

**SCHOOL SPORT AUSTRALIA**  
**Boys and Girls 18 Years & Under**  
**Football Championships**

**RULES AND GUIDELINES**

Note: items in red are changes for 2026

**Section A – Championship Overview**

**A - 1.** These Rules and Guidelines should be read in conjunction with School Sport Australia Policies, Championship Protocols and the Sport Championship Organisational Manual.

**A - 2.** The Championships shall be conducted in accordance with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) unless otherwise stated.

**A - 3. Championship Length**

The championship draw is to played over five (5) competition days.

**A - 4. Eligibility**

Unless age dispensation has been granted as per rule A - 5, students participating in the Championship will be:

**A - 4.1** Eighteen (18) years and under on 31 December in the year of the Championship.

**A - 5. Age Dispensation**

Age Dispensation may be granted to a State or Territory for these Championships as allowed through the School Sport Australia Sport Participation Policy.

**A - 6. Team Size**

Competing teams shall be limited to a maximum of **seventeen (17)** players.

**A - 7. Attendance at Championships**

All students who participate in the School Sport Australia Football Championships must remain at the Championship location throughout the duration of the Championships and be bound by all Championship arrangements, except in exceptional circumstances as per School Sport Australia policy.

## Section B – Competition Structure

### B - 1. Program / Schedule

The host member body should consult the State Sporting Organisation and the scheduled NPL – National Premier League Calendar in order to avoid possible clashes with the NPL finals series.

### B - 2. Draw

#### B - 2.1

For 5 or 6 teams:

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
1 v 2	6 v 1	1 v 4	3 v 6	1 v 3
3 v 4	2 v 3	6 v 2	5 v 1	4 v 6
5 v 6	4 v 5	3 v 5	2 v 4	5 v 2

For 7 teams:

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
3 v 4	7 v 3	1 v 7	2 v 3	5 v 7
1 v 2	2 v 5	3 v 6	4 v 5	6 v 2
5 v 6	6 v 4	2 v 4	6 v 1	1 v 4
4 v 7	3 v 1	5 v 1	7 v 2	3 v 5
		7 v 6		

For 7 or 8 teams:

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
1 v 2	1 v 4	1 v 6	1 v 8
3 v 4	2 v 6	4 v 8	6 v 7
5 v 6	3 v 8	2 v 7	4 v 5
7 v 8	5 v 7	3 v 5	2 v 3

Round 5	Round 6	Round 7
1 v 7	1 v 5	1 v 3
8 v 5	7 v 3	5 v 2
6 v 3	8 v 2	7 v 4
4 v 2	6 v 4	8 v 6

**B - 2.2** The Championship draw for the following year will be determined at the post-event meeting following each year's championships and included in the minutes of the host state report. In the case of a seven-team draw, double headers should be played.

**B - 2.3** Where Double Headers are scheduled, both teams (where possible) must have completed a fixture on that day.

## Duration of matches

**B - 2.4** For draws of 6 teams or less all games shall be forty (40) minutes each way, with an interval of ten (10) minutes at half time. For draws of 7 teams or more all games shall be thirty five (35) minutes each way, with an interval of ten (10) minutes at half time. The use of interchange includes:

**B - 2.4.1** Only in normal breaks of play

**B - 2.4.2** Only after the approval of the referee and/or the fourth official

**B - 2.4.3** Only at the halfway line

**B - 2.5** Stoppage time will be added on at the end of each half.

## B - 3. Game Protocols / Specific Rules / Results

**B - 3.1** Continuous Interchange is permitted from the squad as per A7 representing the State/Territory at the Championships.

**B - 3.2** Coaching from the technical area only will be permitted during a game.

**B - 3.3** Players and appointed officials, as per the championship program, may only take positions on the bench in the technical area. All must be attired in official State uniforms.

**B - 3.4** The standard FFA pre-game procedure for team line up and entry to the field prior to the commencement of play is to be followed.

**B - 3.5** State / Territory team management should sign off the official game result card held by the officials at the conclusion of each fixture.

## B - 4. Points Allocation

**B - 4.1** Points to be allocated: 3 for a win, 1 for a draw, 0 for a loss.

## B - 5. Method of Determining a Winner

**B - 5.1** Final placings shall be determined as follows:

**B - 5.1.1** Competition points obtained in the competition

**B - 5.1.2** In the event that two or more teams are equal on points, placings will be determined by the head-to-head result then by goal difference.

**B - 5.1.3** In the event that placings still cannot be determined, shared placings shall be awarded.

## Section C – Facilities / Equipment

**C - 1.** The first priority of the Championship Planning Committee should be to play the event at a venue with football-specific fields of an International Standard, where possible. Minimum pitch dimensions should be: 100m length x 68m width. (Maximum 110m x 75m).

- C - 2.** The host member body will be required to provide new size 5 match balls of a standard approved by FIFA and the FFA, in consultation with the National Football Advisor. Such balls shall also be suitable for night fixtures.
- C - 3.** The official match card will be provided by the National Football Advisor. Team sheets are not required.
- C - 4.** Training Facility & Equipment Requests
  - C - 4.1** Wherever possible, training grounds should be made available where notice is given of such requirements.
  - C - 4.2** Teams will be required to provide their own training balls and equipment.

## **Section D – Uniform**

### **D - 1. State / Territory Colours**

Australian Capital Territory - Yellow shirts, blue shorts  
New South Wales - Sky blue, dark blue trim  
Northern Territory - Ochre, black and white  
Queensland - Maroon and white  
South Australia - Red, yellow and blue  
Tasmania - Green and white  
Victoria - Navy blue, white trim  
Western Australia - Black and gold

- D - 2.** All shirts are to be numbered. An alternative strip is to be used in the event of a colour clash. In the event of one team having to change their jerseys, the away team listed on the draw will be the team to change.

## **Section E – Injury Management**

- E - 1.** An appointed team official may be allowed on to the field of play to attend to an injured player. This will be only with the referee's permission and may be in addition to the appointed medical officer.
- E - 2.** Refer to School Sport Australia General Policy for the management of injuries. This policy will override any sport specific injury management Protocols.  
[School-Sport-Australia-Injury-Management-Policy.pdf \(schoolsportaustralia.edu.au\)](#)

New Policy Dec 2023

## **Section F – Officials**

### **F - 1. Championship Officials**

- F - 1.1** Championship Convener – To manage all aspects of the Championship
- F - 1.2** Referee Coordinator – To oversee the conduct of the referees during the Championship.
- F - 1.3** The host member body will appoint a person to be responsible for the collection of the official match result cards, cautions and send off reports;

liaison with the appointed referees coordinator; check of match day appointments.

- F - 1.4** The host member body will appoint a person to be responsible for the checking, care and maintenance of the match balls throughout the Championship.

## **F - 2. Match Officials**

- F - 2.1** In consultation with the SSO (State Sporting Organisation) and the National Football Advisor, referees and assistant referees shall be appointed by the host State / Territory.

- F - 2.2** If required and in consultation with the host member body, each State / Territory may also have the opportunity to bring two (2) appropriately accredited student assistant referees.

- F - 2.3** In the absence of an appointed Assistant Referee, each participating team will be required to provide a suitable person to fill this role.

## **Section G – Protests**

- G - 1.** Protests in regard to results are not considered in Football. All other matters can be dealt with by the Disciplinary process.

## **Section H – Discipline / Tribunal / Judiciary / Red cards / Behaviour**

- H - 1.** There shall be two (2) Disciplinary Committees:

- H - 1.1** An Interim Disciplinary Committee, consisting of the Tournament Organiser of the National Championship Committee (or his nominee), the National Football Advisor, a third member appointed by the host member body (but not a LOC manager or coach).

- H - 1.2** The Full Disciplinary Committee, consisting of all the members of the Interim Disciplinary Committee and the respective team manager/s involved in a particular incident report.

- H - 2.** The Interim Disciplinary Committee shall:

- H - 2.1** Shall consider all matters of send-offs in conjunction with the relevant refereeing report. Inform any player if they are required to appear before a disciplinary committee hearing.

- H - 2.2** Advise a team manager of any player who through receipt of a send-off (red card) or three accumulated (yellow card) cautions, is suspended from participation in the next and/or further match(es).

- H - 3.** The Full Disciplinary Committee shall:

- H - 3.1** Hear any case directed to it by the Interim Disciplinary Committee.

- H - 3.2** Hear any appeal directed to it by a team manager against a decision of the Interim Committee.

**H - 3.3** Ask to appear before if any player reported to be behaving in a manner likely to be detrimental to the well-being of the championship and the player code of conduct.

**H - 4.** Any player asked to appear before either Committee must be attended by his/her Team Manager acting "in loco parentis".

**H - 5. Obvious Red Card Error:**

**H - 5.1** Where there is sufficient evidence that leads SSA to believe, in its sole and absolute discretion after game completion, through the NSA or other SSA appointed person, that an obvious red card error was made, an automatic one match suspension may be overturned. This can only occur in exceptional circumstances, such as mistaken identity or a clear error in the application of the law (e.g., a red card issued for a handball in the penalty area when a yellow card should have been given under the IFAB laws of the Game).

Red Card judgment decisions by the referee, such as for Denial of an Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO) or violent conduct one match suspensions, cannot be overturned.

SSA shall appoint a person, such as the National Sport Advisor (NSA) or other person to review any red card decisions made by the referee where required or is requested by the team affected to determine if exceptional circumstances apply and the suspension be overturned for an obvious error.

Should a team appeal the review decision to the interim disciplinary committee and the appeal is unsuccessful, the automatic match suspension is to increase from a 1 match suspension to a 2 match suspension.

**H - 6. Positive Behaviour:** The School Sport Australia Board requires football to implement the following rules regarding behaviour. Where required the NSA or convenor can develop an information sheet regarding below with more detailed information to assist participants with further information.

**H - 6.1 Parent / Spectator removal from the venue**

Where in the opinion of the referee, convenor, national sport advisor or any other person appointed by School Sport Australia determines for any reason whatsoever and at their sole discretion, that the behaviour of a parent/spectator affects the health and wellbeing of match officials (including student officials) or players that person is required to remove themselves from the venue for the remainder of the day.

The following procedure is to be followed:

- A 5 minute drinks break is called by the referee, convenor, national sport advisor or any other person appointed by SSA
- The referee signal to the captains and coaches that a 5 minute drink break is to be taken for the removal of a spectator
- The relevant team manager and officials are required to ensure the person leaves the venue

- The person must move to a location that is outside of the venue and outside the sightlines of the event
- Should the person not leave the venue within the 5 minutes or returns to the venue or sightlines, the match will be called off. SSA may determine that the game be awarded 3-0 to the opposing team at their sole discretion.

#### H – 6.2 Dissent Corner

In the referee's opinion any coach, player, team manager, teacher, spectator, or other person connected with that team fails to adhere to the SSA Codes of Conduct or for any matter relating to dissent as per the IFAB laws of football a corner shall be awarded to the opposing team. Dissent includes any poor behaviour, disrespectfully calling out, or disputing a referee's decision.

Any player or coach dissent, where a yellow card is given also results in a corner being given.

In instances where a penalty or free kick is awarded against a team and in the referee's opinion that the penalty or free kick is of equal or greater advantage to the opposing team, than that of a corner, the referee shall award the penalty or free kick as per the laws of football – no corner shall be awarded.

This rule must be strictly enforced by the referee with zero tolerance for any and all poor behaviours. This rule can be applied by the referee and the event convener or SSA staff member can ask the referee to implement the rule.

Where a corner is awarded to the opposing team and in the opinion of the referee the player taking the corner deliberately kicks the ball out for a goal kick the player is to receive a yellow card for dissent and the corner retaken.

This rule must be strictly enforced by the referee with zero tolerance for any and all poor behaviour. This rule can be applied by the referee and the event convener or SSA staff member can ask the referee to implement the rule.

### Section I – Trophies / Awards / Medals

- I - 1. School Sport Australia medallions shall be presented to players and officials of the teams finishing first (Gold), second (Silver) and third (Bronze).
- I - 2. Eighteen (18) plaques supplied by the school Sport Australia office are to be presented to the players of the All Australian Boys and Girls Teams for being identified with outstanding temperament, sportsmanship and consistent high quality match day performances, particularly in recognition of their technical and tactical understanding of the game.
  - I - 2.1 The selection process will be led and managed by two coaches **participating in the Championships, who will be appointed by SSA on a rotational basis**. All participating coaches will be consulted throughout the week. Final recommendations will be submitted by the end of play on Day 4 of the Championship.

Rotation will be in the following order each year commencing in 2026. Should a coach not wish to be part of the leading of selection the next state on the list will be offered the opportunity to lead the selection process:

<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
QLD	ACT
SA	SA
TAS	QLD
VIC	TAS
WA	VIC
NSW	NSW
ACT	WA
NT	NT

- I - 2.2** The National Football Advisor is to chair all scheduled selection meetings.
- I - 3.** One (1) gold medallion or other suitable trophy is to be presented to the player of the Championship (Boys & Girls).
  - I - 3.1** The Player of the Tournament will be decided by the selectors or in a suitable manner decided at the pre-event meeting.
  - I - 3.2** Boy's inscription: The Peter Grguric Medal, Player of the Championships (Year).
  - I - 3.3** Girl's inscription: The Debbie Tate Medal, Player of the Championships (Year).
- I - 4.** Team player awards are to be presented to one selected player from each competing team. This is awarded to a player who exhibits the spirit and principles of participation at a School Sport Australia event. The awards are to be recommended to the host member body via the National Football Advisor. Selection is by State / Territory team management.