

Welcome to Grade 12 Football.

Most players who will participate in Grade 12, will have now progressed from MiniRoos (ages 5-11). Grade 12 is played on a FULL SIZE field, with a FULL SIZE goal and the same rules (Laws of the Game) and conditions apply as senior football. Football Far North Coast has acknowledged feedback from a club volunteer who suggested that parents and coaches could use some help with getting easy access to information about Grade 12 football, so hopefully the outline below helps? We welcome any constructive feedback if you believe that we can enhance what is included below.

Eligibility to participate must comply with all applicable Regulations. The information provided within the Grade 12 Playing Format and Rules is a GUIDE to assist more understanding for coaches and parents involved in these competitions. Coaches and parents should ensure that assumptions are not made about eligibility or compliance. If there are any questions about eligibility, or the playing format and rules, they should be referred to your club that in turn can seek clarification from FFNC.

The information is displayed in an A-Z format to hopefully make it easy to navigate.

AGE

Definitions

1. Age = Grade of FFNC football competition (i.e. 12 years of age = Grade 12 FFNC football)
2. A player must be turning "at least TEN (10) or not more than TWELVE (12) in the calendar year of the current season to be considered as being AGE ELIGIBLE for Grade 12.
3. Each player is required to be registered in PlayFootball each season.
4. Registration is based on the age that a player turns in the relevant calendar year.
 - 4.1. If a player turns 12 anytime between 1st January and 31st December of the current year (i.e. 2024), the player is AGE eligible for Grade 12 and should be registered in PlayFootball as a Grade 12 player * (* unless there are any conditions imposed on any individual player that prohibits the player from participating in Grade 12).

Over-Age Players

5. A club can lodge an application with Football Far North Coast (FFNC) to request approval for a player who is Grade 13 eligible (i.e. 13 or turning 13) to be graded into Grade 12. An assessment will be made by FFNC within the terms of Competition Regulations, however an approval given for an over-age player will typically exist with a condition that such player must be graded into a Division One team.
6. Any approval for a player to participate in a competition below their eligible age or where a player is graded in a squad that is above their eligible age, creates conditions that will ordinarily prevent participation in their normal age eligible competition.
 - 6.1. This means that a 13-year-old who is approved by FFNC to be part of a Grade 12 squad, is not permitted to also participate in an older age competition (e.g. a Grade 13 or Grade 14 competition, even though that player would ordinarily be age eligible).

Playing across Grades

7. A player is not permitted to play "across" same age competitions (e.g. Cannot play in Grade 12 Division 2 and also Grade 12 Division 1).

BORROWED PLAYER

8. This is a player from the same club, but from a different team, who participates on Game Day for the different team.
9. A player must be otherwise eligible, such as by age, gender, registration and grading.
10. A player cannot play across Divisions in the same age competition (e.g. A player from Grade 12 Division 2 cannot participate as a Borrowed Player for the club's Grade 12 Division 1 team or vice versa).
11. A borrowed player (when eligible on all criteria) can participate in Grade 12, 13 or 14.

COACHES & TEAM OFFICIALS

12. All team officials must be registered as a Coach/Team Official in PlayFootball.
13. Each team is required to have a minimum of one (1), up to a maximum of three (3) registered team officials listed on the match sheet.
14. Only registered team officials who are listed on the match sheet are eligible to stand within the confines of the technical area.

COMPETITIONS

15. Unlike MiniRoos, Grade 12 football exists in a formal competition/competitive format.
16. Each team would ordinarily be scheduled to play at least twelve games in the pointscore season.

DISCIPLINARY

17. The National Disciplinary Regulations apply to Grade 12 and above.
18. An offence that is classed as being an on-field incident as defined under the Laws of the Game may result in a player (or Team Official) being issued a caution (i.e. known as a YELLOW CARD offence) or being sent from the field (i.e. known as a RED CARD offence).
19. A player or coach who is issued with ONE (1) yellow card in the same match, can continue to participate in the same match.
20. A player or coach who is issued with TWO (2) yellow cards in the same match, is subsequently issued with a RED Card and is immediately SUSPENDED and must leave the field of play and the Technical Area.
21. A player or coach who accumulates TWO (2) yellow cards across at least two different matches, is immediately suspended at the conclusion of the match where the second yellow card has been received.
22. A player or Team Official who is subject to a suspension, is not eligible to participate (in ANY role), until FFNC has provided written notification of the suspension and until the individual player or team official has extinguished the full suspension applicable.
23. The name of the suspended participant must be recorded as "standing down" on the relevant match sheets and be subsequently confirmed by FFNC as serving each component of a suspension imposed, before being again eligible to participant (in ANY role).
24. Football Far North Coast will consider what suspensions apply for RED Card offences, however most suspensions will be equal to the minimum suspension for the relative offence, by reference to the Football Australia scale of sanctions outlined in the [National Disciplinary Regulations](#).

DURATION OF MATCH

25. Each match is played as two 25-minute halves.
26. A maximum 5-minute half-time break will exist between the two halves.
27. The referee appointed to the fixture must ensure that the half-time break does not exceed 5 minutes.
 - 27.1. It is important that this is adhered to, to ensure that the scheduling of other fixtures at the same venue on the same day are able to kick-off at their scheduled time.
28. There is no time added-on for injuries or other breaks in play.
29. Late Kick-Off or other delays will ordinarily see time deducted from the maximum 50 minutes match time.
30. It is strongly recommended that teams remain within the vicinity of the field to avoid losing time by returning to the change rooms.
31. In the event of a match commencing after the scheduled time, the referee shall reduce the total duration of the match by the time lost and divide both halves equally. The Referee shall then advise each team to this effect before the commencement of play.

DUTY OFFICER

32. Each HOME club is required to have a registered VOLUNTEER act as a Duty Officer at each field on Game Day.
33. The role of Duty Officer is to monitor the behaviour of spectators.
34. Refer to a [Guide for Duty Officers](#)

FORFEITS

35. If a team is unable to play their scheduled game due to a lack of players, a forfeit is recorded against the team. The opposition team is awarded three (3) points and three (3) goals on the pointscore table.
36. A team cannot borrow or use players from the opposition team.
37. Each team must have at least seven (7) eligible players listed on the match sheet and be present and ready to take the field of play not later than fifteen (15) minutes of the scheduled kick-off time or a forfeit is imposed against the team that is unable to field a team. There is no concession for travel time.
38. Football Far North Coast ultimately makes a decision to impose a forfeit and will consider the evidence available in making such a decision.

FIELD SIZE

39. Grade 12 games are played on a full-size field. As per FIFA guidelines, fields can range from 45m to 90m in width and 90m to 120m in length.
40. Goals are full size.

FINALS SERIES & GRAND FINALS

41. At the completion of each Grade 12 point score competition, the top four (4) teams (unless otherwise advised by FFNC) will qualify for the finals series in each respective age grade and division.
42. The finals series will ordinarily take place over three weeks.
43. The normal format of a junior finals series is outlined below:
 - 43.1. Week 1 – Elimination Semi-Final and Qualifying Semi-Final
 - 43.1.1. Match A (Elimination Semi-Final) – 3rd place v 4th place
 - 43.1.2. Match B (Qualifying Semi-Final) – 1st place v 2nd place
 - 43.2. Week 2 – Final
 - 43.2.1. Match C (Final) – Loser Match B v Winner Match A
 - 43.3. Week 3 – Grand Final
 - 43.3.1. Match D (Grand Final) – Winner Match B v Winner Match C
- 43.4. Extra-time of 10 minutes each way applies for all finals and the grand final if both teams are tied at the end of normal time.
- 43.5. There is no penalty shoot-out if scores remained tied at the end of extra time.
 - 43.5.1. In finals (i.e. Match A – C), the highest placed team in the point score table progress.
 - 43.5.2. In the Grand Final, both teams are declared as joint winners.

GOALS

44. Goals are FULL SIZE.
45. Nets are ordinarily fixed on goals and are recommended to be used however are not compulsory.

GRADING

46. Teams are nominated in divisions (i.e. Division 1, Division 2, Division 3) based on the perceived ability of the respective teams by their clubs.
47. FFNC uses this information and grades teams into divisions (and competitions) that are deemed to be appropriate.
48. The regrading of a team into a higher or lower division will typically not occur once games have been played, although FFNC will use its own discretion in each case.

HOME TEAM (CLUB)

49. The team/club named first in the draw is considered to be the HOME TEAM/Club.
50. A team can still be the Home Team, even when playing at a neutral venue.
51. A team will NOT be the Home Team if playing at the opposition team's venue UNLESS the match was a Final Series match and the venue was classed as being neutral by FFNC.

INTERCHANGES (ALSO KNOWN AS SUBSTITUTES IN FFNC COMPETITIONS)

52. An interchange means that any player from the same team (as listed on the match sheet) can be interchanged (i.e. replaced, swapped or substituted) during the game, by another player from the same team (who is listed on the match sheet).
53. Unlimited interchange of players applies* (*) Subject to the discretion of the referee as to when (and how many) interchanges can be made.
54. The referee is not required to keep a record of which player(s) are interchanged, except IF the goalie is interchanged or swaps with a teammate who is otherwise playing as an outfield player.
- 55.

56. Players are able to return to the field after being substituted off, as long as a maximum number of eleven (11) players from the same team are on the field at any one time.
57. The player leaving the field must be off the field before the interchange player goes on.
58. A coach/team official cannot make substitutions while the ball is in play.
59. A player interchange may only be made when the play is stopped (i.e. when the ball goes out of play for a throw-in or goal-kick, or after a goal has been scored) and permission has been given by the referee.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

60. Parents (and spectators/supporters) should respect the role of the COACH and NOT issue/yell instruction from the sideline.
61. Coaches MUST be registered in PlayFootball.
62. Coaches MUST be located in the team's Technical Area IF they wish to issue any instructions during a match.
63. ALL individuals must respect the role, authority and decisions made by a referee during a match.
64. ALL communication should be respectful.
65. Parents should refer any general questions or concerns to the COACH in the first instance.
66. Parents should refer any serious concerns about child welfare, to the club's Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO), whose name and contact details should be made known by your member club.

MATCH BALLS

67. A Size 4 ball is used.
68. The HOME club should provide three (3) size 4 match balls for each Grade 12 fixture.
69. The logic of the home club/team supplying three (3) match balls is based on trying to maximise the game time played, noting that;
 - 69.1. ZERO time off applies.
 - 69.2. ONE ball being used will potentially create more game time lost .
 - 69.3. A "lost" ball will not impede the game continuing .
 - 69.4. A deflated (or unsuitable) ball can readily be replaced.
 - 69.5. Providing consistent requirements for every competition.

MATCH OFFICIALS (MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS REFEREES)

70. Match Officials are known as either a REFEREE (the one official who has the whistle and officiates on the field of play) or an ASSISTANT REFEREE (typically one of two officials, when appointed, to "run a flag" on one sideline to judge offside, when the ball is out of play and to assist the referee with decisions required on the field of play).
71. A centre referee will ordinarily be the ONLY official appointed to a Grade 12 fixture by FFNC.
72. A referee appointed to a Grade 12 match will typically be young, inexperienced (most likely FIRST YEAR officiating) and may not be super confident.
73. A referee who is officiating for their first season will generally be wearing a GREEN SHIRT to indicate that they are inexperienced. Everyone should SUPPORT these officials and be respectful.

74. If a referee cannot be formally appointed, a coach or parent will need to officiate the game. This responsibility may be shared between the two teams (e.g. one parent from each team referees one half each).
75. Assistant Referees (ARs) are not appointed to pointscore round fixtures, but are typically appointed to Finals series and Grand Final series fixtures where there are enough match officials available.
76. PARENTS are urged to become qualified referees, noting that there are rarely enough match officials available to be appointed to cover every match.

MATCH RESULTS AND POINTS TABLES

77. Match results and points tables are recorded online on the FFNC website.
78. The home club is responsible for entering results online by 11pm each Sunday following the fixture.
79. Results for each weekend fixtures (i.e. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) are then automatically published to the FFNC website by 1am on each Monday morning.
80. FFNC reconciles each result that has been entered online against the records on the match sheets submitted by clubs.
81. Where results are identified as being incorrect online, these are corrected by FFNC and advice is provided to the clubs involved in each fixture.
82. Points are awarded as followed:
 - 82.1. WIN – Three (3) points
 - 82.2. DRAW – One (1) point
 - 82.3. LOSS – Zero (0) points
 - 82.4. WIN (by FORFEIT) – Three (3) points plus three (3) goals
 - 82.5. BYE – Zero (0) points

MATCH SHEETS

83. All teams are required to complete a match sheet and provide it to the appointed match official (OR CLUB appointed match official) before kick-off.
84. Players cannot be added to a match sheet after the game has started.
85. If a player 'might' arrive for the second half, their name is still required to have already been written on the match sheet before Kick-Off (i.e. the start of the game and meaning when the referee has received the match sheet book).
86. The reconciliation of results is typically complete by close of business each Thursday.

MERCY RULE

87. FFNC has resolved to introduce a 'pilot' component within its competition regulations in 2024, called a '**Mercy Rule**'.

This means that the maximum score recorded in any competition fixture in 2024 (i.e. ages 12 to seniors), will be a differential of TEN (10) goals.

The basis of this regulation, is to demonstrate that grassroots football, can be about winning matches, but should not be about humiliating opposition players and teams. The concept of a mercy rule might be a new concept for our code, but it exists in various sports, including AFL, Baseball, Basketball, Rugby League and Netball.

Discussion with club delegates at the Club's Forum in February, prompted questions about the impact on points tables and golden boot records? Suffice to say that the decision to introduce this amendment to regulations as a 'pilot' in 2024, is to provide an opportunity to consider what (if any) unintended outcomes arise?

If a score differential of TEN (10) is reached, the match can continue (as a friendly), if both teams wish to do so. Regardless of what occurs after the score differential threshold of ten has been reached, FFNC will only recognise the score as it was at that point of the match. We make it known that any yellow or red cards issued (at any time during the normal allocated duration of the match), will remain valid and a team cannot 'forfeit' a match to circumvent the mercy rule being imposed.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

88. Maximum of 11 players including goalkeeper on the field of play at any one time.
89. An additional five interchange players can be seated in the technical area.
90. No more than 16 players can be listed on the match sheet and participate in any one fixture from the same team/club.
91. A player must be listed on the match sheet prior to kick-off as part of being considered eligible to participate in any given fixture.
92. All players who are intending to play in the fixture must be written on the match sheet before kick-off. Players cannot be added to the match sheet after kick-off.
93. A fixture may not start or continue if either team has fewer than seven players.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

94. Clubs are required to lodge a list of players (known as a Squad List) who are considered age-eligible (or approval otherwise given*) to participate in Grade 12.
95. A player can be registered in one team (listed on the squad list), one competition for which they are eligible.
96. A junior mixed player cannot participate for a different Grade 12 team from the same club regardless if the other team is in a different division.
97. A player cannot be shared between two teams from different clubs;
 - 97.1. i.e. a player cannot 'fill-in' for the opposing team due to lack of players or any other reason.
98. Females are eligible to play in MIXED gender competitions;
 - 98.1. A female player cannot however participate for two different Girls Grade 12 teams.
 - 98.2. A female player can participate for a GIRLS only team and a MIXED GENDER team, for which they are eligible (generally based on age), but such player can only be registered to one team.
99. A player can only participate a maximum of six (6) times in any one team that they are not registered for before they are regraded to that team;
 - 99.1. A player who is regraded to a different team can no longer participate for the team that they were originally registered in.
100. MALES cannot participate in GIRLS ONLY competitions.

PLAYING EQUIPMENT

101. All outfield players in the same team must wear the following equipment when on the field of play (including in the Technical Area);
 - 101.1. Shirts must be club playing shirts and be the same for all out-field players in the same team.
 - 101.2. Shirts must have sleeves.
 - 101.3. Shirts must have a unique number on the back and be visible from a distance of at least 25 metres.
 - 101.4. The number on each shirt must reconcile with the name of each player, as written on the match sheet.
 - 101.5. Shorts must be the same colour and style for all out-field players in the same team (including when a goalkeeper changes position and becomes an outfield player).
 - 101.6. Socks must be of the same colour and style for all outfield players in the same team (including when a goalkeeper changes position and becomes an outfield player).
 - 101.7. Shinguards (and must be covered by the socks).
 - 101.8. Footwear (football boots or other suitable covered footwear).
 - 101.9. Studs must be safe (metal studs must not be sharp or considered by the referee to be dangerous).

GOALKEEPER

102. A shirt must be worn and must be distinctly different in colour from the out-field players from the BOTH teams.
103. A short sleeve shirt (where being worn) must have sleeves.
104. A long-sleeve shirt is allowable.
105. The shirt must have a unique number on the back and be visible from a distance of at least 25 metres. The number must reconcile with the name of the goalkeeper, as written on the match sheet.
106. Shorts and socks are not required to be the same colour and style as out-field players from the same team whilst a player is acting as the goalkeeper (i.e. NOT an outfield player).
107. Socks must be worn and cover the shinguards. The colour and style can however be different from outfield players in the same team.
108. Shinguards (and must be covered by the socks).
109. Footwear (football boots or other suitable covered footwear).
110. Studs must be safe (metal studs must not be sharp or considered by the referee to be dangerous)
111. Undershirts must be the same colour as the main colour of the shirt sleeve.
112. Undershorts/tights (e.g. Skins) must be the same colour as the main colour of the shorts or the lowest part of the shorts.
113. A goalkeeper can wear trackpants.

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

114. Undershirts must be the same colour as the main colour of the shirt sleeve.
115. Undershorts/tights (e.g. Skins) must be the same colour as the main colour of the shorts or the lowest part of the shorts.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

116. All items of jewellery (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are forbidden and must be removed.
117. Using tape to cover jewellery is not permitted.
118. A player who has a CAST on an arm or wrist cannot participate EVEN if the cast is wrapped or padded.

OTHER ITEMS

119. Spectacles can be worn by a player as long as the referee is of a view that the spectacles (e.g. frames) will not cause injury to the player or to any other player.

ALTERNATE STRIPS

120. In the event of a strip clash (i.e. two teams wearing similar colours OR two teams from the same club), it is the responsibility of the home club/team to organise to wear their approved alternate strip.

POINTS

121. Points are awarded as followed:
 - 121.1. WIN – Three (3) points
 - 121.2. DRAW – One (1) point
 - 121.3. LOSS – Zero (0) points
 - 121.4. WIN (by FORFEIT) – Three (3) points plus three (3) goals
 - 121.5. BYE – Zero (0) points

POSTPONED FIXTURES

122. A postponed fixture is when a game cannot be played as a consequence of inclement weather or adverse condition of the field.
123. When a game is postponed, FFNC will advise both clubs/teams by email that the fixture has been postponed due to wet weather closure of the field the game was scheduled to be played on.
124. FFNC will make an assessment about re-scheduling (or otherwise) and identify a suitable date and time for the fixture to be played.
125. Fixtures that do not proceed (i.e. are not re-scheduled) will be declared.

RULES (FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME)

126. In Grade 12, the FIFA Laws of the Game are applied with minor modifications to corner kicks.
 - 126.1. Corner kicks are to be taken on the goal line at a point 3 metres from the junction of the goal line and the penalty box (16.5 metres line) and towards the corner on that side of the field in which the ball went out.
127. The FIFA Laws of the Game can be found [here](#).

SCHEDULING

128. Fixtures are scheduled at the discretion of Football Far North Coast. The team that is named first will be considered as the home team, even if the fixture is played at a neutral venue.
129. Each team can expect to play a minimum of 12 games in a pointscore season and a maximum of 14 games in a season (plus any games in a finals series that a team may qualify for) regardless of how many teams exist in any given competition.
130. The scheduling of all games is shown on the FFNC website and be accessed from the 'View Fixtures & Results' file on the home page.
131. Grade 12 Mixed Gender games are ordinarily scheduled for Saturday mornings with kick-off times typically ranging from 8:30am to 11:40am. Occasionally, games are also scheduled on Friday evenings (kick-off from 6pm to 7:30pm) OR Sunday mornings (kick-off from 8:30am to 11:20am).
132. Girls Grade 12 games are ordinarily scheduled on Sunday mornings with kick-off times typically ranging from 8:30am to 11:20am, but may also be scheduled on Friday evenings (kick-off from 6pm to 7:30pm). This can be for reasons such as additional or catch-up games being required due to competition structure or games that were postponed due to wet weather.
133. In rare circumstances additional or catch-up games will be scheduled mid-week (i.e. Monday to Thursday) to align with another fixture at the field of the home club.

SQUAD LISTS

134. A Squad List is a list of players who are considered to otherwise eligible to participate in the nominated competition in that season.
135. Each club must lodge a Squad List for all teams and must be lodged with FFNC not less than seven (7) working days prior to the commencement of each respective competition.
136. A minimum of 11 players up to a maximum of 16 players may be listed on the squad list.

TECHNICAL AREAS (TA)

137. The technical area is defined as the length of the bench plus one metre each side of the bench and the area in front of the bench up to a 'minimum' of one metre away from and parallel to the sideline.
138. Only interchange players and a maximum of three (3) registered team officials listed on the match sheet are permitted to occupy the technical area.
139. All team officials and interchange players must remain in the TA (except where warming up).

WET WEATHER

140. In the event of wet weather rendering a club's fields unsuitable for play, FFNC will make a decision as to whether the game will be postponed to a later date or moved to an alternative venue (this is typically the home field of the opposition team).

YELLOW CARDS & RED CARDS

141. Refer Disciplinary
142. Cards are issued by the referee if a player or coach/team official commits an offence (in the opinion of the referee) that is deemed to be an offence in the FIFA Laws of the Game

ENJOY THE SEASON!