



LAWS OF THE GAME

CHARTER FOR THE AFL LAWS
OF THE GAME COMMITTEE





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Australian Football is the most spectacular game in the world, featuring outstanding players and backed by passionate supporters who have made the game Australia's most popular sport.

The first recorded game of Australian Football was played in 1858 – since then the game has evolved and will continue to evolve, but there are many unique characteristics that make it **Australia's Game**.

The AFL Commission is the independent body charged with the ultimate decision-making responsibility for all elements of Australian Football.

To assist the AFL Commission with its deliberations, the AFL Laws of the Game Committee has been established to make assessments of the game, canvass views, test theories and provide comments and recommendations regarding the Laws of the Game.

The AFL Commission considers very seriously the recommendations from the Laws of the Game Committee on any changes to the rules and interpretations under which the game is played.

One of the most significant developments in the Laws of the Game processes has been to enhance the consultation that takes place with important industry groups including coaches, players and supporters, in shaping the recommendations of the Laws of the Game Committee.

While the Laws of the Game Committee respects and values the views of all industry stakeholders, it has the responsibility to independently weigh all game trends, submissions and views and make recommendations to the AFL Commission that it considers to be in the best interests of the game. This independence is fundamental.

The AFL Commission provides this Charter for the Laws of the Game Committee and associated stakeholders as a reference point on how the game should be played at AFL level by providing guiding principles for the Laws of the Game and identifying unique characteristics to be encouraged in the game.

Elements of the Charter for the Laws of the Game Committee may be updated by the Commission from time to time to help ensure that Australian Football remains the most spectacular game in the world.

CHARTER OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the Charter for the Laws of the Game Committee are:

- For the AFL Commission to provide the Laws of the Game Committee and other stakeholders with an overview of the guiding principles, fundamental elements and unique characteristics of Australian Football it is seeking to encourage via the Laws of the Game.
- For the AFL Commission to provide a clear reference point to the Laws of the Game Committee when assessing the game and considering potential rule and interpretation changes.
- To give the AFL Commission a clear reference point when considering recommendations from the Laws of the Game Committee.

Note: The primary focus of this charter is the game at AFL level as we recognise:

- i. There are modified rules versions of the game including junior competitions, NAB AFL Auskick and AFL 9s
- ii. In various parts of the world, the game is not played on an oval shaped ground
- iii. Other competitions have the option or flexibility of applying the Laws of the Game to suit local conditions and resources



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE LAWS OF THE GAME

To maintain and enhance Australian Football as the most spectacular game in the world, the game at AFL level must remain entertaining and exciting to watch and safe to play within the confines of a body contact sport.

Guiding principles for the Laws of the Game are:

- The unique characteristics of the game should be maintained and encouraged
- Player health and safety is protected via the Laws of the Game, interpretations and officiating
- A priority of the Laws, interpretations and officiating is to reward and protect the player who makes winning the ball their primary objective
- Australian Football at AFL level should be maintained as a physically tough and contested game with appropriate consideration to player health and safety
- Players of various sizes, football and athletic ability have an opportunity for success in the game played at the highest level
- The direction and movement of the ball is unpredictable and has few restrictions
- There are few restrictions on where players can be located across the ground
- Continuous and free flowing football is encouraged ahead of repetitive short passages of play
- The Laws of the Game balances offensive and defensive aspects of play, where an attacking style of game is encouraged



Rule and interpretation changes should be considered if there is an opportunity to further enhance, or address trends that threaten the principles of the Laws of the Game.

FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

A number of fundamental elements of Australian Football have been shaped over the course of the ongoing 150-year evolution of the game.

As Australia's only indigenous code, Australian Football has unique characteristics to be maintained and encouraged:

- Played with an oval shaped ball
- Played on an oval shaped ground
- Has 18 players on the field per team
- Is a match consisting of four quarters
- Is based on kicking
- Permits handpassing, but does not allow the ball to be thrown
- Features spectacular high marking and spectacular goals
- Features players running at high speed while bouncing the ball
- Awards six points for a goal and one point for a behind
- At the start of each quarter and after each goal, play is resumed by a ruck contest at a centre bounce or ball-up
- When the ball has crossed the boundary line or hits the behind post, play resumes via a throw-in or free kick

Australian Football at AFL level to be maintained as a physically tough and contested game through:

- Contested possessions
- Contested marks
- Ruck contests
- Tackling
- Shepherding and bumping
- The physical demands of fast and extended play

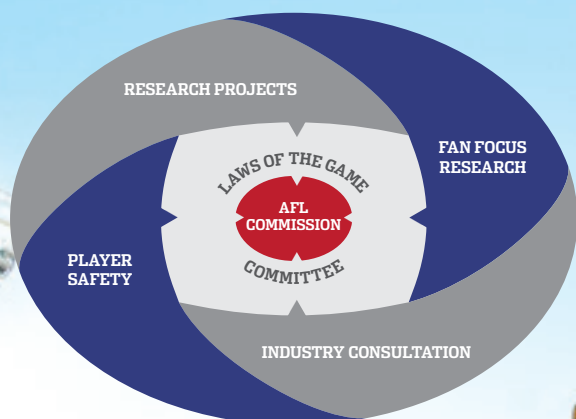
It must be emphasised that all players have a duty of care to fellow participants. Tackling, shepherding, bumping and other contested elements of the game must be conducted within acceptable bounds to protect the health, safety and welfare of players and minimise the risk of injury.



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Processes

The AFL Commission is the ultimate decision-making body for the Laws of the Game having given consideration to the recommendations from the Laws of the Game Committee and consultations with the game's stakeholders including supporters, coaches, players and clubs.



Committee

Each year the AFL will appoint the Laws of the Game Committee to meet and consider the trends and health of the game. They will give consideration to the annual research and consultation processes and referencing this Charter, then make recommendations to the AFL Commission on the Laws of the Game.

The Laws of the Game Committee consists of:

- The AFL General Manager of Football Operations (GMFO) as Chairman
- An officer of the AFL appointed as the Secretary of the Committee
- The AFL appointed Game Analyst
- The AFL National Head of Umpiring
- A cross section of AFL competition stakeholders, including though not restricted to players, coaches, umpires, club staff and media

Members will be invited to serve the committee on an annual basis.

The committee will meet for a minimum of six times per year and may include presentations from others in the industry.





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Australian Football League

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