



## MEMORANDUM

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To: **Country Region Managers – for the information of Region Stakeholders**

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Cc: **AFL Vic Management**

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From: **John O'Donohue – Community Football Manager**

Date: **9 December 2025**

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Re: **Variations to Laws of the Game for AFL Victoria Country Leagues**

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The AFL has recently announced amendments to Laws of the Game and the interpretations of specific rules however are not necessarily applicable to Victorian Country Football. Under Laws of Australian Football AFL Victoria has applied Law 2.2:

### **2.2 VARIATION BY CONTROLLING BODY**

- a) A Controlling Body may apply to the AFL to vary these Laws as they apply to the competition or competitions conducted by the Controlling Body.

AFL Victoria confirms the following variations and interpretations to amendments for season 2026 which shall apply to affiliated Country Leagues.

### **18.4 RUCK CONTESTS**

#### **Application:**

A player is no longer required to nominate for a ruck contest at around the ground ball ups and boundary throw in, however; 18.4.2 Number of Rucks Each Team must have no more than one Ruck contesting any centre throw-up or boundary throw-in.

#### **Interpretation:**

Players are no longer required to nominate for a ruck contest however, no more than one ruck from each team may contest the throw up.

### **13.2 CONTESTING THE CENTRE BOUNCE OR THROW-UP**

**Application:** The throw-up of the football shall be contested by the Ruck who must start with both feet within the Ten Metre Circle and may only enter the Team's attacking half or exit the Ten Metre Circle after the football is bounced or thrown up by the field Umpire. No other Player may enter the Ten Metre Circle until the football is thrown up by the field Umpire.

#### **Interpretation:**

The Ruckman shall stand either side of the white line in the centre circle until the umpire has thrown the ball up, players may then contest the ball. No Change.

### **18.10 OUT OF BOUNDS**

**Application:** A field Umpire shall NOT award a Free Kick against a Player who does not demonstrate sufficient intent to keep the football in play; the ball shall be thrown in.

#### **Interpretation:**

Insufficient Intent has not been applicable in Country Football and the ball shall be thrown in by a Boundary Umpire in all parts of the ground. Insufficient intent is not a free kick. No change to current interpretations.

#### **Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited**

AFL Victoria provides the following clarity to amendments for season 2026 which shall apply to affiliated Country Leagues.

### **13.2 COMMENCEMENT OF PLAY**

The field Umpire shall commence play in each quarter by holding the football above their head, blowing a whistle and ~~bouncing~~ or throwing up the football in the Centre Circle.

#### **Application:**

Removal of Centre Bounce was previously removed at Community Level and is not applicable.

#### **Interpretation:**

No Change.

### **AFL 23<sup>rd</sup> man or Substitute Rule**

#### **Application:**

Not applicable in Country Leagues. Leagues may adopt a By Law governing additional players or substitutes.

#### **Interpretation:**

No Change.

### **13.1 STARTING POSITIONS**

Where six Players from each Team are permitted in each area defined by the Boundary Line and the Fifty Metre Arcs; of these six Players for each area referenced in Law 13.1

~~(a), at least one Player from each Team is positioned within the Goal Square;~~

#### **Application:**

13.1 has been exempt from Country Leagues as detailed at Section 27 of AFL Victoria Country Rules and the AFL amendment is therefore not applicable.

#### **Interpretation:**

No Change.

Should you have any questions in relation to the implementation or interpretations to the 2026 amendments, please contact the AFL Victoria Community Football Team.

Regards



**John O'Donohue**  
**AFL Victoria**  
**Community Football Manager**