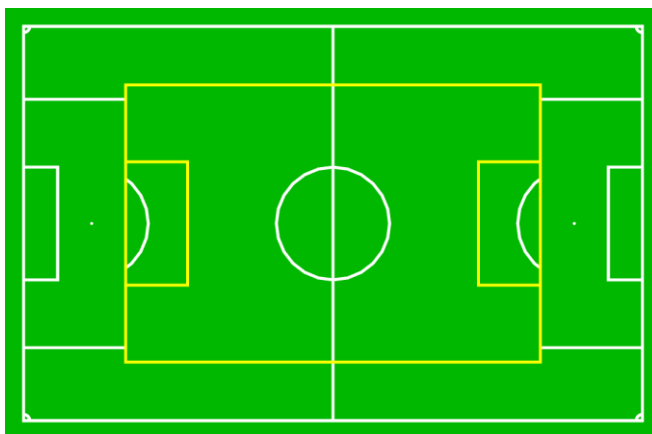
ii) 7v7:



iii) 9v9 side to side:



iv) 9v9 box to box:



- i) For player safety, MiniRoos fields must be arranged so that there is at least 3m between fields and at least 3m between a field and any hard fixture (e.g., a building, light post, or goal post)
- (E) Youth and Senior Leagues shall play according to the FIFA Laws of the Game as published from time to time except that:
- i) For U12 and G12 Development Leagues, the playing format is identical to 9v9 MiniRoos.
 - ii) For U13 and G13:
 - a) Once a goal kick has been awarded the Players from the attacking Team must retreat 25 metres from the defending Team's goal line.
 - b) Goalkeepers must take their own goal kicks.
 - c) From a goal kick the ball must be played by another Player of the defending Team outside the penalty area and not more than 25 metres from the defending Team's goal line and only when the ball has been touched by that Player may Players of the attacking Team come within 25 metres of the defending Team's goal line ("the 25-metre area").
 - d) If at the time of the goal kick attacking Team Players are within the 25-metre area but:
 - are retreating; and
 - are more than 10 metres from the defending Team Player receiving the ball from the goalkeeper,
 - play should continue.
 - iii) Subject to Rule 12.4(E)d) above, if a goal kick is not taken in accordance with this rule, then the goal kick is retaken.

- (F) Slide tackles are not permitted in O45 competitions rules which includes opposition players in ESFA Knockout competitions as per table below:

Contact with player	Severity of tackle	Sanction	Restart
No	None	None	Indirect free kick
Yes	Careless	None	Direct free kick / penalty
Yes	Reckless	Caution	Direct free kick / penalty
Yes	Excessive force	Send-off	Direct free kick / penalty

12.5 PROVISION OF PLAYING STRIPS

- (A) Each Team must play in colours as approved by the ESFA Board as per Schedule A By Laws and published by the ESFA. Kit colours MUST be provided to ESFA in EOI forms prior to the season or via email with a photo of the entirety of the kit including sock colour. Clubs should endeavour to have all teams play in the same kit and/or colours. If individual teams are playing in different kits to the club kit, these MUST be approved by ESFA prior to ordering and use. Kits NOT the same colour as the Club kit will not be accepted and a fine of \$50 per team will apply
- (B) In the event of a Club fielding a Team in colours similar to those of the opposing Team or the Referee, and the Referee is of the opinion that confusion may arise, the Referee may order the Club whose colours ARE NOT officially registered with ESFA to change its colours in accordance with Schedule A By-Laws. If the colours are both teams are officially registered, or if the colours of neither team are registered, the visiting team is to change. The referee may refuse to allow the Match to commence until a satisfactory change is made. ESFA reserve the right to advise Clubs prior to a scheduled match, as to which team will be required to wear a different colour based on kit information provided to and approved by the ESFA. A \$50 fine will apply to the team whose colours are not officially registered.
- (C) If a Team is ordered to change its colours by a Referee and either refuses to do so or is unable to do so, that Team will forfeit the Match and forfeit fines will apply

12.6 GOALPOSTS

- (A) Combination goals posts are permitted in ESFA competition Matches.
- (B) Where the ball strikes part of the goal post that does not form the soccer goal, the ball shall be deemed to be out, and play shall restart with a goal kick or corner depending on the last Player to touch the ball.
- (C) Where portable goalposts are used, they must be anchored in accordance with Australian Standards.

12.7 FA and FNSW PROGRAM Playing Rules

- (A) Through affiliation with ESFA, Clubs may implement FNSW and FA programs including but not limited to the MiniRoos Kick off Program and

Walking Football. These programs typically require Play Football registration of players within ESFA boundaries. ESFA may establish additional local rules and policies for such programs. Where no local ESFA playing rules exist, ESFA Clubs must follow Football NSW and FA rules and participation requirements.

13. DISCIPLINE AND MISCONDUCT

13.1 CAUTIONS

- (A) The Referee shall record all yellow and red cards on the Digital Match Sheet in the appropriate section.
- (B) A Player or coach who receives 5 yellow cards during a Season in all competitions shall be suspended for 1 Match.
- (C) A Player who receives 8 yellow cards during a Season in all competitions shall be suspended for a further 1 Match.
- (D) For each subsequent 2 yellow cards a Player shall be suspended for 1 Match.
- (E) Clubs will be notified once a player reaches 4 and 7 cautions.
 - i) The 10-minute sin bin rule (temporary dismissal) shall apply for referee dissent in all Senior Competition Matches as well as Youth Competition U18 Boys and U18 Girls League. In 2025 a 5-minute sin bin rule (temporary dismissal) will be introduced to U16 Boys and U16 Girls Leagues. The Sin Bin only applies to players (including goalkeepers) when a player dissents a decision. It does not include players who are not on the field of play (i.e., substitute or substituted player).
 - ii) The yellow card (signal for a caution) is shown as well as clearly pointing with both arms to their team's technical area.
 - iii) The TD period begins at the restart of play and ends when the player returns from the touchline with the referee's permission.
 - iv) RTO's will assist the referee where necessary with stopwatch of 10 minutes and signal from the Technical Area
- (F) Cautions will be reset for Finals Series.

13.2 SENT-OFF PLAYERS

- (A) A Player sent-off during a Match will have their penalty determined in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.
- (B) A mandatory 1 match suspension shall refer to ALL Red Cards in accordance with Disciplinary Policy. This includes two caution send offs.
- (C) The Referee shall submit a send-off report by 9:00am Monday following a weekend match or by 12 noon the next day following a mid-week match.

13.3 MISCONDUCT

- (A) The Referee shall report all misconduct not resulting in a send-off in a Match Incident Report which must be submitted by 9:00am Monday following a weekend match or by 12 noon the next day following a mid-week match.
- (B) Misconduct shall be defined to include the following:
 - i) Breaches of the [FA Spectator Code of Behaviour](#) or Match Participants [FA Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)
 - ii) Violent behaviour by multiple Players where the Referee is unable to

- identify and sanction all acts of violent conduct. (e.g., a brawl or melee).
- iii) Behaviour of RTOs, officials, or Spectators, which if it were to occur on the field, would be the subject of a send-off report.
 - iv) Any request to remove a person or persons from the vicinity of the playing area by the Referee.
 - v) Entry to the playing area by substitutes, officials, or Spectators, during play including during any stoppages which is not authorised, and which results in a verbal or physical confrontation with Players or Match Officials.
 - vi) Use of ineligible Players and coaches/officials (pursuant to 8.)
 - vii) Any other behaviour that may bring the game or the Association into disrepute.
- (C) [Misconduct](#) may be reported by other attendees or Participants at the Match through a detailed [JotForm](#) report of the alleged incident, which shall be handled in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure. This form must be submitted by 5:00pm Tuesday for weekend matches, or 2 days after completion of midweek matches. To report the use of ineligible players and coaches/officials, please refer to 13.5 DISPUTES.
- (D) All reports of misconduct shall be reviewed in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.
- (E) The RTO shall be responsible for identifying persons the Referee wishes to cite for misconduct where there is a reasonable belief the person is associated with the Team.
- (F) In addition to persons identified, Clubs shall also be liable to penalty for misconduct by its Players or associated persons not restricted to but including spectators, RTO's, Committee Members, Ground Staff, Officials
- (G) Where misconduct occurs, and there is no official RTO with a separate ESFA registration present, additional penalties may be imposed on the Club.

13.4 MISTAKEN IDENTITY

- (A) The following will outline the process to challenge a yellow or red card based on mistaken identity.
- (B) At the end of the match, the RTO shall confirm that all details of the match are correct with the Match Official.
- (C) If the RTO believes that a participant has been mistakenly identified to have received a yellow or red card, a dispute must be lodged on the DRIBL Match Sheet indicating the mistakenly identified player. DRIBL Match Sheet must be fully completed and submitted with the dispute by 9:00am Monday for weekend matches or 5:00pm the following day for midweek matches.
- (D) Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if an RTO fails to comply with the requirements in 13.3 (C) a Participant **cannot** challenge the attribution of a yellow or red card on a Match Sheet or a suspension resulting from a Send-Off Report, based on mistaken identity.

- (E) If a Participant believes that they have been mistakenly identified on the Match Sheet by the Match Official as having received a Yellow or Red Card, the Participant or their Club must notify the ESFA by submitting the following:
- i) **COMPULSORY:** A signed written statement by the Participant reported by the Match Official, stating that they were not responsible for the offence and identifying to the best of their knowledge, the Participant responsible; **AND**
 - ii) **OPTION 1:** A signed written statement by the Participant who **was** responsible for the offence; **OR**
 - iii) **OPTION 2:** A signed written statement from the Participant's Club Official identifying, to the best of their knowledge, the name of the Participant who was responsible for the offence.
- (F) These forms must be submitted to the ESFA by 5:00pm the next working day following completion of the match and can be completed via [JotForm](#).

13.5 DISPUTES

- (A) The following will outline the process to dispute player ineligibility or a match result.
- (B) At the completion of the match, the RTO shall confirm all details of the match are correct with the Match Official.
- (C) If the RTO believes that there is an issue with the player ineligibility or the match result, they must submit a dispute on the DRIBL Match Sheet with reasoning behind the dispute. Dribl Match Sheets must be fully completed and submitted with the dispute by 9:00am Monday for weekend matches or 5:00pm the following day for midweek matches.
- (D) Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if an RTO fails to comply with the requirements in 13.3 (C), a dispute will be rejected by the ESFA.
- (E) If a dispute is accepted, further investigation will be conducted.

13.6 ABANDONMENT OF MATCHES

- (A) Where a Match is abandoned due to the misconduct of Players, officials, or Spectators of one Team, that Team shall be deemed to have forfeited the Match.
- (B) Where a Match is abandoned due to the misconduct of both Teams the outcome of the Match shall be determined by the ESFA Competitions Manager, with guidance from the Disciplinary Committee, using the following options:
- i) The result at the time of the incident stands provided at least 75% of the Match time had elapsed.
 - ii) The Match is replayed.
 - iii) The Match is annulled, and no points are awarded.
- (C) Where a Match is abandoned but the Disciplinary Committee finds no misconduct by either Team the outcome of the Match shall be determined by the ESFA Competitions Manager, with guidance from the Disciplinary Committee, using the following options:

- i) The result at the time of the incident stands provided at least 75% of the Match time had elapsed.
 - ii) The Match is replayed.
- (D) Where a Match is abandoned due to bad weather, the Referee shall rely upon the relevant Football NSW Policy or bad weather i.e., Lightning, flooding, Heat Policy etc and/or Section 10.2 Assessment of Playing Surfaces, ESFA shall at its discretion advise if the game shall be replayed as per Rule 14.6 C

13.7 MANIPULATION OF RESULTS

- (A) Clubs shall endeavour to complete all Matches including rescheduled Matches. Clubs shall use all reasonable endeavours to field the best possible Team in the last three Match Days of the Premiership Season where the outcome of the Match will affect the final placing of Teams qualifying for the Finals Series. A Team forfeiting a Match at this stage of the Season shall be liable to additional penalties under the Disciplinary Procedure including a points penalty where the forfeit directly results in a Team losing the Premiers position or qualification for the Finals Series. A team forfeiting during finals series, shall also be liable to additional penalties under the Disciplinary Procedure and may be withdrawn from the finals series.

13.8 CONTROL OF SPECTATORS

- (A) It shall be the duty of Clubs to maintain control of and prevent any disturbance amongst Spectators. Failure to do so may result in the imposition of penalties as per the Disciplinary Procedure
- (B) All Spectator related reports shall be lodged with ESFA in writing no later than 9:00am on Tuesday following a weekend Match and shall only be considered if made by the Referee (received by 9:00am Monday) or a Club Secretary from Teams participating in such Match.
- (C) No Spectators are to be allowed behind either goal while a Match is in progress. This includes MiniRoos matches.
- (D) All spectators from both Clubs must be on the side of the field with ropes/line markings. This refers to MiniRoos, Youth and Seniors.

13.9 GRIEVANCES

- (A) The following will outline the process to conduct a Club-to-Club complaint or claim.
- (B) Before referring any grievance to the ESFA, a Club making a claim, or a complaint must write to the other Club involved in the subject matter of the Grievance. This should include details of the Grievance, and any material or evidence relied upon by the Club in respect of the grievance.
- (C) The Respondent Club will be allowed at least seven (7) days to respond. The Respondent's reply must include reasons for any disagreement with the details of the Grievance.

- (D) If a response is not received within seven (7) days of the notice from the Claimant or Complainant referred to in section 9.3 (B), or the Grievance is not otherwise resolved, the Claimant or Complainant may, in writing, refer the Grievance to ESFA in accordance with section 9.3 (E).
- (E) To refer a Grievance to the ESFA, a Claimant or Complainant must submit a Grievance Form and any evidence and/or written submissions it intends to rely on, within fourteen (14) days after the dispatch of the notice referred to in 9.3 (B). A [Grievance Form](#) can be submitted via [JotForm](#).
- (F) Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if a Club fails to comply with the time requirements in 13.9 (E), a Grievance will be rejected by the ESFA.

14. RESULTS, COMPETITION POINTS AND FORFEITS

14.1 COMPETITIVE AND NON-COMPETITIVE AGE GROUPS

- (A) Where Divisions are formed for any Age Groups, they will be Competitive and Non-Competitive as follows:

Age	Male		Female	
5	U5	Non-Competitive	G5	Non-Competitive
6	U6	Non-Competitive	G6	Non-Competitive
7	U7	Non-Competitive	G7	Non-Competitive
8	U8	Non-Competitive	G8	Non-Competitive
9	U9	Non-Competitive	G9	Non-Competitive
10	U10	Non-Competitive	G10	Non-Competitive
11	U11	Non-Competitive	G11	Non-Competitive
12	U12	Non-Competitive	G12	Non-Competitive
13	U13	Competitive	G13	Competitive
14	U14	Competitive	G14	Competitive
15	U15	Competitive		
16	U16	Competitive	G16	Competitive
17	U17	Competitive		
18	U18	Competitive	G18	Competitive
21	M21	Competitive	W21	Competitive
All-Age	AAM	Competitive	AAW	Competitive
30			O30W	Competitive
35	O35M	Competitive		
45	O45M	Competitive		
55	O55M	Social Non-Competitive		

- (B) Where a Division is Non-Competitive, results will be collected for the purposes of ability matching, but there will be no results nor standings published, nor will a finals series be conducted.
- (C) Where a Division is Competitive, results will be collected, and there will be results and standings published, and a finals series will be conducted.

14.2 NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

- (A) Clubs shall ensure their Teams' Match results are recorded in the Competition Management System (DRIBL) no later than 10:00am on the following working day after the Match. Fines may be issued at the rate of

\$5 per missing result per team after this time.

(B) Should there be a result in dispute, please refer to: 13.5 DISPUTES.

14.3 COMPETITION POINTS

(A) Points shall be allocated as follows for all Premiership Matches:

- iii) Win - Three (3) points
- iv) Draw - One (1) point each team
- v) Bye - Three (3) points
- vi) Loss - No points
- vii) Forfeit - Three (3) points to the Team receiving the forfeit and 3 goals. An additional minus (-) three (3) points to the team forfeiting may be applied in accordance with Disciplinary Procedure and Schedule of Penalties. In Youth Football – Three (3) points and six (6) goals.

14.4 RANKING OF TEAMS

(A) The ESFA will use the following process when determining the ranking of Teams within each Premiership Competition:

- i) Greater number of points obtained in all Premiership Matches
- ii) If two (2) or more Teams are equal based on the above criterion, their place will be determined as follows:
 - a) Greater goal difference resulting from all Premiership Matches.
 - b) Greater goals scored from all Premiership Matches.
 - c) Greater number of goals scored in the Premiership Matches between the teams concerned (head-to-head).
 - d) A Play-off Match between the Teams concerned under arrangements approved by the Executive.

14.5 CLUBS REMOVED OR WITHDRAWING FROM DIVISIONS

(A) In the event of any Team withdrawing or being removed from a Division, the following procedure will take effect to allow the altered Division to proceed to a conclusion.

- i) Removed or withdrawing during first Round:
 - a) For all opposing Teams that have played the removed or withdrawn Teams, points and goals will be deleted from their records and they shall be credited with a bye result.
 - b) Teams that have not played the removed or withdrawn Team will obtain a bye result.
- ii) Removed or withdrawing during the second or subsequent Rounds:
 - a) For all complete rounds of Matches, all points and goals acquired against removed or withdrawn Teams will be retained by opposing Teams.
 - b) For all incomplete rounds, points and goals acquired against such Teams shall be lost and bye results shall be credited for these parts of the Premiership competition.
 - c) Where a postponed or deferred Match from an earlier Round of Matches remains unplayed at the time of withdrawal, the result shall be deemed to be a forfeit.

(B) The ESFA may refer a Club that withdraws a Team after the

commencement of the Season for further sanction under the Disciplinary Procedure.

14.6 MATCHES AFFECTING THE FINALS SERIES

- (A) Any rescheduled Match affecting Finals Series positions must be played prior to the final scheduled Premiership Match Day unless there is provision for a wet weather weekend after that date.
- (B) If a rescheduled Match is not played prior to the commencement of the Finals Series, it will be deemed a no result, and no points will be allocated.
- (C) In the event of the postponement of a Match in the final Premiership Match Day, the ESFA shall determine if the Match is to be replayed.

14.7 FORFEITS & WALK OFFS

- (A) Teams must field at least seven (7) eligible Players at the start of any Match.
- (B) If a Team fails to enter the field of play or has insufficient Players for the Match to commence ten (10) minutes after the scheduled starting time, the Referee shall inform both RTOs (if present) that the Match has been abandoned and that the Match will be dealt with as specified below.
- (C) Any Club that fails to fulfil an engagement to play a Match at the appointed date, time or venue without acceptable explanation shall be deemed to have forfeited that Match.
- (D) Whether a forfeit has occurred shall be determined by the ESFA.
- (E) In addition to fines that may be issued under these rules, the forfeiting Club may also be liable for any reasonable expenses incurred by its opponents relative to that Match or Matches including Match Officials' Fees and ground hire.
- (F) In the event of a walk-off by one Club prior to the completion of a Match the Team will be deemed to have forfeited the Match. The offending Club must provide to the ESFA, within 48 hours, an explanation of their actions. Such explanation must be referred to the Disciplinary Committee for review and possible action.

14.8 PENALTIES FOR FORFEITS

- (A) In the event of a Team forfeiting a Match, the following result shall be recorded:
 - i) For Youth Leagues, the result shall be deemed a 3-0 win to the opposition Club and full points shall be allocated for the Match.

- ii) For Senior Leagues, the result shall be deemed a 3-0 win to the opposition Club and full points shall be allocated for the Match. The team forfeiting may be subject to minus (-) 3 point penalty in accordance with the ESFA Disciplinary Procedure and Schedule of Penalties
 - iii) Where a Match has commenced and a Team was subsequently deemed to forfeit due to insufficient Players or the use of ineligible Players, the result at the completion of the Match may stand if the opposition Club won by more than 3-0.
- (B) When a Team intends to forfeit, their Club must notify the ESFA office in writing, in an ESFA approved JotForm by Thursday 9am for all weekend Matches or 48 hours prior to the scheduled kick off for all weekday Matches.
 - (C) Teams forfeiting on a first occasion without notice given as specified in 14.8(B) or having a forfeit imposed on them for misconduct shall be fined \$100.
 - (D) Teams forfeiting on a second occasion for any reason shall be fined \$200.
 - (E) Teams forfeiting on a third or subsequent occasion for any reason shall be fined \$300 and be ineligible to:
 - i) be declared Premiers;
 - ii) participate in the Finals Series, or;
 - iii) be nominated for Champion of Champions.
 - iv) May face expulsion from competition at the discretion of ESFA.
 - (F) In addition to fines that may be issued, the forfeiting Club may also be liable for any reasonable expenses incurred by its opponents relative to that Match or Matches including Match Officials' Fees and ground hire.
 - (G) No forfeit will be accepted during the Finals Series. Should a team forfeit, fines will apply, and the team may be removed from the Finals Series.

15. FINALS SERIES AND TROPHIES

15.1 FINALS SERIES

- (A) ESFA will endeavour to implement a 3-week Finals Series format;
- (B) The 4 team, 3-week Finals Series format shall be:

Week	Match number	Match name	Teams
Week 1	1	Major Semi-Final	1 st vs 2 nd
	2	Minor Semi-Final	3 rd vs 4 th
Week 2	3	Preliminary Final	Loser 1 vs Winner 2
Week 3	4	Grand Final	Winner 1 vs Winner 3

- (C) A Finals Series may be shortened to a standard 2-week Finals Series if wet weather or other unforeseen events severely interferes with the Premiership or Match Day 1 of the Finals Series.

(D) The 4 team, 2-week Finals Series format shall be:

Week	Match number	Match name	Teams
Week 1	1	Semi-Final 1	1 st vs 4 th
	2	Semi-Final 2	2 nd vs 3 rd
Week 2	3	Grand Final	Winner 1 vs Winner 2

(E) The winner of the Grand Final shall be deemed the Champions.

15.2 POSTPONED OR ABANDONED FINALS SERIES MATCHES.

- (A) In the event an alternative weekend date is not available, the ESFA will seek to reschedule Finals Series Matches which are washed out or abandoned to the Wednesday afternoon or evening immediately after the washed out or abandoned Match.
- (B) Should either Team not be available, the Match will be deemed to have been forfeited by that Team.
- (C) Should the Match not be rescheduled due to weather intervening, the highest place Team will be deemed to have won the Match and proceed to the next stage.
- (D) Should a Grand Final Match be washed out, the ESFA will determine the outcome of the Match, or any reschedule.

15.3 FINALS SERIES VENUES

- (A) The Executive shall determine the venue for all Finals Series Matches
- (B) All venues shall be considered neutral, and instructions shall be issued as to who is responsible for preparing the field.

15.4 DRAWN FINALS SERIES MATCHES

- (A) If at the conclusion of a Finals Series Match the scores are level, the Teams shall play two equal periods of extra time as follows:
 - i) 13-18 years – 10-minute halves
 - ii) 19-35 years – 15-minute halves
 - iii) 45+ years – No extra time – straight to penalty shootout
 - iv) No half time shall apply
- (B) If the scores are still level at the conclusion of extra time, the Match shall be determined by the penalty kick method as prescribed by FIFA.

15.5 PREMIERSHIP TROPHIES

- (A) The Premiers of each Division shall be presented with a trophy or plaque.

15.6 GRAND FINAL TROPHIES

- (A) The Champions of each respective Division, having won the Grand Final shall be presented with a trophy or plaque.

15.7 PERPETUAL TROPHIES

- (A) Perpetual trophies awarded to Clubs are to be returned to the ESFA Office by the ESFA Annual General Meeting.
- (B) Clubs that fail to return a perpetual trophy by the cut-off date will be required to pay for a replacement.

15.8 FINALS SERIES PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- (A) In Finals Series Matches a Player who plays in a Team pursuant to Rules 7.6(D), 7.6(E), 7.7(H) or O must have played for that Team at least once during the Premiership Competition.
- (B) In Finals Series Matches, excluding Men's Championship Matches, a maximum of 5 Players may play in a Team pursuant to Rules 7.6(D), 7.6(E), 7.7(H) or O.
- (C) No exemptions will be granted during Finals Series. If a player has not played during the season in accordance with these Regulations, no exemption should be sought.

16. MEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE

- (A) The Men's Premier League shall consist of a First Grade for 2025 only.
- (B) Men's Premier League structure for 2026 will be reviewed throughout the year by a working group.
- (C) A minimum team of 14 players must be registered in both Play Football and Dribl.
- (D) Players registered in a Men's Premier League may not play in any other League (home and away) at any time throughout the season.
- (E) There will be no prize money for 2025.
- (F) Matches shall not be played on consecutive days for Premiership, the ESFA Cup, FNSW State Cup, FA Cup and Waratah Cup. Monday rescheduled fixtures by ESFA are to be played unless an agreement is reached by both teams and agreed by ESFA.
- (G) Players registered in Men's All Age, Men's O35 and Men's O45 may play as borrowed players (in accordance with limits imposed in borrowing rules) into the Men's Premier League and must have been borrowed a minimum of once to play in the MPL First Grade Grand Final.
- (H) Clubs shall abide by the dates of fixtures on the draw.

17. WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE

- (A) No Club will have more than one team in Women's Premier League unless self-nominated by the Club or approved by ESFA in the interests of the integrity of the Competition.
- (B) A Prizemoney contribution of \$817.50 per team shall be collected by ESFA at the commencement of the 2025 season and held for distribution at the end of the season. (note: 81.75% of the MPL Prizemoney contribution is

awarded to First Grade)

- (C) Prize money shall be paid as follows (when 8 clubs are participating: subject to change if more or less than 8 clubs):
- i) WPL Premiers - \$3,680
 - ii) WPL Runners Up - \$1,440
 - iii) WPL Third Place - \$280
 - iv) WPL Champions - \$760
 - v) WPL GF Runners Up - \$380

18. KNOCKOUT COMPETITIONS

- (A) The ESFA will generally endeavour to run annual knock-out Competitions. If Knockout competitions are organised for the 2025 calendar year, details will be declared in advance and offered to clubs to nominate teams.

19. FAILURE TO COMPLY

- (A) Failure by a Club, Team or individual to comply with any of these rules may result in any of:
- i) non-acceptance of into a Competition;
 - i) disqualification from a Competition;
 - ii) forfeit of points;
 - iii) action under the Disciplinary Procedure;
 - iv) imposition by ESFA of a fine as specified in the Schedule of Penalties or as per the following Rules:

Rule	Offence	Amount
Rule 4.1(J)	Withdrawal of a Team's nomination after the publishing date for proposed gradings of Teams into Divisions but before Match Day 1 of the Premiership competition	\$100
Rule 4.1(K)	Withdrawal of a Team's nomination after Match Day 1 of the Premiership competition	\$500
Rule 6.1(P)	Late submission of Match Amendment Form	\$150 to the Club of each participating Team
Rule 10.1(C)10.1	Failure to dress the field (nets, corner flags) or no spectator/supporter marking (lines, cones, or ropes for spectators/supporters to remain behind)	\$10
Rule 11.2(F)	Failure to submit Digital Match Sheets to ESFA	\$10
Rule 2.1(A)i)	Failure to list a player on Digital Match Sheet – first offence after Match 5	\$50

Rule	Offence	Amount
Rule 2.1(A)ii)	Failure to list a player on Digital Match Sheet – second offence	\$100
Rule 2.1(A)iii)	Failure to list a player on Match Sheet – third offence	\$500
Rule 7.4 E)	Requesting more than 1 deferral in season without amended date, time and field	\$100
Rule 11.2(L)	Clerical errors including, but not limited to, failing to endorse up-graded Players, duplicate shirt numbers, incorrect shirt numbers and failing to sign a Digital Match Sheet.	\$5 per error
Rule 14.2(A)	Failure to submit results in Competition Management System by 10:00AM on the working day following a Match	\$10 per missing result to each participating Team
Rule 14.8(C)	First forfeit (either imposed or without notice)	\$100
Rule 14.8(D)	Second forfeit	\$200
Rule 14.8(E)	Third and subsequent forfeit	\$300