

# **COVID-19 RULES – IMPACTED ADVANCED COMPETITIONS**

**These Rules are to be read in conjunction with the relevant 2024 Rules of Competition.**

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. Strict adherence to government health orders or protocols
2. FV will do all it can to facilitate the playing of full season (100%) of football within the context of Government regulations and the season window. Our philosophy is that when it is safe to do so, football should be played. Where this is simply impossible to be done, FV will provide the fairest means possible for the determination of a match result and to ensure that the football season is completed
3. Plan, prepare and adapt – unavailability of players, coaches, staff may occur at any point of the season, however football will go ahead as scheduled in line with these Rules
4. Senior Competition fixtures must take priority at all times by utilising the young and emerging talent at our Football Clubs to support the fulfillment of fixtures
5. Be prepared to play mid-week fixtures where games have been postponed
6. Whilst the season calendar and fixtures provide a guide for the 2024 season, these may change at the discretion of FV
7. Regular Season Competition Fixtures will take priority over Finals fixtures
8. Anyone who provides misleading information to FV may incur severe individual and team penalties under the GDT
9. These Rules may be updated throughout the course of the season at the absolute discretion of FV

## **1. PLAYER AVAILABILITY**

- 1.1. Unless not permitted to do so as a direct result of health orders or protocols issued by the Victorian Government:
  - 1.1.1. Clubs/Teams must participate in all Competition Fixtures. Any Club/Team which fails to do so will face a forfeit (3-0 loss) and may face penalty under the GDT; and
  - 1.1.2. Any Team which fails to participate in four (4) Competition Fixtures within a Regular Season may be removed from its League at FV's absolute discretion.
- 1.2. If a Club wishes to seek to Postpone any Competition Fixture on the basis of COVID-19 then it must contact FV in writing via email [nplvictoria@footballvictoria.com.au](mailto:nplvictoria@footballvictoria.com.au) at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled fixture to allow FV time to consider the request and to inform other impacted parties. Except in the case of extenuating circumstances, failure to notify FV in writing at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled fixture and non-participation may result in a forfeit (3-0 loss).
- 1.3. Clubs may be required to provide evidence of the impacts of COVID-19 in support of any request for a Competition Fixture to be Postponed. Should FV reasonably conclude that false evidence has been supplied and/or a Club is seeking to use these Rules to gain a competitive advantage, then an automatic forfeit (3-0 loss) will be awarded to the offending team and the Club/Team may face penalty under the GDT.
- 1.4. FV will consider any request under section 1.2 and determine in its absolute discretion the postponement of the scheduled fixture. FV will use reasonable endeavors to confirm any Postponement at least 24 hours before the Competition Fixture is due to take place. FV has, and shall have, no responsibility for any loss suffered as a result of such decision,

including if such decision is communicated less than 24 hours before to impacted parties.

- 1.5. Unavailability of non-Players (eg coaches) will not be considered a valid reason to Postpone a Competition Fixture for the purposes of these Rules.
- 1.6. If a Competition Fixture is Postponed under these Rules, FV will at its absolute discretion, and working with Clubs where reasonably possible, determine the timing of any rescheduled fixture. If the fixture cannot be rescheduled, a No Result shall be recorded. Such decision is not open to appeal or review. Clubs must play rescheduled Competition Fixtures as determined by FV. Non-participation in the rescheduled fixture will result in a forfeit (3-0 loss) to the offending Team. If neither Team is available to participate, then a No Result shall be recorded.
- 1.7. FV at its absolute discretion may alter the 2024 Season calendar which may include and is not limited to adding additional catch up rounds.
- 1.8. In the event of forfeit without adequate notification to FV of a least 24 hours, the payment of any Match Official fees is entirely (100%) the responsibility of the non-participating Club. The payment will be shared (50%) if both Clubs do not (or are not ready to) participate in the Competition Fixture.
- 1.9. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in these Rules, unless otherwise determined by FV acting in its absolute discretion, all Competition Fixtures must be completed by 30 November 2024.
- 1.10. Where there is an extension to the Regular Season due to unforeseen circumstances it may take priority over Finals in all Advanced Competitions. FV at its absolute discretion may decide to cancel Finals at any time during 2024.
- 1.11. In the instance where there is a Play Off Match or Finals fixture scheduled to be played after 30 November 2024, FV may in its absolute discretion alter the 30 November 2024 cutoff date and apply new rules to ensure that it is completed.

#### **NPL Men's, NPL Women's, VPL 1 and VPL 2**

- 1.12. If Players are unavailable as a result of COVID-19 for Competition Fixtures in NPL Men's, NPL Women's, VPL1 and VPL2, then Clubs must elevate Players from the respective U23 or U20 Teams to fill Competition Fixture squad gaps. If Clubs remain unable to field a squad of fourteen (14) Players for a Senior Competition Fixture (including a rostered goalkeeper) then the fixture may be Postponed and must be played within fourteen (14) days or such longer period as determined by FV in its absolute discretion.
- 1.13. If, as a result of elevation described in section 1.12, Clubs are unable to field a squad of twelve (14) Players (including a rostered goalkeeper) for an U23 or U20 Competition Fixture then the fixture may be Postponed and must be played within fourteen (14) days or such longer period as determined by FV in its absolute discretion.

#### **Junior Boys NPL (JBNPL) and Junior Girls NPL (JGNPL)**

- 1.14. If Players are unavailable as a result of COVID-19 for Competition Fixtures in JBNPL or JGNPL, then Clubs must elevate Players from lower age groups to fill Competition Fixture squad gaps, unless the Club feels, acting reasonably, that the Player is not physically suitable to do so, understanding the physical demands on children when playing in older age groups. As well as escalation, Clubs may also drop-down age

eligible Players if available (for example a 14 year old rostered to play for the U16's may drop down and play for the U14's provided it does not impact on the continuation of the U16's Competition Fixture).

- 1.15. If Clubs remain unable to field a squad of a minimum of (11) Players for a Competition Fixture (including a goalkeeper) then the fixture may be Postponed and must be played within fourteen (14) days or such longer period as determined by FV in its absolute discretion.
- 1.16. In the event that a Pre-Qualification Competition Fixture is Postponed under section 1.14, Clubs have five (5) business days from the originally scheduled Competition Fixture to nominate an alternate date (midweek) and venue. The date must fall within fourteen (14) days of the original fixture of the Pre-Qualification phase in line with 2024 season calendar which may be updated from time to time. Both date and venue must be approved by FV. If no venue and date is provided the Competition Fixture will be rescheduled at FV's absolute discretion.
- 1.17. If the Postponed Competition Fixture relates to a match involving Gippsland FC, Ballarat City FC, Bendigo City FC, GV Suns and/or Murray United FC, rescheduling may result in a double header weekend for the impacted Teams/Clubs as mid-week matches are not possible due to travel distances.

## **2. PRE-QUALIFICATION PHASE JBNPL**

- 2.1. The final ladder positions for each age group at the completion of the Pre-Qualification phase will determine the 2024 JBNPL Competition consisting of a total of up to 22 Round seasons in the format identified in the Rules of Competition unless Teams have played an uneven number of Competition Fixtures owing to Postponements under section 1.4 in which case the average points per game shall be determinative, followed by average goal difference per game, followed by average goals for per game.

## **3. PROMOTION/RELEGATION/PREMIERS/CHAMPIONS**

- 3.1. If a Regular Season is determined cancelled by FV as a result of COVID-19 then for all Advanced Competitions:
  - 3.1.1. if 50% or more of the Competition Fixtures as originally planned for that competition have been played (excluding Abandoned or Postponed fixtures), subject to section 3.2 below, the final standings will be determined as at the point of cancellation and promotion, relegation and crowning of premiers and champions shall apply as per sections 10 and 13 of the Rules of Competition. *For example, should 75% of the season be completed at the point of season cancellation, the current ladder positions will determine promotion and/or relegation.*
  - 3.1.2. If less than 50% of the Competition Fixtures as originally planned for that competition have been played (excluding Abandoned or Postponed fixtures), FV

will determine the Regular Season incomplete and promotion, relegation, crowning of premiers and champions and awards will not take place.

3.2. Final standings for the purposes of section 3.1.1 shall be determined as follows:

3.2.1. Where Teams have played an even number of Competition Fixtures, League position at the time of cancellation shall be determinative.

3.2.2. Where Teams have played an uneven number of Competition Fixtures, the average points per game shall be determinative, followed by average goal difference per game, followed by average goals for per game.

#### **4. UPDATED RULES**

4.1. These Rules may be updated throughout the course of the season at the absolute discretion of FV.