



# 2025 PAUL KELLY CUP

## RULES & REGULATIONS



## SECTION 1 – COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The AFL NSW/ACT Paul Kelly Cup is designed to engage and introduce primary school students to the game of Australian Rules Football in NSW/ACT. It is the premier primary-school pathway competition, providing students with an opportunity to learn about and participate in a fun environment.

### 1.2 SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY

- a. All primary schools in NSW/ACT are eligible to participate
- b. Participants from the following year groups are eligible to enter the competition:
  - i. Year 3 and 4 (limited sub-regional rounds, no progression)
  - ii. Year 5 and 6 (all sub-regional rounds, progression)

### 1.3 COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

- a. The AFL NSW/ACT Paul Kelly Cup competition is managed and led by AFL NSW/ACT Participation staff at all levels of the pathway
- b. The Competition Management duties include:
  - i. Overseeing the operations and administration of the Competition
  - ii. Liaising with school coordinators and AFL NSW/ACT staff (including umpires)
  - iii. Circulating information on the Competition
  - iv. Distributing nomination information for the Competition
  - v. Constructing fixtures for the Competition
  - vi. Appointing Competition Managers and Ground Managers for each stage of the progression
  - vii. Facilitating ground bookings and venue availability
  - viii. Appointing suitably qualified first aid
- c. The Competition Manager/Ground Manager is responsible for the following:
  - i. Ensuring AFL NSW/ACT staff have appropriate uniform for easy recognition
  - ii. Ensuring grounds are open and suitable, including bathrooms.
  - iii. Ensure grounds remain safe and suitable to play on. Identify any conditions that may place attendees at significant risk (e.g. extreme weather)



- iv. Ensuring location of first aid is advised
  - v. Ensure grounds are set up correctly according to the rules, including scoreboards where applicable
  - vi. Ensure footballs (correct size) are available
  - vii. Ensure umpire equipment is available (e.g. whistles, score cards, goal umpire flags) and umpires are appointed and adequately briefed on specific rules
  - viii. Ensure timekeeping equipment is available, including a siren and back-up if required
  - ix. Ensure scores and results are updated on PlayHQ
  - x. Ensure School Team Managers and Players are briefed with the rules prior to the start of play
  - xi. Ensure disciplinary reports by umpires are reported to relevant staff and school
- d. AFL NSW/ACT is responsible for providing information about the representative pathway for Paul Kelly Cup Competitions. The representation of the pathway is as follows:



## 1.4 SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Schools must register via the relevant nomination form provided by AFL NSW/ACT
- b. Registration is required prior to competing and schools will be invoiced \$25 per team (+GST)
- c. Each school must nominate a School Team Manager that is responsible for the following:
  - i. Ensure players are correctly attired in uniform
  - ii. Ensure players are within the appropriate year group and eligible as stated in the [Section 1.2](#)
  - iii. Ensure team sheets, including player names and numbers, are complete and submitted to Competition Manager



## SECTION 2 – COMPETITION RULES

### 2.1 NUMBER OF PLAYERS IN A TEAM

- a. Table 1 outlines the number of players allowed in a team for each age group

**Table 1 – Number of Players Allowed in a Team**

Competition	Minimum Number of Players on the Field	Maximum Number of Players in Squad
Year 3-4 Boys & Girls	9	12
Year 5-6 Boys & Girls	12	16

- b. Players must be evenly spread in three zones (forwards, midfield and backs) at the start of each half:
- In Year 3-4 competitions, players must remain in zones
  - In Year 5-6 competitions, players may move out of their starting zone
- c. It is recommended that players change positions throughout the match
- d. Interchange can take place at any time
- e. On-field player numbers must be equal at all times
- f. Only players in the forward zone (identified with a wrist band) can score, from the forward zone
- g. If a non-forward zone player scores (goal or behind), play is re-started by the umpire with a ball up where the ball was kicked.
- h. If a forward scores from outside the forward zone, play is re-started by the umpire with a ball up where the ball was kicked.
- i. Where a mark is taken or a free kick is awarded inside the forward zone, the player is permitted to push back to outside the forward zone to kick for goal.

### 2.2 FIELD SIZE

- a. Table 2 outlines the field dimensions for each competition

**Table 2 – Paul Kelly Cup Field Dimensions**

Competition	Length (Metres)	Width (Metres)
Year 3-4 Boys & Girls	85-100m	50-75m
Year 5-6 Boys & Girls	90-120m	50-75m



- a. Zones and the boundary of the field are to be marked with cones

## 2.3 MATCH FOOTBALLS

- a. Table 3 outlines the match football size and type for each competition

**Table 3 – Match Football Size & Type**

Competition	Size	Type
Year 3-4 Boys & Girls	2	Synthetic
Year 5-6 Boys & Girls	3	Synthetic

## 2.4 MATCH TIMES & DURATION

- a. Table 4 outlines the duration of matches and breaks for each competition

**Table 4 – Duration of Match and Breaks**

Competition	Half Length (mins)	½ Time Break (mins)	Match Total (mins)
Year 3-4 Boys and Girls Year 5-6 Boys and Girls	10	5	25

## 2.5 DRAWN FINALS MATCHES

- a. In the event of drawn scores in a semi-final match, the highest ranked team progresses into the Grand Final
- b. In a Grand Final, in the event of scores being equal, the following procedure will occur:
- Score will be confirmed by goal umpires (if applicable) or scoreboard
  - The coach will be allowed to address their team during a three (3) minute break after the final siren at the end of normal match time.
  - Teams will re-position themselves in the same direction as at the end of regular time.
  - Teams will play for 5 minutes each way (no break, change ends)
  - Should scores remain even at the end of extra time, teams will reset their position (not changing ends), with golden point until there is a winner upon the first score

## **2.6 START OF PLAY**

- a. The match shall be started (and restarted after each goal) with a ball-up between two players in the centre of the ground.
- b. A player cannot take possession directly from a ball-up, must tap the ball and cannot play the ball again until another player has touched it.

## **2.7 OUT OF BOUNDS**

- a. When the ball goes out of bounds, a free kick is awarded against the team to have the last disposal (kick or handball). The opposition player closest to where the ball went out of bounds will be awarded a free kick.
- b. A player can kick a goal from an out of bounds free kick, if the closest player is a forward in the forward zone.
- c. When the ball goes out of bounds from a defensive act, including fumble, smother or punch, play is restarted with a ball up 5-10 metres from the boundary where the ball went out of bounds
- d. If there is any doubt as to whose free kick it is, a ball up is to occur 5-10 metres in from the boundary line

## **2.8 TACKLING/SHEPHERDING**

- a. Players are permitted to hold and “bear hug” an opponent in possession of the ball between the shoulders and wrap (modified wrap tackle)
- b. A free kick will be awarded where:
  - i. A tackle forces an opponent to the ground
  - ii. An opponent is pushed in the back
  - iii. An opponent is held without possession of the ball
  - iv. A tackle is deemed by the umpire to be rough
- c. Players are permitted to shepherd, unless an opponent is being held without possession of the ball

## **2.9 MARKING, BOUNCING, KICKING OFF THE GROUND & HOLDING THE BALL**

- a. In Year 3-4 competitions, the following rules apply:
  - i. A mark is awarded when a player catches a kick from another player, no minimum distance



- ii. A player may bounce the ball a maximum of once in any single possession
  - iii. A bounce must occur before a player runs more than 15 steps
- b. In Year 5-6 competitions, the following rules apply:
- i. A mark is awarded when a player catches a kick from another player, if kick has travelled at least 10 metres
  - ii. A player may bounce the ball a maximum of once in any single possession
  - iii. A bounce must occur before a player runs more than 15 steps
- c. In both competitions, the following rules apply:
- i. Players are not permitted to deliberately kick the ball off the ground
  - ii. Holding the Ball is enforced
  - iii. Players must make an attempt to legally dispose of the ball once they have had prior opportunity
  - iv. The maximum distance for an advanced free kick is 30 metres

## 2.10 SUMMARY OF RULES & REGULATIONS

Rule	Year 3-4 Boys & Girls	Year 5-6 Boys & Girls
Progression	No	Yes
Players	9 per side (3/3/3 stay in zones), max squad of 12	12 per side (4/4/4 start in zones), max squad of 16
Ground Size	85-100m x 50-75m	90-120m x 50-75m
Match Ball	Size 2 Synthetic	Size 3 Synthetic
Bounces	1 Bounce	1 Bounce
Out of Bounds	Last disposal – free kick In doubt/defensive act – ball up 5-10m from boundary	
Kicking Off the Ground	No, unless accidental	
Stealing/Shepherding/Fending	Yes	
Tackling	Modified	
Barging/Rough Conduct	No	
Mark	No minimum distance	10m



Match Timing	2 x 10-min halves (5 min break)
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## SECTION 3 – DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

### 3.1 RED AND YELLOW CARDS

- a. An umpire can give a yellow or red card to any player who commits an act that is considered to be a Reportable Offence under the *Laws of Australian Football*.
- b. A player shown a yellow card is to remain off the field for a period of 15 minutes playing time (excluding any time during a quarter break). The player may be replaced on the field by another player. This may carry over matches if there are less than 15 minutes remaining in the current match.
- c. A player sent off under a red card is unable to participate further in the match. The player may be replaced on the field by another player.
- d. A player sent off under a red card will also be considered to have been reported by the umpire for the offence and the following process will apply:
  - i. Immediately following the match, the Competition Manager will consult the umpire and obtain the details of the reportable offence.
  - ii. The Competition Manager will then determine if the red card has been a sufficient penalty for the offence described, or if the nature of the offence is such that it requires a Tribunal to be convened to consider any additional penalty (e.g. a suspension from further matches) to be applied to the player.

### 3.2 DETERMINATION OF A REPORTABLE OFFENCE

- a. Where a Tribunal is to be convened:
  - i. It will be made up of the Match/Competition Manager and the two supervising teachers (one from either school)
  - ii. Evidence will be heard from the umpire, the player and any other witness called by the player and umpire.
  - iii. The tribunal will then determine if any further penalty is to be applied, and if so, the terms of that penalty.
  - iv. Results of the tribunal are to be noted on the match report sheet, and should state the charged player's name, school, whether the player was found guilty or not guilty and the details of any additional penalty applied.
  - v. Where a player is found guilty of an offence, the player's school is also to be formally notified of this to determine whether any further action is to be taken in accordance with school policy.
  - vi. Where more than one player from a team is sent off under a red card in a match, that team may be suspended by the Competition Manager from participating in any further matches depending on the seriousness of the offences committed.

