



NCF Masters Football

(Over 30 Women and Over 35 Men)

Rules of Competition

2017

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RULES OF COMPETITION

1. COMPETITION STRUCTURE

These rules are to be read in conjunction with NCF By-Law 7 Competition Rules and where these rules do not cover the requirements, the By-Law will be used.

NCF will arrange age restricted competitions for players as per the following:

Competition	Year of Birth qualification
Over 35s (Men)	Players attaining the age of 35 years or older in registration year (calendar year)
Over 30s (Women)	Players attaining the age of 30 years or older in registration year (calendar year)

Competition Winners

In all Competitions, the team finishing with the most points in each division at the conclusion of the "Home and Away" season will be declared Premiers. At the conclusion of the fixture season, the top four (4) placed teams in each division will participate in a Finals Series to determine the Grand Final Winners and Runners Up.

Competitions

NCF reserves the right to amend the size and structure of any competition.

2. RULES OF THE GAME

As per FIFA Rules, with the following variations:

1. Length of games - 2 x 40 minute halves, with a maximum of a 10 minute half-time break
2. No Slide Tackles allowed (Goalkeepers excepted)
 - a) A Slide Tackle occurs when two or more players are challenging for the ball and any of them "slide" for the ball.
 - b) Any challenge not made on two feet is to be considered a Slide Tackle.
 - c) There must be a slide AND a tackle before the challenge can be penalised, but there does not have to be contact between the players.
 - d) A player is considered to be challenging an opponent for the ball if the opponent is within a radius of one (1) metre of the player.
 - e) These rules apply to a goalkeeper who chooses to play or attempts to challenge for the ball with his feet.
 - f) They do NOT apply to a goalkeeper playing or attempting to play the ball with his hands.

3. No tackling from behind
4. For Cautionable Offences (fouling, abusive language, etc) and repeated general misconduct, the following card system applies:
 - a) **Yellow Card** means that the player has been cautioned, however they do not need to leave the field of play
 - b) **Blue Card** is issued at the discretion of the referee where in the opinion of the referee, they believe the player needs time off the field for inappropriate or unsporting behaviour, this will be for a minimum of 5 minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes in the "sin bin" (sidelined), with a replacement player not permitted to take the field
 - c) **Two Blue or Yellow Cards in any pattern**, (e.g two blue cards, two yellow card, or one yellow and one blue card) for the same player in the same game, means that the player must leave the field of play, and take no further part in the game. **NO REPLACEMENT PLAYER IS ALLOWED.** No Send-off Report is required for the accumulation of 2 Blue/Yellow Cards for the same player in the same game, and a mandatory one week suspension applies.
 - d) **Red Card** is issued in cases of Serious or Violent foul play or conduct, Spitting or physical assaults on another person or official. A Send-off Report must be completed in such an instance.
 - e) All Cards issued in a Match will be noted on the Match Sheet

3. FIXTURES

Scheduling

NCF will arrange the dates, times and venues of all fixtures and whenever necessary, in consultation with the clubs/teams concerned. NCF reserves the right to schedule or re-schedule a fixture or fixtures on any day, time and place as it deems appropriate.

Duration

All fixtures will be played over two halves of 40 minutes each (a total of 80 minutes). After normal time in each half, the match official may add on Injury/Stoppage Time as they see fit. The match official has the right to abandon any fixture match if, in their opinion, playing conditions compromise player safety.

Half Time Interval

The half-time interval must be a minimum of five (5) minutes and no longer than ten (10) minutes in duration.

Points

In all fixtures, match points will be awarded as follows:

WIN	Three (3) Points
DRAW	One (1) Point
LOSS	Nil (0) Points
BYE	Nil (0) Points
NO RESULT	Nil (0) Points for either team

4. APPLICATION FOR ALTERATION TO FIXTURES

Any application for an alteration to scheduled fixtures shall be submitted to NCF at least ten (10) working days prior to the scheduled fixture.

Each request will be determined on its merits. Applications for alterations due to "social functions" (eg weddings, christenings, confirmations or other social and religious events) will only be considered if the opposing team is agreeable to the alteration.

NCF's decision in regards to the rescheduling of fixtures will be final.

5. NON-PARTICIPATION IN A FIXTURE

In the event the home or visiting team is not ready to commence a fixture or finals match **within 15 minutes of the scheduled kick-off** time, the match will be recorded as a 3-0 win in favour of the opposing team, and the points will be awarded to the opposing team. Should any team claim such a forfeit they must notify NCF, noting the circumstances of the non-playing of the fixture by notation and a signature on the Match Sheet.

If, for any reason, a team intends to forfeit a scheduled fixture match, the team is to provide two (2) clear working days written notice of the forfeit to the Competition Administrator. NCF shall then be responsible for notification to the opposition team and the Match Officials. The match will be recorded as a 3-0 win in favour of the opposing' team, and the points will be awarded to the opposing team.

A team that forfeits a match will be responsible for all Match Fees. The team may also, subject to sufficient notice being given, be responsible for any referee fees in relation to the match. A team which persistently forfeits matches, may, at the discretion of NCF, be withdrawn from that competition.

6. WITHDRAWAL/REMOVAL FROM FIXTURES

If any team in the competition withdraws or is removed then the following will apply:

- a) if the team is withdrawn or removed before the competition has started and they cannot be replaced - a bye in the competition will be substituted.
- b) if the team is withdrawn or removed during the first round - the recorded results for that team will be deleted and a bye in the competition will be substituted
- c) if the team is withdrawn or removed during the second or subsequent rounds - all points and goals acquired for completed rounds will be retained by opposing teams; the recorded results for that team in the uncompleted round will be deleted and a bye in the competition will be substituted.

7. POSTPONED MATCHES

Matches may only be postponed for reasons of ground unavailability (due to weather conditions, or unforeseen scheduling clashes). Matches will not be postponed for reasons of shortage of player numbers. NCF reserves the right to reschedule all postponed matches on any day, time and place as it deems appropriate, in consultation with both teams.

NCF reserves the right to record any outstanding fixtures that have not been completed by **NO LATER THAN** one (1) week after the conclusion of the fixture season as a NIL-ALL DRAW.

8. ABANDONED MATCHES

Should the match official abandon a Masters match, then the match result will stand, unless:

- (a) one or both the of the competing Clubs request the match to be replayed, or
- (b) the matter is referred to NCF for determination

All replay requests must be made in writing within 72 hours of the match being abandoned. Any request after this time will be disregarded and the match result will stand.

NCF shall take into consideration the following factors when considering a request for a replay:

- reasons why the match was abandoned
- result of the match at the time of abandonment
- the impact on the final league standing of a fixture
- the impact on the finals series of a finals match

The decision of NCF regarding the request for a replay or to have the matter referred for determination shall be final. NCF's determination on the outcome of any abandoned match shall be final.

NCF reserves the right to determine the match result if it is satisfied that one (or both) of the competing teams, its players, officials, members or supporters were directly responsible for the abandonment of the fixture.

If the allegation is proven, NCF may decide to direct any of the following outcomes:

- the match be recorded as "NO RESULT"
- the match be recorded as 0-0 draw
- the match be recorded as a 3-0 win in favour of the opposing team, unless the score at the time of abandonment was of a greater margin in favour of the opposing team, and the points will be awarded to the opposing team
- impose a fine, suspend, expel or take whatever disciplinary action it deems necessary against the offending team(s), player(s) and official(s)

9. GOAL DIFFERENCE

If, at the end of the fixture competition, any two or more teams are equal on points, goal difference shall be taken into account in determining:

- the Premiers;
- the teams eligible to play in the Finals Series;
- all other positions on the points table.

Goal difference shall be calculated by subtracting the number of goals AGAINST from the number of goals **FOR** in all fixture matches:

- the team with the higher or highest resultant plus figure from such subtraction shall be deemed to have the superior goal difference and shall be the higher or highest placed team;
- in the case of goal difference being equal, the team having scored the most goals FOR shall be the higher or highest placed team.

In the case of teams having an equal goal difference and having scored an equal number of goals FOR:

- the team with the higher or highest number of points from matches played between the teams in question shall be the higher or highest placed team;
- if the number of points is equal, then the team with the superior goal difference from matches played between the teams in question, shall be the higher or highest placed team;
- in the case of goal difference being equal, the team having scored the most goals FOR from matches played between the teams in question, shall be the higher or highest placed. team;
- if the goal difference and goals FOR are equal, then the team that scored the most away goals from matches played between the teams in question, shall be the higher or highest placed team.

If teams are still equal after taking into account all of the above considerations, the following will apply:

- to determine Premiers and all other positions on the table - an official of each team will be required to meet with an official of NCF and lots will be drawn

10. FINALS SERIES

Scheduling

NCF will arrange dates, times and venues of all Finals Series matches. NCF reserves the right to schedule or reschedule matches on any day, time and place as it deems appropriate.

Duration

All finals matches will be played over 2 halves of 40 minutes each (a total of 80 minutes). After normal time in each half, the referee may add on Injury/Stoppage Time as they see fit. The match official has the right to abandon any match if, in their opinion, playing conditions compromise player safety.

Half Time Interval

The half-time interval must be a minimum of five (5) minutes and a maximum of ten (10) minutes.

Format - All Competitions

The Semi-Finals will be contested between the 1st and 4th placed teams, and the 2nd and 3rd placed teams. The winners will go direct to the Grand Final.

For all finals matches, should the scores be equal after normal time, then 2 x 10 minute periods of extra time shall be played in full. Should the scores still be equal after extra time, a penalty shoot-out in accordance with FIFA regulations will be taken to determine the winner.

11. INTERCHANGE OF PLAYERS

In all Competitions, unlimited interchange will be permitted, with no more than seven (7) substitutes permitted to be named on the team sheet. Only player's names that appear on the team sheet are permitted to take part in the match. A player who has been interchanged may return to the field for another player. All interchanges can only occur at a break in play with the approval of the referee and must take place at or near the halfway line.

All substitutes must be seated within the technical or team area. They must wear bibs or an alternative coloured uniform to their team strip. Substitutes are permitted to warm up outside of the technical or team area, provided they are wearing bibs or an alternative coloured uniform to their team strip. When warming up, substitutes are requested to choose an area furthest from the opposing team.

12. PLAYER REGISTRATION

Players are permitted to be registered at any time up until the 30th of June. However, players are not permitted to transfer to another team within the NCF competitions after 30 June each year.

Unless cancelled earlier, registration is effective from date of registration until 31 December of that year.

All requests for refund of registration fees for players who have not taken part in a competitive match must be processed by their Club before the 30 June each year.

13. ELIGIBILITY/NON-ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

Eligible Players

A player is eligible to take part in a NCF Masters competition match, provided they have been registered with My Football Club, and made Active by their Club and they are not under suspension..

A player is eligible to take part in an NCF Masters competition match provided their name has been listed on the team sheet and the player has signed the team sheet prior to the end of the match..

Ineligible Players

Any player not registered as per NCF guidelines for the current season is considered ineligible and is not permitted to participate in any NCF Masters competitions.

Any player under suspension will be deemed ineligible, and is not permitted to participate in any fixture until that suspension is served. This includes automatic suspensions for yellow, blue and red cards along with penalties determined by the Disciplinary Committee.

A player whose name is not listed on the team sheet prior to the end of any NCF Masters competition match is considered ineligible and is not permitted to participate in that match.

NCF reserves the right to investigate the eligibility of any player who participates in any of its competitions.

Player Eligibility - Fixtures & Finals Series

Finals Series

A player is eligible to take part in an NCF finals match provided their name has been listed on the team sheet, and participated in at least a third of the teams normal season matches.

Protest - Playing Ineligible Player

Any team or Club is permitted to lodge a letter of protest regarding the alleged fielding of an ineligible player. The protest must be in writing and be forwarded to NCF. Such protests will be accepted from team or Club officials ONLY - any protests from persons other than team or Club officials will be disregarded. An investigation of the circumstances surrounding the incident will be undertaken immediately.

In the event that the protest is upheld, the Penalties and Outcomes as stated below will apply. In the event that the protest is dismissed, then the match result will stand.

Penalties and Outcomes

If it is established that a player competing in any NCF competition fixture was not legitimately registered or was ineligible to play, then the following will apply:

- the team found guilty shall forfeit any goals scored and points gained in that match and the points and match will be awarded to the opposing team.
- the game will be recorded as a 3-0 win in favour of the opposing team, unless the final result was of a greater margin in favour of the opposing team.
- NCF may impose a fine, suspend, expel or take whatever disciplinary action it deems necessary against the offending team or player.

In the event that it is established that both teams competing in any NCF competition fixture fielded players who were not legitimately registered or were ineligible to play, then the following will apply:

- the match will be deemed as a NO RESULT, whereby, no points will be awarded.
- NCF may impose a fine, suspend, expel or take whatever disciplinary action it deems necessary against the offending team or players.

14. TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Facilities/Ground Arrangements

NCF will ensure through Coffs Harbour City Council that all matches scheduled at Coffs Coast Sport and Leisure Park have fields and facilities in appropriate order. Should a match be scheduled at another ground, the following responsibilities are to be in place:

Home teams should ensure:

- the ground is correctly marked, including the technical area;
- it provides suitable goal nets, safely fastened or pegged to the ground and corner flags;
- it provides toilet facilities and dressing room facilities (where possible) that are hygienic and clean;
- it provides a safe environment for players, officials and spectators;

- it provides a Referee's Room where referees can rest and leave their belongings while officiating.

Any team whose facilities do not meet the requirements specified may have its home fixtures played away.

Player Identification

Each team should ensure that players listed on the *official* team sheet have in their possession some legitimate form of photographic identification which should be produced at the request of the Referee or opposing Team Manager. Legitimate forms of photographic identification may include but are not limited to a Driver's Licence, or passport.

If the player is unable to produce photographic identification, he is still permitted to participate in the match. The referee should note this fact on the team sheet (providing details). The opposing team should then submit a protest to the Competition Administrator within 72 hours of the scheduled match time.

Team Sheets

On match day, both teams are required to complete the NCF team sheet prior to the commencement of any match. The team sheet must list all players taking part in the fixture. The team sheet must be supplied to the match referee at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off. The home team is responsible for providing the team sheet which will be supplied by NCF.

It is each team's responsibility to ensure:

- it has minimum number of seven (7) players to commence the match;
- that it does not list more than 18 players on the team sheet;
- all players taking the field are eligible to play;
- all players taking the field of play are correctly listed on the team sheet in legible writing;
- all players are ready to commence the fixture at the scheduled kick-off time.

Alcohol Consumption – Participants

Players are not permitted to consume alcohol prior to or during a game. Referees have a "duty of care" to all players, and will refuse to allow a player to continue to participate in a game if alcohol consumption is evident. This clause will also apply to match officials, and coaches/managers.

Alcohol Consumption - Club Facilities

Alcohol is only to be consumed in defined licensed areas at any club. Failure of any person to adhere to rules in this regard may jeopardise that club's liquor license. NCF maintains a policy of no consumption of alcohol outside of licensed areas. Team officials are responsible for ensuring persons comply with this rule.

Should persons be seen to be in breach of this rule, the home team official must advise such person to conform to the rules immediately. Should such person refuse

to adhere to this request, the home team official shall be at liberty to liaise with the match referee to have the game stopped until the situation is resolved. Should this still not resolve the situation, the home team official shall be at liberty to contact the police to have such person removed.

Away teams playing at a home team's Club must not bring their own alcohol with them (unless this has been agreed with the Home Club) and should support the home team's facilities.

Match Balls

The home club shall provide the appointed match referee at least two (2) Match Balls (Size 5), at least 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the scheduled fixture. All balls shall be of the same brand and must be of 'match ball' quality.

Playing Strips

All clubs must nominate a "Home" and have available an "Alternate" strip. The alternative strip (shirts, shorts & socks) should not clash with the nominated "Home" strip. All playing strips must have numbers on the back of the jerseys.

All first named clubs will be deemed the "Home" team and will play in their nominated colours. In the event there is a clash of colours, it will be the responsibility of the visiting team to change into an alternative strip. Visiting teams should take their away strip (shirts, shorts and socks) to every match. Team managers should check the strip worn by their opponents on a weekly basis to avoid the likelihood of a clash. Goalkeepers can wear any colour provided it does not clash with either team or referees.

Water Bottles

Due to health concerns, buckets and sponges are banned. Water bottles or individual cups are recommended. For safety reasons, water bottles are not to be thrown either on or off the field.

Results of Fixtures

NCF has responsibility for recording the results of fixtures within the competition management system as soon as possible after each game.

Stretchers and First Aid

It is advisable that all clubs allocate one stretcher suitable for first aid and emergency use at all fixtures. Officials should ensure that stretchers are placed in a safe and accessible position to first aid staff. It is recommended that a person trained in first aid is available during matches.

15. TECHNICAL AREA

Each club should have a Technical / Team Areas clearly marked as stipulated by FIFA guidelines and provide sufficient seating to allow all personnel to be seated during the match. Due to the nature of this competition (social), formal markings will not be enforced unless behaviour is deemed unacceptable by NCF or its Administrator. However, teams are expected to remain in separate areas.

16. DECISIONS OF THE MATCH OFFICIAL

All decisions of the match referee regarding the facts connected with play (including whether a goal is scored or not and the result of the match) are final, and no protest can be lodged.

17. MATCH OFFICIALS' INFORMATION

Team Sheets and Send Off Incident Report Forms

At the conclusion of each match, the Referee shall complete the Team Sheet and Send Off/Incident Report Forms.

It is the responsibility of the NCF Administrator, and if a match is played on a Club field, the home team official to collect the team sheet from the referee once completed, and forward to reach the NCF office no later than **two (2) working days after the match**,. The Referee must forward any Send Off/Incident Report Forms to the NCF office by **no later than two (2) working days after the match**

In the event a team official approaches the match Referee seeking to protest the fielding of an ineligible player, the Referee should instruct the team official to lodge an official protest. The Referee should note this on the Team Sheet.

Please note that the Team Sheets & Send-Off/Incident Report Forms from the appointed match official will be accepted transcript. NCF may investigate and make alterations to this transcript if it is reasonably satisfied that an error has been made.

Non-Attendance or Unavailability of Match Official

In the event no registered match official is present to take charge of the fixture, then the designated "Home": team shall consult the visiting team and appoint a match official to take charge of the fixture. This match official has the same powers as a registered match official.

All teams are obligated to fulfil all fixtures regardless of whether an appointed match official is present to take charge. Should any team fail or refuse to participate in any fixture on the above grounds, then the following will apply:

- the match will be recorded as a 3-0 win in favour of the opposing team, and the points will be awarded to the opposing team;

- the team may be subject to further disciplinary action

In the event both teams refuse to play, NCF reserves the right to award a NO RESULT, fine both teams and recommend further disciplinary action.

Extreme Weather Conditions

In extreme weather conditions, NCF or the appointed match official reserves the right to postpone, delay or abandon any fixture. If the appointed match official postpones, delays or abandons any fixture due to extreme weather conditions, he/she must notify NCF within 48 hours of the decision.

All teams, players, and match officials are requested to please note the following;

- If the temperature is 32° or above, water bottles should be made available and placed along the sidelines to enable any player to take a drink during the course of the game; *and*
- If conditions are considered extreme by the match referee, he or she has discretion to allow a 2-minute break during the course of each half.

In the event of the cancellation or abandonment of a fixture through rain rendering grounds unplayable, all such fixtures shall be played or replayed at a time and under such conditions as NCF shall determine, provided however, that any such fixture shall be played or replayed on the ground where possible.

Players' Equipment

It is the Referee's responsibility to ensure all players take the field of play are wearing equipment that is safe to themselves and any other person. All players must wear shin-guards whilst on the field of play.

Jewellery

In accordance with FIFA 'Laws of the Game', a player is forbidden to wear any type of jewellery. This includes rings, ear-rings, eye-rings, nose-rings, lip-rings, belly-rings and any other type of piercing. It also includes necklaces or other types of neck adornment, bracelets, bangles or other types of wrist adornment and any type of hair adornment. No taping of any type is permitted including wedding rings. All jewellery must be removed before a player enters the field of play in the course of a match. The only exception to this rule will be medical bracelets.

Referees are also subject to this restriction on the wearing of jewellery with the exception of watches.

Blood Rule

In the event a player suffers an injury or wound which results in the loss of blood, the match official will request that the injured player receive attention outside the field of play and only when they are satisfied that the injury or wound is safely covered and contained, will the player be permitted to re-join the game. In the event the player's uniform or attire is splattered with blood, the referee will instruct that player to change his attire before being permitted to re-join the game. Should the injured player be required to change his uniform, then the appointed match official will show discretion in allowing the player to wear an alternative numbered shirt if necessary.

18. DISCIPLINARY

See the current FFA and NCF Disciplinary policy documentation.

19. CODE OF CONDUCT

This code applies to the conduct and behaviour of all players and team officials currently under the direct control of NCF, and should be read in conjunction with FIFA Fair Play Code. The Code of Conduct is part of the Online Player Registration within My Football Club.

A breach of this Code of Conduct could be seen as bringing the game into disrepute and could result in disciplinary action by NCF.

20. SPECTATOR CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

This code applies to the conduct and behaviour of all spectators at matches under the direct control of NCF. The Spectator Code of Behaviour is available on the FFA