



COVID FUNCTIONAL

FRAMEWORK

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AFL Victoria and its affiliated bodies seek to provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for people to experience Australian Rules Football and in 2021, to overcome adversity and unite communities through the game of Australian Rules Football.

As the governing body we will be participant and outcome focussed by providing the correct policies, frameworks and roadmaps to support the industry to operate in a COVID affected environment. We accept the responsibility to the communities we represent to provide an environment that allows people to connect and socialise in a safe way that improves physical and mental health and fosters a feeling of togetherness over isolation.

Through the provision of leadership and being outcome focussed, we will focus on what can be done, to Return to Play in 2021 bring other organisations, community groups and individuals along for the journey.

The COVID Functional framework is to support Community Football for a Return to Play in 2021:

- It includes a set of agreed terms that will work as 'triggers' (By Laws).
- It will remove ambiguity around decision making, reduce the stress and anxiety on administrators/volunteers and clearly outline the way forward in a simple, concise, and easy to understand format.
- The Framework is focussed on signing off a set of agreed terms that will allow the management of a season following the cancelled 2020.

In the COVID environment we need to establish a minimum viable season will be a version of our normal with enough features to be usable by leagues, clubs, and participants.

In 2021, Don't let perfect get in the way of good.

What does this mean? It doesn't have to be perfect, the highest priority is to Return to Play in a safe and welcoming environment. Quality and equitability come a distant second to the goal of creating a season that gets underway, can be flexible with fixturing and can accommodate a finals series.

This Framework is built on the willingness to present a viable season that gives participants the opportunity to participate and provides the vehicle to feel connected in difficult times.

COVID FRAMEWORK - BY LAW – Recommendations

Governing Principals

- That the health and safety of the community remains the highest priority
- That whilst balanced competition is important, that the opportunity to participate whenever possible be of higher priority
- That where possible the H&A and Finals shall be conducted within the traditional timeframes
- Equality in the draw be of lesser importance than opportunity to participate whenever possible
- That a premiership be awarded once a minimum of [insert number] H&A games be achieved
- That a minimum viable season which triggers a finals series be the maximum number of games possible and not influenced by traditional fixture requirements and expectations
- That a Finals Series be played with a minimum of 1 week (1 v 2) and up to a traditional final's series of 4 weeks
- Should any scenario occur which is not covered within these By Laws then the matter shall be referred to the League Executive to determine at their absolute discretion

1. Positive COVID TEST

- 1.1 Player/Official immediately notify AFL Victoria Region Manager or Football Development Manager where appropriate
- 1.2 AFL Victoria FDM/RM notify AFL Victoria Country Manager
- 1.3 AFL Victoria notify Public Health Authority
- 1.4 Club always follows advice of the Public Health Authority
- 1.5 Public Health Authority to instruct AFL Victoria of Return Strategy

Subject to changes in the Federal or State Government COVID Restrictions and AFL Victoria Protocols, a season may be impacted which shall trigger the implementation of the following By Laws.

2. Impact of a COVID Interruption on a Single Round

- Should an entire Round of matches be abandoned, no points or percentage shall be awarded to any team
- The season shall recommence with the next scheduled round.
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence

3. Impact of a COVID Interruption on a consecutive Rounds

- Should consecutive Rounds of matches be abandoned, no points or percentage shall be awarded to any team for the abandoned Rounds
- The season shall recommence with the next scheduled round.
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence

4. Impact of a COVID Interruption on a Multiple Rounds

- Should multiple Rounds of matches be abandoned, no points or percentage shall be awarded to any team
- The season shall recommence with the next scheduled round.
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence

5. Impact of a COVID Interruption on individual matches within any Round

- Should individual matches within any Round be abandoned, team shall be awarded 2 points each and the average weekly percentage of all participating teams of the same competition from that round of matches
- The individual games shall not be rescheduled
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence

6. Return to Play following a COVID Interrupted Round or Match

- If 1-3 consecutive Rounds have been abandoned, then the season may recommence at the next scheduled round at the discretion of the league. If 4-6 consecutive Rounds have been abandoned, then the season shall recommence at the next scheduled round following a minimum of 7-day training period at the discretion of the league but not less than a minimum 7-day training period
- If more than 6 consecutive Rounds have been abandoned, then the season shall recommence at the next scheduled round following a minimum 14-day training period at the discretion of the League but not less than a minimum 14 day training period
- Should the recommencement following any period of abandonment occur during the scheduled Finals Series, then the Finals shall be adjusted at the direction of the League Executive in consultation with the Region Commission and AFL Victoria

7. Impact of a COVID Interruption on an individual FINALS matches

- League Executive may reschedule FINALS matches at their absolute discretion
- Where time does not permit for a FINALS game to be rescheduled, should an individual FINALS match, excluding the GRAND FINAL be abandoned, the team with a higher ladder position at the end of the Home and Away season shall be deemed the winner by virtue of higher ranking

8. Impact of a COVID Interruption on a GRAND FINAL

- League Executive may reschedule the GRAND FINAL matches at their absolute discretion
- GRAND FINAL must be completed by [insert date]
- Where time does not permit for the GRAND FINAL to be rescheduled and the GRAND FINAL be abandoned, the team who entered the Grand Final first by way of victory in the Second Semi or if not applicable, by a higher ladder position, at the completion of the Home and Away season shall be deemed the winner

9. Final Qualifications in a COVID interrupted Season

- Should a season be impacted on by COVID the League Executive may determine FINAL Qualifications game requirements for Players at their absolute discretion at any stage during the season

10. Consequence of a suspension in a COVID interrupted Season

- All suspensions MUST be served in accordance with the AFL Victoria Country Rules and suspensions apply to games played and not dates

11. Impact of COVID Interruption on the Allowable Player Payment Rule

- Should a round be abandoned, then the Allowable Player Payment Caps shall immediately be calculated on a pro rata of games played
- Leagues may make application to the Region Commission to reduce the Allowable Player Payment Cap at any stage during the season should a minimum of 6 Rounds be abandoned
- Should any scenario occur which is not covered within this regulation, then the matter shall be referred to the Region Commission to determine at their absolute discretion



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12. Impact of COVID Interruption on the Player Point System

- Regardless of any Rounds being abandoned, the Player Point System regulations and categories shall not be affected
- Should individual club matches be abandoned, clubs may make application to the Region Commission for special consideration for individual Player Reassessment for the following season under relevant region processes and consistent with the Clause 7.3 of AFL Victoria Player Points system Policy

13. Matters not covered by COVID By Laws

- Should any scenario occur which is not covered within these By Laws then the matter shall be referred to the League Executive to determine at their absolute discretion