



SEASON 2026

**NETBALL
COMPETITION
RULES**

BFNL NETBALL COMPETITION RULES

Preamble

These Rules must be read in conjunction with

- World Netball Rules

DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

In these Competition Rules unless the contrary intention appears:

“BFNL” means Bendigo Football & Netball League Incorporated. In these rules referred to as “BFNL” or “the Bendigo Football & Netball League”.

“Commission” means the Commission of AFL Central Victoria.

“League” means the Bendigo Football & Netball League Incorporated.

The appendices and schedules attached should be read in conjunction with and form part of the By-Laws of the Bendigo Football Netball League (BFNL).

1. RULES OF NETBALL

BFNL is the governing body and its competition rules override all other netball rules. Rules of play will be governed by the World Netball Rules.

2. PLAYER UNIFORMS

- 2.1** All clubs must submit details of uniforms each season. Shirts, skirts, bodysuits/dresses, socks and briefs (nominated colours).
- 2.2** Players must be in full uniform, in registered club colours for all matches. Any player without full uniform will not be permitted to take the court.
- 2.3** Playing initials must be worn by all players: GS, GA, WA, C, WD, GD and GK.
- 2.4** Sponsorship logos are not permitted on netball bibs, with the exception of the required official BFNL major sponsors.
- 2.5** Sponsorship logos are permitted on playing uniform/dress as set down by Netball Victoria guideline.
- 2.6** No tracksuit pants are permitted unless a medical certificate is produced and tabled at a league general meeting and also produced upon request.
- 2.7** Any offending player(s) will be asked to leave the court, until compliance of the above clauses is carried out.

3. LEAGUE STRUCTURE

The League will be structured in the following manner for competition

purposes:

Each Club shall field five (5) netball teams:

1. BFNL A Grade (Female)
2. BFNL A Reserve (Female)
3. BFNL B Grade (Female)
4. BFNL B Reserve (Female)
5. BFNL 17 & Under (Female)
6. BFNL 15 & Under (Female)

Participant age is determined as at 31st December of that year.

4. REGISTRATIONS

- 4.1** All clubs must submit the BFNL Club Player List to the BFNL Manager one week prior to the commencement of the first home and away match
- 4.2** All players must be registered with BFNL on the approved Netball Victoria online database prior to playing their first match. Any player not registered on the online database for the BFNL prior to playing their first game will be deemed unregistered
- 4.3** All coaches must be registered with the BFNL on the approved Netball Victoria online database.
- 4.4** No new player or coach registrations will be accepted after 30th June in the current year
- 4.5** All players' registrations expire at the end of BFNL netball home and away and finals season.
- 4.6** Playing an unregistered player or a player who has failed to gain a clearance will result in the following penalties:
- (a) \$150 fine per offending player and loss of four (4) premiership points for each occasion in which an unregistered player takes part in a match and any percentage obtained from those matches.
- 4.7** The BFNL Board of Management may set limits upon the number of registrations and/or clearances that any one club may get from any source.
- 4.8** A player seeking a clearance to another BFNL Club prior to 30 June of the current playing season, must initiate the clearance process by submitting the Netball Clearance form via the BFNL General Manager at least 72 hours before the desired destination Clubs next match. Refer to the Netball Clearance Application form for further details on the process.
- 4.9** A Single Game Voucher (SGV) is limited to a number of three (3) purchases/

uses, before having to pay for a full BFNL Club membership, and only when a player purchases a full membership, will the games played on SGV count towards finals eligibility. An SGV needs to be marked next to the player's name on the score sheet for identification (SGV).

5. FACILITIES

- 5.1** Home teams have the responsibility to ensure the court is in a playable condition, e.g. water removed and swept. If, due to circumstances beyond the control of the home club, the designated court is unavailable for play, clubs may only switch venue or alternate venue with the permission of the BFNL Manager. Inclement weather will not be considered as a reason to switch games. Penalty: \$250

6. COURT AUDIT/RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1** A court audit shall be completed in the appropriate book provided at the commencement of the days play. All hazards identified will be documented and if possible rectified or reported to the appropriate agency (local council, reserve committee) if major repair required. The original copy must be submitted along with other match day paperwork.
- 6.2** The BFNL retain the right to take whatever action it deems necessary to address any issue arising from a ground or court inspection report, including but not limited to; moving the game to another venue, cancelling the game, or re-scheduling the game to another day or time. Preference of the BFNL is for any scheduled game to be completed on the same day or weekend at the agreement of competing clubs.
- 6.3** In any match when heavy rain falls or any adverse weather conditions occur during play, the umpires may, at the request of either or both Captains call for time off for a maximum of 30 minutes, after which play must be completed or abandoned.
- 6.2.1 Where captains cannot agree on the resumption of play, the two umpires have the casting vote.
- 6.2.2 When a match has been abandoned during the home and away season the result will be recorded as per BFNL By Law 13.4 Non-Completion of Matches.
- 6.2.3 When a match has been abandoned during a final, the team finishing higher on the ladder at the completion of the home and away rounds will be awarded the win.
- 6.4** All Clubs are responsible for recording all injuries at the discretion of the injured player or players' guardian (player under 18) in the club injury book.

- 6.5** All Players in a league representative team are responsible for recording all injuries at the discretion of the injured player or player's guardian (player under 18) in the injury book

7. SCORERS AND TIMEKEEPERS

- 7.1** Each home club must supply one official scorer and a scoreboard attendant. Each away club must supply one official timekeeper.

8.1.1 The official scorer and official timekeeper are to sit together and confer with all goals shot. The scoreboard attendant is to update the scoreboard progressively as the match is played.

7.1.2 The timekeeper is to inform the umpires of the match commencement, and the start and end of each quarter. The official scorer is to inform the scoreboard attendant of the official scores at the end of each quarter to ensure the correct score is displayed for public view.

- 7.2** Scorers, timekeepers and scoreboard attendants cannot play during the game in which they are officiating.

- 7.3** For each final the BFNL Manager shall appoint one independent scorer, one independent timekeeper and one scoreboard attendant (not associated in any way with the teams competing in the final.)

8. FORFEITS

- 8.1** Any team that does not attend the first fifteen minutes of the prescribed starting time will incur an automatic forfeit

- 8.2** Any team that does not supply a suitably accredited umpire within the first fifteen minutes of the prescribed starting time will incur an automatic forfeit.

- 8.3** In the event of a club being unable to field any open age teams during the season then the A Grade must be filled before the A Reserve, B Grade, B Reserve before 17 & Under. Any exemptions to the above will be at the BFNL Board of Management's discretion.

- 8.4** In the event of a forfeit, a fifty dollar (\$50) fine will apply and the BFNL Manager is to be notified by forfeiting team by no later than 9.00pm on the day prior to the match Also, the opposing team is to be notified by the forfeiting team.

- 8.5** The representative of a team that receives a forfeit must sign and fill in score sheet with 7 only nominated players at the designated time the team was to due play, so as to register its players. Failure to do so will mean the team concerned will not be accredited with playing.

9. FIXTURE ALTERATIONS

- 9.1** If a club wishes to alter the starting time of a match during the Home and Away Season, then the Club must notify the opposing Club's netball Delegate and Coach 72 hours prior to the match starting time. If the opposing Club agrees to a re-schedule starting time then the time shall be no later than half an hour after the scheduled starting time.
- 9.2** The Home Club must submit the BFNL Game Time Change online form for League assessment.
- 9.3** All changes must be approved by the League.

10. PLAYING TIMES

- 10.1** Competition matches and finals shall be four (4) quarters of fifteen (15) minutes each. Each match with intervals of three (3) minutes between the first/second and third/fourth quarters and a five (5) minute break at half time.

10.2 Home and Away Games

Single Court Venues

Day Games

- 15 & Under – 8.40am start
- 17 & Under – 10.00am start
- B Reserve – 11.20am start
- B Grade – 12.40pm start
- A Reserve – 2.00pm start
- A Grade – 3.20pm start

Night Games

- 15 & Under – 12.00pm start
- 17 & Under – 1.20pm start
- B Reserve – 2.40pm start
- B Grade – 4.00pm start
- A Reserve – 5.20pm start
- A Grade – 6.40pm start

Dual Court Venues

Day Games

- 15 & Under – 10.00am start
- 17 & Under – 11.30am start
- B Grade – 11.30am start
- A Reserve – 1.00pm start
- B Reserve – 1.00pm start
- A Grade – 2.30pm start

Night Games

- 15 & Under – 1.00pm start
- 17 & Under – 3.30pm start
- B Grade – 3.30pm start
- A Reserve – 5.00pm start
- B Reserve – 5.00pm start
- A Grade – 6.30pm start

10.3 Games will commence at the time specified in rule 10.2. Any teams that are not on court ready to play on time will mean the other team will get one goal per minute of absence. If both teams are not on court together, the first quarter will be shortened by the period of absence of both teams.

10.4 No extra time is to be played during the rounds throughout the season where a draw occurs. Extra time will only apply during the finals. At the end of full time there is an interval of two (2) minutes. Extra time consists of two halves of five minutes each. All other rules pertaining to extra time are outlined by Netball Victoria.

11. NETBALLS

- All netballs used for matches will be determined by the BFNL including any sponsor brand requirements
- Each team shall supply one ball, with home team ball to be used for the first half and opposition's ball in the second half, unless damage necessitates replacement or the Captains of both teams agree that a change of ball is necessary.
- In finals, branded netballs will be provided by the BFNL

12. MATCH DAY PAPERWORK & RESULTS

12.1 The Home club is required to print out the day's games score sheets for each grade for match day:

- (a) Finalised teams must be entered into the Netball Connect system by 12pm on the day before match day to enable the home team to print out all game's score sheets.
- (b) Printed scoresheets can be manually changed by crossing out players that are not playing and hand writing other players on.
- (c) Hand written players must be written precisely as player names are registered in the approved online netball database

12.2 On match day the Home Club is responsible for entering the results onto the IT system by 6:00 pm game day. This is to include:

- (a) Quarter by quarter scores plus final score;
- (b) Team sheets for both the home and away teams.

12.3 A Club Representative must submit the official scoresheet from each match via the designated online form by 12pm the Monday following the match. Penalty \$100.

All Match Day Paperwork must be filed in the provided envelope for

collection.

- 12.4** League Best & Fairest Votes are to be submitted by the match umpires immediately after the match via the online form.
- 12.5** Failure to comply with Clause 12 including the late entry of a team into the approved online netball database, may result in a \$150 fine.

13. MATCH OFFICIALS

- 13.1** A team may have up to five team officials. These will include a coach and at least one primary care person.
- 13.2** A Primary Care person:
- (a) Must hold First Aid qualifications.
 - (b) Must wear identification as specified.
 - (c) Must not have any other roles (including as a player).
 - (d) Must only act in accordance with the World Netball Rules.

14. ELIGIBILITY FOR HOME & AWAY GAMES

- 14.1** Prior to the commencement of the game, all players must be listed on the score sheet. No players can be added once the game has commenced.
- 14.2** The number of matches each player plays is to be counted following the last home and away period. Finals matches to be accredited but not for eligibility for finals.
- 14.3** Should the age of any person representing a club in the 17 & under and 15 & Under team be challenged, that person shall be obliged to complete and verify a Statuary Declaration as to her age and to exhibit her birth certificate thereto. The same shall be admissible in any hearing by way of protest or dispute before the Tribunal. Any expense that the player incurs in obtaining a copy of her birth certificate for defending an unproven protest, shall be reimbursed by the protesting club.
- 14.4** After playing a total of nine (9) games in higher grade/grades throughout the season and finals series a player may not play in a lower grade for the remainder of the season, including finals. This rule applies to all grades
- 14.5** A Club can apply for the following exemption; each application will be considered on its merit: Any 17 & Under or 15 & Under player who doubles up in into a B Reserve game only, on the same day, shall not have the B Reserve game counted for over qualification finals eligibility
- 14.6** A breach of Rule 15.4 throughout the Home and Away series will result in loss of four (4) premiership points of the grade as to which the game was played plus a \$100 fine.

15. ELIGIBILITY FOR FINALS

15.1 To be eligible to play in any BFNL Finals, a player must have played at least four (4) games for that club during the home and away period of competition in the current season in four (4) separate rounds. All games played during the Home & Away and the Final series will be recorded as "played".

*(To be reviewed for season 2026 based on fixture structure).

15.2 After playing a total of nine (9) games in a higher grade/s throughout the season and final series a player may not play in a lower grade for the remainder of the finals.

15.3 In the event that an ineligible player plays in any final, the offending team shall be immediately disqualified for the remainder of the final series.

16. UMPIRES

16.1 Each team must supply one badged umpire for both A Grade and A Reserve. They must also supply one umpire for B Grade, B Reserve, 17 & Under and 15 & Under, (being badged or competent and pursuing his/her qualifications in umpiring) for each round of home and away series.

16.2 Teams must register umpires and upload their qualifications on the approved online netball database.

16.3 Failure to have umpires with the necessary qualifications will result in a \$50.00 fine to the non-complying team unless agreement has been reached between the clubs involved.

16.4 Umpires should not umpire more than two (2) games per day.

16.5 In line with the Netball Australia Uniform policy (December 2022) umpires can choose if they wish to wear black skirt/shorts, leggings and or skins should an umpire wish to. Clubs are to ensure all their umpires are wearing or are provided with a League sponsored white top.

16.6 The BFNL Manager shall endeavour to organize umpire information sessions in the form of courses and discussions. All clubs must have at least two (2) representatives attend all of these. All clubs found to be in default shall incur the penalty of: the cost of the course per head

16.7 The League shall ATTEMPT to supply NEUTRAL UMPIRES for all final matches

17. PROTESTS

17.1 A protest must be lodged in writing by 5 p.m. the Tuesday following

the match, it shall then be referred to the BFNL Board of Management for consideration and possible hearing by an independent tribunal, following which they will rule

- 17.2** All protests are to be lodged with the BFNL Manager and NOT directly to the opposing Club. It is the responsibility of the BFNL Manager to inform any club of a protest and or complaint lodged by another and ensuing action to be taken.

18. REPRESENTATIVE / INTERLEAGUE TEAMS

- 18.1** Selection committee of three to be chosen at the start of the current season (as appointed by the BFNL Board of Management) to invite players to attend training squads for representative teams with one month's notice.

- 18.2** All such players selected must be available for official training, tournaments and representative matches. Selection committee to liaise with coach on team selection.

- 18.3** Coaching and team manager positions to be advertised to give all interested persons a chance to apply and be considered for these positions. BFNL Board to ratify appointments. Selection dates, grades and or age groups be forwarded to each club.

- 18.4** To be eligible for representative teams, players must have played at least three games in the BFNL Netball competition during the current season.

- 18.5** Players in the League shall attend the nominated number of training sessions designated by team management

19. MEDIA

All clubs will be required to be part of any media program as required by the league.

20. INDEMNITY

Any person playing netball in any competition organized by the league shall do so at their own risk. The BFNL Board of Management and their respective servants, agents, independent contractors and voluntary workers carrying out honorary or unpaid duties and each and every person participating or otherwise engaged in netball matches (including training sessions) conducted by or under the auspices of the league, the club or Netball Victoria from any actions, proceedings, demands, suits, claims, costs and expenses and other liabilities of whatsoever nature directly or indirectly arising from any injury or impairment suffered.

21. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

In the event of extreme circumstances occurring in any of the League's Rules, the BFNL Board of Management shall have the power to deal with any matters arising and impose any penalties as they see fit, including:

- Netball Vic – Wet Weather guidelines
- Netball Vic – Lightning Protocols.