



# Welcome to the 2021 Modified Football Program





## PARENT INFORMATION

### MODIFIED FOOTBALL RULES 2021

The Hills Football League (HFL) has recently reviewed and revised the match day rules for the Modified Football Program. The new rules will come into effect for the 2021 season.

#### Who makes the rules?

The HFL is responsible for setting the rules of the competition. The AFL provides guidance on this through the Australian Football Match Policy. The HFL can choose to accept, refuse or adjust rules to suit the competition.

#### Why did the rules change?

The rules of the HFL Modified Program have not been reviewed in full for sometime so it was necessary to undertake the review to ensure our program was in line with other programs and that it was appropriate for modern day players.

Any person wishing to participate in our game should be able to do so in a manner that is appropriate to his or her skills, needs and aspirations. For too long we have allowed eight-year-old kids to play under the same match conditions as professional players – it's simply not right. It is essential that young players are introduced to the game through modified rules and regulations that consider their physical, psychological and emotional needs. Research has shown that young players playing under modified conditions are more likely to enjoy themselves and want to play again. They are able to incrementally learn new skills that are more appropriate to their age and this also maintains their interest in football. We want to make sure our program is welcoming and inclusive and focuses on appropriate skill development.

#### How did the rules get decided upon?

Consultation on changes commenced in 2020 with club Modified Football Coordinators. Further discussion continued into 2021 where clubs endorsed the changes. The HFL then hosted coaches and umpires at information sessions that further discussed the reasons for the rule changes and their interpretation during training and matches.

#### Contact play

Deferring the introduction of full tackling is based upon the need to provide players with the best possible conditions to learn, develop and improve their disposal skills by reducing congestion and pressure on the player in possession. All skills are eventually taught and learned, but there is an appropriate sequence for doing so. The physiological and emotional readiness of children's bodies to resist the pressures of tackling also needs to be recognised in assessing when to introduce tackling. The AFL has stated that the "age of readiness" will vary from child to child, but generally is recognised as being around the 11-12 age group. The HFL and clubs have decided to introduce the "normal" tackle at U10s in 2021. This will be closely monitored throughout the year.

#### Further information

For further information, please refer to your child's coach or your club Modified Football Program Coordinator.



# MODIFIED FOOTBALL RULES 2021

ACTION	UNDER 8	UNDER 9	UNDER 10	UNDER 11
Players on ground	9 a side max Zoning mandatory Arm bands for forwards	12 a side max Zoning mandatory Arm bands for forwards	15 a side max Coach/Umpire managed	18 a side max Coach/umpire managed
Goal kickers	Only players in the forward zone can kick a goal		Anyone	Anyone
Oval size	80metres max	100 metres max	100 metres max	110 metres min
Match length	4x 10min	4x 10min	4x 10min	4x 12min
Breaks	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter – 3min. Half time – 5min.			
Ball size	Size 2 synthetic	Size 3 synthetic	Size 3 synthetic	Size 3 synthetic
Recording match details	No ladders. No finals. Scores, best players and goal kickers may be submitted for publication through use of Sports TG only			
Coaching position	On field	On field	Off field with runner	Off field with runner
Out of bounds	Last possession			
Contact	No tackle or bump. No contact or spoiling except when accidental in nature.	Modified tackle. No bumping.	“Normal” tackle. No bumping.	As per the Laws of Australian Football.
Stealing, smothering, shepherding	NO stealing, smothering or shepherding	As per the Laws of Australian Football		
Holding the ball (HTB)	1 bounce allowed. Able to run 10metres			
Marking	A mark is awarded irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled to any player who marks it or who makes a reasonable attempt to mark it.	A mark is awarded irrespective of the distance the ball has travelled to any player who catches it or shows control.	A mark is awarded when a player catches the ball directly from another player’s kick that has travelled at least 10m.	
Kick off the ground	Not permitted unless clearly accidental			
Ruck	No designated ruckman. Umpire chooses ruckman contest. Ruckman stand opposing each other (no check side rucking). They must not contact the opposing ruckman with their knee. Ruckman must palm or punch the ball and cannot take possession until another player has touched the ball.			
Penalties	Player can be ordered off at umpire’s discretion. No distance penalty.			Player can be ordered off at umpire’s discretion. 10m distance penalty.



## MODIFIED FOOTBALL PROGRAM (U8-U11) POLICY

1. The Hills Football League modified football competition consists of teams nominated from the Division 1 and Country competitions in the following age groups:
  - Under 8
  - Under 9
  - Under 10
  - Under 11
- 1.1 The maximum player age shall be adhered to as at 1<sup>st</sup> January.
- 1.2 Players playing below their chronological age bracket must be recorded on the [Playing Down form](#) and submitted to the HFL prior to the season start or prior to the player participating in their first match for the season.
- 1.3 Players playing above their chronological age bracket must do so with the permission of their parent/guardian and both the coach and the parent/guardian must ensure it will not be to the detriment of the player or put the player at unnecessary risk.
- 1.4 Players must be registered with their club through the Sports TG system.
2. Coaches and Umpires must work together prior to and throughout the match to benefit the learning experience of the players.
  - 2.1 The home team coach must contact the visiting coach to confirm match times and team numbers.
  - 2.2 The number of players on the field can be negotiated between the coaches. The fair play rule must be utilised where possible provided that the number of players on the field per team DOES NOT exceed the maximum number stated in the Match Rules.
  - 2.3 The umpire can hold the match until coaches assist in correcting player positions.
  - 2.4 The umpire can provide commentary to players to encourage and engage understanding of rules to players.
  - 2.5 Coaches and umpires are encouraged to approach each other during a break to discuss undue rough play, rulings outside of the age group or any other matter of concern. Both coaches are to be present during these discussions.
  - 2.6 For under 8 and under 9 teams – each team will be allowed one coach on the field during the match. He/she is NOT to carry a whiteboard or folder etc. The coach must wear a fluorescent vest to identify their role. No other support (including a runner) is allowed on the ground.
  - 2.7 For under 10 and under 11 teams – a runner only will be allowed on the field during play. He/she must wear a fluorescent vest to identify their role.
  - 2.8 Coaches must hold the appropriate level of accreditation through AFL Coach.
  - 2.9 Coaches and voluntary umpires are encouraged to attend education and information sessions provided by the HFL, the SANFL or AFL Coach.

3. Player safety is priority.
  - 3.1 Oval surface and equipment inspections must be undertaken by the home club prior to commencement of a match, or series of matches on the same day, to ensure the area is clean and free from hazards. [Hard copy Checklist](#) or available on the AFL Match Day App.
  - 3.2 Players must wear a mouthguard during a match.
  - 3.3 Protective headwear is allowed where it is fit for purpose and deemed as safe by the coach and/or umpire (good fit, no loose straps etc.)
  - 3.4 Gloves are only allowed where a medical certificate is provided and the umpire and/or coach deem them safe for use.
  - 3.5 At least one qualified First Aid Officer and/or Sports Trainer must be in attendance at all matches.
  - 3.6 Coaches must have a DCSI [Working with Children Check](#). Club Officials are also encouraged to have this clearance.
4. Good sportsmanship is to be modelled by all match officials as per the *HFL Modified Football Program Code of Conduct for Officials*.
  - 4.1 Team captains must shake hands/elbow with each other and the umpire prior to the match commencing and at the end of the match.
  - 4.2 Teams must line up and shake hands, high five or elbow with opponents after a match.
  - 4.3 Teams may choose to sing team songs but must do so with respect to the opposition team.
  - 4.4 Swearing, violence, arguing with an umpire or other unnecessary behaviour will not be tolerated. An umpire may send a player off the ground for up to one quarter of play. The umpire may extend this up to the remainder of the game for severe or repeated cases.
5. The Hills Football League will set the programme of matches and carnivals for the season.
6. Cancellation and/or forfeit of matches may occur from time to time for the following reasons.
  - 6.1 Where a team is unable to participate in a match with enough players (even with the assistance of the opposition team and the fair play rule).
  - 6.2 Where there is an emergency situation or unexpected event that impacts the team/s.
  - 6.3 Where inclement weather impacts the health and safety of the players.
    - 6.3.1 The home club is responsible for the decision to delay/cancel a match due to inclement weather.
    - 6.3.2 Clubs must take into account the [AFL National Extreme Weather Policy](#) and their relevant club policy.
    - 6.3.3 Clubs must take into account the impact of heavy rain, wind and hail exposure on young players.
    - 6.3.4 Clubs must be aware of weather conditions in their area and make contact with opposition teams as early as possible.
7. Recording of match details may occur and can be submitted to the HFL in the directed format. Records may include; match results, best players, goal kickers.
8. All disputes are to be received by the HFL in writing as soon as possible following the trigger for the dispute.



# MODIFIED FOOTBALL PROGRAM (U8-U11) CODE OF CONDUCT FOR OFFICIALS

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The HFL Modified Football Program allows players to learn the game in a safe environment that introduces skills and game rules gradually as they progress through the age groups. It is the responsibility of officials and parents to support and ensure a safe environment for the players.

As such, the following is to be adopted by all clubs:

## **BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS**

The HFL supports the [Play by the Rules](#) guidelines. Officials must contribute to creating a positive sporting environment by being good role models. To do this, officials (coordinators, coaches, team managers, runners and umpires) must:

### **Place the safety and welfare of kids above all else**

- Be aware of and support the return to play guidelines.
- Address behaviour that offends community standards or is against the law (for example, racial vilification, sexual harassment, common assault).

### **Encourage fair play**

- Always be fair, impartial and consistent.
- Encourage and praise good sporting behaviour.
- Emphasise trying hard and having fun, not only winning.

### **Communicate well**

- Communicate honestly, generously and fairly.
- Express decisions clearly.
- Keep your emotions in check and maintain composure.
- Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake.

### **Uphold your club/association's code of conduct**

- Understand, uphold and support your club/association's code of conduct.

### **Keep up to date and organised**

- Know the rules and understand the spirit of the game.
- Be conscientious and punctual.

## **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

“Positive attitudes and conduct make sport enjoyable for everyone. Some people can ruin the experience with poor behaviour.

This can include things like undue pressure, abuse, taunting, poor sportsmanship, foul language, harassment, bullying, victimisation and more. It can be verbal, written, physical or emotional.

Poor behaviour can occur in many places - during play, on the sidelines, at training, in the clubhouse or outside of the sporting arena.

It can be coaches, players, parents, spectators, officials or administrators that behave poorly. Any one of these people, children or adults, can be the victim of poor conduct too.

Poor behaviour stems from a lack of respect. Showing respect is so important, particularly for young people. It's important to teach respect for coaches, team mates, officials and anyone else involved in your sport.” [Play by the Rules.](#)

Please refer to the below resources to assist and guide incident management.

Informal processes must be managed as quickly as possible following the incident.

Formal submissions must be made to the HFL as soon as possible following the incident. Formal submissions will be assessed and managed on a case-by-case basis.

## **RESOURCES**

[Dealing with a complaint](#)

[Informal process](#)

[Formal process](#)

**THIS IS A GAME  
WE ARE HERE  
TO HAVE FUN!**

**THE OFFICIALS AND COACHES  
ARE VOLUNTEERS**



**LET KIDS  
BE KIDS**

**STOP POOR SIDELINE  
BEHAVIOUR IN  
JUNIOR SPORT**

