



AFL Asia 2023 Asian Championships Match Rules and Regulations

BACKGROUND

The AFL Asia 2023 Asian Championships will be conducted by AFL Asia in partnership with the Host Club, the Thailand Tigers Football Club.

It is the responsibility of each Club to ensure that all Club officials are conversant with these Match Rules and Regulations.

1. GENERAL

1.1 Definitions

In these Match Rules and Regulations:

AFL means the Australian Football League, a company incorporated in Australia and responsible for the promotion and development of the game of Australian Football.

AFL Asia means the division of the AFL responsible for the governance and development of Australian Football in Asia.

AFL Asia Advisory Board means the AFL Asia Advisory Board appointed for the purpose of developing and promoting the game of Australian Football in Asia.

AFL Asia Development Manager means the person employed by the AFL to oversee and manage all aspects of the Tournament.

AFL Asia Official means any person appointed by the AFL Asia Development Manager, AFL Asia or the Host Club, to assist with the management of this Tournament.

Club means an Australian Football Club or League recognised by AFL Asia as an AFL Asia Member.

Division means a division of the Tournament.

Host Club means the Thailand Tigers Football Club, being the Club selected by the AFL Asia Advisory Board to host the Tournament.

Laws of Australian Football means the Laws of Australian Football as administered and controlled by the AFL.

Player means a person eligible and selected to play for a Team.

Team means a Club team competing in the Tournament.

Team Member includes without limitation a Player, coach, runner, trainer, manager, official or any other person performing any duties (paid or unpaid) for or on behalf of a Team.

Tournament means the AFL Asia 2023 Asian Championships.

Tournament Manager means the person responsible for the operational and administrative aspects of the Tournament, assisting the AFL Asia Development Manager.

Tournament Subcommittee means the committee appointed by AFL Asia to implement these Match Rules and Regulations and manage the Tournament.

1.2 Construction and Amendment of Regulations

(a) AFL Asia shall interpret all provisions contained in these Match Rules and Regulations and any interpretation or application by AFL Asia of any of the provisions contained in these Match Rules and Regulations shall be final and binding on every person bound by them.

(b) AFL Asia may from time to time amend these Match Rules or Regulations or make such further or other rules and regulations as it deems fit.

2. ENTRY INTO TOURNAMENT AND COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS

2.1 Application

Subject to any terms and conditions of entry determined by AFL Asia, each Club may enter one Team to participate in each Division of the Tournament by submitting a nomination form.

2.2 Number of Teams

AFL Asia may in its absolute discretion decide the number of Teams which will compete in the Tournament.

2.3 Bound to Regulations and Other Rules

(a) By participating in the Tournament, each Club, Team and Team Member is deemed to be bound by and shall comply with:-

(i) these Match Rules and Regulations;

(ii) the Laws of Australian Football; and

(iii) any resolutions, determinations, rules or regulations made by AFL Asia.

(b) Before competing in its first Tournament match, a Club must complete and lodge with the Tournament Manager the "Team Registration Sheet" in the form prescribed by AFL Asia, signed by either the Team Manager, President or a nominee.

3. DATE OF COMPETITION

AFL Asia, in consultation with the Host Club, shall determine the dates of the Tournament.

4. VENUES

All Tournament matches shall be played at venues determined by the Tournament Subcommittee in consultation with the Host Club.

5. FORMAT OF COMPETITION

5.1 Divisions

(a) There will be three men's divisions and one women's division at the Tournament.

(b) Clubs must nominate Teams for either Men's First, Second or Third Division, Women's Division or a combination of Divisions. Following receipt of a nomination, the AFL Asia Development Manager and Tournament Manager will allocate a Team to a Division having regard to the Club's nominated preference, recent results, team lists, scheduling logistics and any other factors deemed relevant by the AFL Asia Development Manager and Tournament Manager.

5.2 Structure of Schedule

The structure of the Tournament will be determined by the Tournament Subcommittee, acknowledging that the preference is for:

(a) A minimum of three games for each Team.

(b) Semi-finals and/or a Grand Final.

In 2023, the Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3 Men's and Women's Division will play 3 preliminary round group matches and an additional match related to their final standings will be played if the Tournament schedule permits (finals system explained below in 5.4 Finals).

5.3 Points Awarded Each Game

For all preliminary round group matches, Teams will be awarded 4 points for a win, 0 points for a loss & 2 points for a draw and allocated percentage based on the match score.

5.4 Finals

It is acknowledged that, historically, at the completion of the preliminary round group matches, the top four teams would compete in the Semi Finals with the winners then competing in the Grand Final.

In 2023, the structure of Finals will be finalised following final team submissions. The amount of participating Teams will determine the Finals structure.

6. MATCH CONDITIONS

6.1 Length of matches

Preliminary round group matches will be played within half-hour periods, consisting of 2x12 minute halves with a 3-minute half time break and 3-minute break between matches.

Finals matches will be played within 40-minute periods, consisting of 2x15 minute halves with a 5-minute half time break and 5-minute break between matches.

The Tournament Manager may in their absolute discretion alter the duration of a match.

6.2 Timekeeping

A centrally controlled siren will sound on the designated start and end time of both halves of each match during the Tournament. The match will officially commence when the umpire blows their whistle and conducts the first bounce, as soon as possible after the sounding of the siren, and once all players are in position.

Timekeepers shall sound a warning 1-minute prior to the commencement of each half and again at the start of each half of each match during the Tournament, regardless of whether players are in position.

Timekeepers for all matches shall be appointed by the Tournament Manager or the Host Club.

All timekeepers shall follow the instructions of the Tournament Manager (as varied from time to time).

6.3 1-minute rule and “No Show” penalties

If all the players in a Team are not in position after 1-minute of the sounding of each siren to start play, a penalty of 1 goal per minute will follow until they take the field and the umpire’s whistle is blown to start play. For the avoidance of doubt, the first goal would be awarded at the 1.00-minute mark of a match to the Team with all players in position, up to a maximum of 6 goals (at 6.00 minute mark). For example, if the umpire’s whistle to start the game is blown at the 4.25min mark, the Team with all players in position on the first siren would start 24-0 ahead.

If both teams are not in position on the sounding of the first siren, the timekeeper will only begin the 1-minute count once one of the Teams players are in position and the timekeeper is notified to do so by the central umpire.

If a team has still not shown up on the sounding of the half time siren, the game will be awarded to the team on the ground and a score of 36-0 will apply.

The timekeeper will be responsible for keeping track of the time with the central umpire responsible awarding the appropriate penalty in liaison with the Tournament Manager at the end of each half.

6.4 No Drawn Matches in Finals

(a) Preliminary group matches – No overtime will be played in the preliminary round group matches. Both teams will be awarded 2 points for a drawn match. (4 points for a win, 0 for a loss)

(c) Grand Final – Should scores be tied at the end of play, 2x5-minute overtime periods will be played with a 1-minute half time break to allow players to change ends in between overtime periods. Coaches will not be allowed on the ground in between overtime periods. Should the scores still be tied at the end of the overtime period, on the sounding of the siren the umpire will return the ball to the centre square for a Golden Goal period of play.

6.5 Coin Toss

The Captain (or their representative) of each Team must attend the Tournament Marshall's Tent at half-time of the match preceding theirs to submit their Team sheet and participate in a coin toss for their match, which will be conducted by the designated umpire or an AFL Asia official.

7. TEAM COMPOSITION

7.1 Squad and playing numbers

(a) Division 1 Teams will be able to select a squad of up to 26 players/match (16-a-side and 10 interchange players)

(b) Division 2 Teams will be able to select a squad of up to 24 players/game (12/14/16-a-side matches as determined by the Tournament Manager and 8 interchange players), with an uncapped playing squad.

(c) Division 3 Teams will be able to have unlimited squad numbers to encourage increased participation numbers. 12/14/16-a-side matches will take place as determined by the Tournament Manager with unlimited interchange players.

(d) Women's Teams will be able to have unlimited squad numbers to encourage increased participation numbers. 14/16-a-side matches will take place as determined by the Tournament Manager with unlimited interchange players.

(d) Opposing Teams may alter the number of players for each match by mutual agreement. If one Team does not want to increase or decrease playing numbers, their opposition Team must play to the designated numbers as set above. If an agreement to alter the number of players is put in place, both Teams must notify AFL Asia and the AFL Asia Development Manager or Tournament Manager before the start of play.

7.2 Qualification for Finals

A player must have played in at least 2 preliminary round group matches to be eligible to play in the Division 1, 2, 3 or Women's Grand Final.

7.3 Movement of players between first and seconds teams

A Player may be promoted from a Division 2 or 3 Team into the same Club's Division 1 Team to replace players suffering Tournament ending injuries. Approval must be sought prior to any promotion from the Tournament Manager and clause 7.2 will still apply.

Movement of players down a Division is not permitted.

7.4 Seconds Teams

Clubs fielding two or more Teams must select their best team for their Division 1 Team. Where the Tournament Manager considers that a Club has players competing in Division 2 or Division 3 who should be competing in Division 1 the Tournament Manager may, at their discretion, penalise the Club or Team including by deducting their Tournament points.

7.5 Movement of players from one team to another team during the Tournament

If a Team is struggling for players or has a number of tournament-ending injuries and cannot field enough players for a match they must notify the Tournament Manager, and the parties will try and agree a reasonable solution. Where the solution involves replacement players, the replacement player/s cannot return to their original Team for a Grand Final if they have assisted the struggling team for the majority of the Tournament.

Division 1 teams who cannot comply with the Local Players Policy (8.2) may field Local Players from other Division 2 and 3 Teams provided they have the consent of the players' team officials and it is in the best interests of the Local Player's development.

8. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

8.1 Ring-Ins

To promote a fair competition, we do not want to see players brought into a team from outside of the Club, purely to help a team's chances in the Tournament.

To qualify for the Tournament, a player must have played with their Club at a previous Asian Championships, or have in the last 12 months played with that Club in an Official AFL Asia fixture (including recognised domestic competitions such as SCAFL, GDAFL, PAFL, VFL, HFL, AFL Japan A League/GO League, Lofty Cup, China Cup, etc)

While it is hard to monitor, the spirit of the Tournament demands that all players are long-term residents of the country who he/she is playing with.

The following is a guideline to read in conjunction with clause 8.1:

Acceptable

A player who has previously played at an Asian Championships with that Club and has relocated to another country.

Unacceptable

A player who has not played with the Club or has not lived in that country before and is brought in for the Tournament specifically because of his/her playing ability.

Frowned upon

An Australian State League player or similar standard player who has never resided in the country of the Club they would like to play with, but attended a tournament or played a game earlier in the year to gain qualification for the Tournament.

8.2 Local Players

(a) All Teams in the Men's Divisions 1, 2 and 3 are required to name Asian Nationals in their Squad. In Division 1, 2 & 3, each Team must have at least two Asian Nationals in their squad with one player on the field at all times. Clause 7.5 was introduced in 2019 to assist Division 1 Teams with the specific changes to their increased Local Player requirements.

Although encouraged, there are no Asian Nationals rules in place for the Women's Division during the development phase of this Division, with the vision of maximising participation.

(b) A player is deemed an Asian National if:

- . (i) the player is or has been predominantly resident in the country of a Club between 10 and 18 years of age; or
- . (ii) the player is a citizen of the country of a Club at the time of the Tournament.

(c) If a Team fails to name or play any Asian Nationals in their squad for any Tournament match, that Team will be required to play one man short on field and two players less on the interchange for that match (total 3 players less).

(d) If a Team names only one Asian National in their squad, that Team will not be allowed an interchange should that player need to leave the field at any time and must play with one player less on the interchange.

(e) The Captain of a Team can request a head count with the central umpire should a Team wish for a confirmation of compliance with this clause 8.2.

(f) If at any time a Team is found by the Tournament Manager to have breached this clause 8.2, that Team will be penalised one goal against them immediately following a head count.

8.3 Exemptions

The Asian Championships Subcommittee may, on a case-by-case basis, exercise favourable discretion in its application of clauses 7.5, 8.1 and 8.2 if it is satisfied that the Club is conducting activities to grow and develop its playing base beyond the traditional expat populations and the exercise of discretion is in the best interests of the Tournament. Submissions in this regard must be made in writing to the Tournament Manager.

9. TEAM REGISTRATIONS

Each Club must complete the online player registration form 2 weeks prior to the Tournament, noting details regarding the last game that each player in their squad played for the Club and identifying which players are Asian Nationals. Clubs nominating two or more Teams will also be required to pick final squads by the same date. This process will also assist AFL Asia in its pursuit to provide an accurate and engaging AFL Asia 2023 Asian Championships Record.

Each Club will have access to the list of Teams submitted for the Tournament and may submit objections to the Tournament Subcommittee as soon as practicable via email or at the President's Meeting on the Friday night prior to the Tournament. Those objections will be circulated by the Tournament Subcommittee for consideration by all Clubs.

10. LAWS OF THE GAME

Unless otherwise provided in these Match Rules and Regulations, Tournament matches will be played in accordance with the Laws of Australian Football.

10.1 The Last Disposal Between The Arcs rule will only apply to the Women's Division in accordance to AFLW rules and regulations, which is clearly stated below.

The 'Last Disposal Between The Arcs' rule will apply only in the middle of the ground, between the 50 metre arcs. If a team kicks or handballs the ball out of play from this part of the ground, the other team gets a free kick. If the ball goes out of bounds in the general field of play within the arcs it will be a throw-in.

However, no free kick will be awarded if the opposition player shepherds the ball across the boundary line where the football could have otherwise been touched.

10.2 – Rules recently implemented by the AFL that will be implemented at the Tournament

(a) Starting Position Rules – At the start of every half or after a goal has been kicked.

In matches whereby there are 16 players starting on the field, teams will field 5 forwards, 5 defenders and 6 midfielders (4 starting in the centre square and 2 wings). The 5 forwards and 5 defenders must start within the arcs of the ground with a minimum of 1 forward and 1 defender starting in the goal square.

Matches whereby there are 14 players starting on the field, teams will field 4 forwards, 4 defenders and 6 midfielders, whilst games with 12 players starting on the field, teams will field 4 forwards, 4 defenders and 4 midfielders, with the 2 wings to be removed.

(b) Kick Ins

After a behind, a player no longer needs to 'kick-in' to one's self to play on out of the goal square. And, the player on the mark will need to stand 10 metres away from the top of the goal square – this used to be 5 metres.

(c) Marks / Free Kicks

If a defender takes a mark, or gets a free kick, within 9 metres of their own goal, then the player on the mark in the attacking team will be brought in line with the top of the goal square.

(d) Kicking For Goal Post Siren - Centre Of Goal Line

Half-time, full-time – when play ends, if there's a player who's taken a mark or been awarded a free kick, they can now kick across their body using a snap or check-side kick. They still need to end up in the same place, in line with the player-on-the-mark and the goal but can start where they like.

(e) Marking Contest

The 'Hands in the Back' rule interpretation has been repealed. A player can hold their ground by placing their hands on the back of their opponent in a marking contest. But they can't push the player in the back.

(f) Ruck Contests - Prior Opportunity

A ruck player who takes possession when contesting a throw-up, or boundary throw-in, will not be regarded as having had prior opportunity.

(g) Ruck Nominations – Not Required

Ruck nominations will not be required throughout the duration of the Tournament. However, if a Team has more than one player contending the ruck in any ball-up or throw-in contest a free kick will be awarded to the opposition ruck player.

10.3 There will be an interchange zone area and Teams are encouraged not to allow a substitute onto the ground until a player has fully crossed over the boundary line of the interchange area (unless in the case of injury).

10.4 25-metre penalties will apply, not 50 metres.

10.5 The Order Off Law contained in the Laws of Australian Football - Section 23 (aflasia.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/laws-of-the-game-booklet-2023.pdf) shall apply as follows:-

(a) Red Card: A Player ordered from the field for the remainder of the match under Law 23.2 of the Laws of Australian Football shall be shown a Red Card.

(b) Yellow Card: A Player shall be shown a Yellow Card and ordered from the field for a three (3) minute period of match playing time for all other reportable offences prescribed in the Laws of Australian Football other than the reportable offences listed in Law 23.2. The Interchange Steward shall be responsible for administering the 3-minute period. The Player need not be reported to be ordered from the field.

(c) Players ordered off the field may not be replaced.

10.6 In the case of a particularly serious offence, AFL Asia will have the right to ban a player for the remainder of the Tournament at its discretion. In this instance, the player can be replaced for the next match.

10.7 Time wasting and abusive language rules also apply to runners, water bearers, coaches and interchange players. If need be, the Tournament Manager or central umpire will have the right to order that Team to remove its captain from the field for 3 minutes (in the sin-bin).

10.8 Each team is permitted one team runner and 2 water bearers.

10.9 Head counts. Only a Team captain can request a head count from the central umpire. If requested, the teams must immediately line up in the centre of the ground for a count. Any player observed to leave the field will be counted.

10.10 If there are extra players on the field, that team will have their score reset to zero. If there are no extra players on the field – the opposing captain will get a free kick, plus 25-meter penalty to restart the game.

11. COMPLAINTS

11.1 Person May Make Complaint

A President of a Club or a coach or captain of a Team may lodge a complaint with the Tournament Manager in relation to an alleged breach of these Match Rules and Regulations as soon as possible after a match has been completed.

11.2 Asian Championships Manager to Investigate

Upon receiving a complaint, the Tournament Manager shall investigate the matter, consulting with any parties deemed necessary.

The Tournament Manager may also investigate any matter that has been referred to it by an umpire or which he or she considers may amount to a breach of these Match Rules and Regulations.

The investigation by the Tournament Manager shall be:-

- (a) inquisitorial in nature;
- (b) conducted with as little formality and technicality and with as much expedition as the proper consideration of the matter permits; and
- (c) be conducted and concluded as soon as practicable.

11.3 Determination of Complaint

The Tournament Manager will make a determination in relation to the complaint, in consultation with AFL Asia (to the extent practicable), and any relevant Tournament officials or Club Presidents.

The Tournament Manager may impose such penalties and make such orders and give such directions in each case as he or she in his or her absolute discretion thinks fit.

11.4 Failure to Co-operate: A person who, in the opinion of the Tournament Manager, fails to fully observe and comply with clause 11.2, shall:

- (a) be deemed to have been involved in conduct which is prejudicial to the interests of AFL Asia and the conduct of the Tournament; and
- (b) be dealt with by the Tournament Manager as they in their absolute discretion thinks fit.