

GUIDANCE ON APPLICATION OF THE NEW FOOTBALL RULES

This document aims to provide clarity and consistency in officiating the new football rules. It has been developed in consultation with the National Referees Panel and the Football Review Committee.

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VERSION CONTROL

No	Date	Guidance Changed
Issue 1	27.02.25	N/A
Issue 1.1	14.03.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLAY ON IMMEDIATELY – Advanced Mark. If a goal or point is scored, advantage has accrued. Section deleted as this is now in Rule as amended by Central Council on 10.03.25. DISSENT BY PLAYERS. The word ‘in play’ is now inserted and the word “how long ref” is deleted. During a kickout or free kick it could be considered an infraction of Rules of Foul Play – Rule 4 - Technical Foul - 4.18 “<i>To interfere with a player taking a freekick, sideline kick or kickout ... verbal interference considered by the referee to be aimed at distracting the player taking the kick</i>”. DISSENT BY MATCH OFFICIALS. Changed to align with amendment by Central Council on 13.03.25 TIME WASTING. Although the average kickout duration over the 2025 AFL Rounds 1 to 5 was 21.1 seconds, enforcing a specific time guideline could place undue pressure on referees. Instead, referees will continue to use their discretion to determine whether a goalkeeper or any other player is intentionally delaying a kickout or free kick, as has been the case previously.

SOLO & GO

- i. The ball is spilled/ fumbled by a player in the act of taking a toe-tap for the purposes of starting a solo & go - the solo & go is cancelled and a free kick is taken from the original position of the foul. A subsequent solo & go may not be taken.

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- ii. When taking a solo & go a player must take the toe-tap within 4m of the position of the original foul. A player is allowed to carry the ball up to this 4m point and the toe-tap must be completed before he reaches this point i.e. 4m from where the foul occurred. The player cannot be challenged for 4m beyond the point of where he took the toe-tap, for the purpose of starting a solo & go.
- iii. If the player takes a toe-tap to start a solo & go beyond 4m where the foul occurred - it is a 'hop ball' as this is a breach of Rule 4.24 (a) "To advance the ball deliberately from the place at which a *free kick or sideline kick is to be taken. Penalty: Cancel the Free-kick and Throw in the ball*

HANDING BACK THE BALL

- In the situation where a player takes possession of the ball after a foul has occurred but is not on the team of the player awarded the free kick - where the player in possession of the ball is not in the immediate vicinity of an opposition player/or the player fouled, for the purposes of not delaying his opponent taking a free kick, he may pass the ball to a teammate who will in turn "hand over the ball" to the nearest opposition player, or the player fouled.
- Example: A goalkeeper standing on his goal line caught the ball after it was kicked in from distance by the opposition. The referee then called the ball back for a free - if there was no opposition player beside him, the goalkeeper may pass the ball back out the field to a teammate, who can then "hand over the ball" to the nearest opposition players or the player fouled (rather than the goalkeeper having to leave his goal line and travel out the field to hand over the ball).

DISSENT

Examples of players, in play, calling "Steps ref", or "Pick up ref" do not warrant a 50m advancement of the ball.

Players

The penalty for the foul described in Rule 6 - Dissent - Rule 6.4 (i.e. "To show dissent **with the Referee's decision to award a free kick to the opposing team**") *The free kick already awarded shall be taken from a place 50m more advantageous than the place of original kick, up to the 13m line.* If the ball is advanced inside the 40m, the team awarded the free kick may choose to take it outside the 40m arc.

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Managers/ Team Officials

It is not in rule to advance the ball 50m if a Team Official shows dissent with Rule 6.4 i.e. *“To show dissent with the Referee’s decision to award a free kick to the opposing team”*, as Dissent Rule 6.4 is only for players.

However, what is in rule is if a Team Official receives a Yellow or Red Card (for committing any of the listed categories of infractions in Rule 5 – Rules of Control - Misconduct at Games), **as amended by Central Council on 13.03.25**, a free kick is awarded on the offending team’s **20** line. This includes a Yellow Card for **challenging the authority of a Match Official**; or a Red Card for **using abusive language to a Match Official**. The team awarded the **20** free kick have the option to take the free kick outside the 40m arc. Note: Selectors, Medical staff, Maor Uisce etc. are considered Team Officials.

TIME WASTING

The referee will use their discretion to determine if a goalkeeper, or other player, is delaying own kickout or freekick.

GOALKEEPER

- If a team has a goalkeeper sent off for a Black or Red Card, he must be replaced i.e. a team must always have a goalkeeper on the field of play (the exception is if the goalkeeper is off the field receiving treatment for an injury)