

2026 Football West Key Competition Rule Changes



Junior Rules				
Article & Paragraph	Current Rule	Action	New Rule	Rationale
Article 7, paragraph 7	<p>If a Club has multiple Teams within the same age group, a maximum of two Players from a higher ranked Team may play for the next lowest-ranked Team on any given weekend, subject to any Competition-specific player movement rules. These Players may vary each week.</p> <p>Example: If a Club has Teams in Under 14s JDL 1, JDL 3, and JDL 4, a Player from JDL 1 may move down to JDL 3, but not to JDL 4.</p>	<i>Amendment</i>	<p>Players are eligible to play for any team in one age group but can only play for 1 team in that specific age group on any match week, for example, a club with a 13D1, 13D3 and 13D5, may play for any team on any given weekend but only that 1 team</p>	<p>This rule ensures flexibility for Clubs while maintaining fairness and competitive integrity across the age group. Allowing Players to be eligible for any Team within the same age group gives Clubs the ability to manage injuries, availability issues, and player development needs.</p> <p>However, restricting a Player to only one Team per match week prevents Clubs from gaining an unfair advantage by moving the same Player across multiple Teams in the same round. It also supports consistent team identity, avoids overuse of Players, and ensures opposing teams compete under fair and predictable conditions.</p>
Add to article 7	n/a	<i>New Rule</i>	<p>2 - Players are eligible to play in 2 different age groups in the same match week, if the player is age eligible for both</p> <p>3 - Players that are playing in an age group below their usual team, must only represent the highest ranked team in the lower age group.</p> <p>Rules in paragraph 1 do not apply in match week 9 and match week 18 of the league competition</p>	<p>This rule is designed to balance player development, squad flexibility, and competitive fairness across the season. Allowing players to participate in two age groups when age-eligible gives Clubs practical support for managing injuries, absences, and player development needs.</p> <p>However, requiring players who move into a lower age group to only represent the Club's highest-ranked team in that age group prevents competitive imbalance and protects the integrity of lower-ranked divisions.</p>
Article 16, Paragraph 7	7. In 2025 the placement of Teams for the JDL Under 13s Competition will be determined via rankings in a pre-season grading Competition as set out in Article 18	<i>Remove Paragraph</i>	n/a	No more U13 grading as we have had a year with new junior system
Article 18	Under 13s grading	<i>Remove Article</i>	n/a	No more U13 grading as we have had a year with new junior system
Article 27, paragraph 1	Once a Player has started (or been listed on a Team List)f) in nine (9) Matches of NPLWA-M, State League, Amateur League or Metro League competition in the Under 18s, Under 23s/Reserves or First Team, they are no longer eligible to participate in the JDL and the JCL during the same Competition Season.	<i>Remove Paragraph</i>	n/a	<p>This rule has been updated to better support player development and provide Clubs with practical flexibility.</p> <p>Allowing age-eligible players to move between two age groups encourages progression, such as JDL players gaining valuable experience in SL or NPL environments.</p>

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Article 27, paragraph 2	A Club must notify Football West in writing, confirming that Player's choice to play either NPL, State League, Amateur League, Metro League or Junior Boys League before that Player may participate in any further Matches. Each Club is responsible for monitoring the number of Matches played by each of that Club's Players.	Remove Paragraph	n/a	This requirement is being removed because Clubs and Football West no longer restrict Players to a single competition pathway. Players are now allowed to participate in both junior and senior competitions, supporting development and providing greater playing opportunities.
Article 27, paragraph 3	Once a Player has taken the field of play in a NPL or State League Match for the First, Under 23s, Reserves or Under 18s age groups, Amateur League or Metro League that Player is not eligible to participate in the Junior Boys League for a Team below Under 15s JDL Division 3 during the same Competition Season.	Remove Paragraph	n/a	Players who participate in State League or NPL competitions are considered to be operating at a significantly higher standard than social-level football. Allowing these Players to participate in social competitions could compromise the integrity and fairness of those competitions, as their skill level would give their team an undue advantage.
Article 27, paragraph 4	A Player may not play in any age group of the NPL or State League and any age group of the JCL League on the same weekend.	Amendment	<i>Once you play a State League or NPL game in U18s, Reserves, U23s or First Team, you may not play JCL</i>	Players who participate in State League or NPL competitions are considered to be operating at a significantly higher standard than social-level football. Allowing these Players to participate in social competitions could compromise the integrity and fairness of those competitions, as their skill level would give their team an undue advantage.
Article 27, paragraph 5	No JDL Division 1 or 2 Player may play in the JCL, No JDL Division 3 and below player can play below JCL Division 3 unless the relevant Club has applied for an exemption to this rule in writing to, and received written consent from, Football West. Football West will only consider granting such an exemption if the applying Club's next highest placed Team is below the JCL Division 3. For the purposes of this Article 25, a Player will be deemed to be an JDL Player if that Player has appeared on the Electronic Match Card of that Club's JDL Teams on at least 50% of that Player's Matches (if they have played more than two matches) or if they are listed on the Player Roster for that JDL Club.	Amendment	Any player who is defined to be a JDL player, may not play JCL For the purposes of this Article 25, a Player will be deemed to be an JDL Player if that Player has appeared on the Electronic Match Card of that Club's JDL Teams on at least 50% of that Player's Matches (if they have played more than two matches)	The change reflects the principle that JDL (Junior Development League) is a higher standard of competition than JCL (Junior Community League). Restricting JDL Players from participating in JCL ensures that lower-tier competitions remain fair and competitive, protecting the integrity of those leagues.; It also reinforces the pathway structure: JDL provides a development-focused environment for advanced players, while JCL caters to a broader participation level. Allowing JDL Players to drop into JCL could create an unbalanced competition and undermine both the competitive and developmental objectives of the league structure.
Article 27, paragraph 6, all of Article 28	JDL Division 1 and 2 Teams will be required to submit a Player Roster with no more than sixteen Players listed.	Remove Paragraph and remove article	n/a	Rosters are being removed from the rules because they are not actively used or referenced during the season. Removing this requirement simplifies administration, reduces unnecessary record-keeping, and focuses eligibility verification on actual match participation rather than static lists.

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Article 28, paragraph 8	A Player may move between JDL Boys Clubs and play in the JDL Boys Div 3 or above for the remainder of the Competition Season as long as they move before 12:01pm on 30 April 2025.	<i>Amendment</i>	A JDL player may move to another JDL club before 7 th of May 2026 12.01pm OR If outside this date, it requires approval from the old and the new club AND Football West	Section A aligns the rule with the competition calendar, ensuring consistency and clarity for scheduling purposes. Section B emphasizes flexibility and player enjoyment. As long as both Clubs agree, there is no issue with player participation across teams, supporting the principle that players should be able to enjoy their football wherever opportunities arise, while still maintaining cooperative management between Clubs.
Article 29, paragraph 4	Once a Junior Girl's Player has taken to the field in nine (9) Matches of the Women's League. Following the ninth Match for the Women's League, the Player must choose whether to play in either the Women's League or the Junior Girls Team(s) for which they are eligible subject to paragraph 3 above.	<i>Remove Paragraph</i>	n/a	Junior girls participating in Women's League matches is not considered to create a competitive advantage, as the focus is on supporting participation rather than gaining an unfair edge. Allowing movement between Junior Girls and Women's League teams helps Clubs manage player numbers and ensures matches can proceed smoothly. This flexibility encourages participation and provides development opportunities without compromising competition integrity.
Article 29, paragraph 5	A Club must notify Football West in writing, confirming that Player's choice to play either Junior Girl's or Women's League before that Player may participate in any further Matches. Each Club is responsible for monitoring the number of Matches played by each of that Club's Players.	<i>Remove Paragraph</i>	n/a	Junior girls participating in Women's League matches is not considered to create a competitive advantage, as the focus is on supporting participation rather than gaining an unfair advantage. Allowing movement between Junior Girls and Women's League teams helps Clubs manage player numbers and ensures matches can proceed smoothly. This flexibility encourages participation and provides development opportunities without compromising competition integrity.

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General Rules				
Article & Paragraph	Current Rule	Action	New Rule	Rationale
New rules, 30.14/3	If the shirts or socks of the participating Teams are alike or similar or are in the opinion of the Match Official likely to cause confusion, and the away Team is unable to change that part of its attire which is causing that confusion, then the Match Official may elect for the Match not to proceed. For the avoidance of doubt, bibs may not be worn.	<i>Amendment</i>	If the match does not proceed due to these circumstances, the offending team is to be forfeited, unless Football West in its discretion determines otherwise.	<p>It is unfair for a Club to arrive prepared for a match only to be disrupted because the opposing Club has not taken proactive steps, such as bringing a spare kit.</p> <p>The home Club should not bear the stress or burden of rescheduling or managing such avoidable issues. This rule ensures Clubs take responsibility for being match-ready and protects the integrity and smooth operation of scheduled fixtures.</p>
New rules, 38	n/a	<i>New Rule</i>	Additional rule, Football West reserves the right to direct any host venue to supply additional ground marshals as required - this is predominantly to be used when clubs are hosting outside of these competitions OR if there is a potentially high-risk match	<p>This rule allows Football West to ensure the safety and smooth operation of matches by directing host venues to provide additional ground marshals when necessary. It is particularly important for matches hosted outside standard competitions or for games identified as potentially high-risk.</p> <p>By having the authority to require extra marshals, Football West can better manage crowd control, minimize safety risks, and support Clubs in maintaining a secure and well-organized match environment.</p>
Add to Match Scheduling Policy	n/a	<i>New Rule</i>	Clubs must agree to play a rescheduled game in the time frame specified by Football West. If clubs cannot agree a new date within this timeframe, FW will determine the new date and time of the match.	<p>This rule is designed to eliminate situations where Clubs forget to schedule matches or intentionally delay rescheduling to gain a competitive advantage, such as waiting until after a professional window opens.</p> <p>By enforcing clear expectations around rescheduling, the rule ensures fairness, prevents strategic manipulation, and maintains the integrity and continuity of the competition.</p>
Add to general	n/a	<i>New Rule</i>	<p>In any competition which has a First team and linked reserves/ U18 teams, the sanction for a forfeit in the reserves or U18 will stay the same.</p> <p>Should a club forfeit the first team match as well, the first team will additionally be deducted 6 Competition points and pay double the listed fine amount.</p>	<p>This rule aims to prevent Clubs from forfeiting matches without a valid reason. The expectation is that a Club's first team takes priority; forfeiting at that level would mean two full teams of players are unavailable, which should be highly unlikely.</p> <p>This also is an added deterrent to clubs who forfeit first team games at the end of the season when they have nothing to play for and do not wish to travel. Several instances over the last few years have had an impact on surrounding teams when clubs behave in this manner and weaken the integrity of the league.</p> <p>By reinforcing this hierarchy, the rule maintains fixture integrity and avoid unnecessary disruptions to the competition.</p>

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NPL Rules				
Article & Paragraph	Current Rule	Action	New Rule	Rationale
17.1.3	<p>1.1.1 General entry admission fees may be charged up to the maximum amounts listed below:</p> <p>1.1.1.1 General Entry - \$10</p> <p>1.1.1.2 Students, Pensioners or concession holders with evidence of status - \$5</p>	<i>Amendment</i>	<p>Change to \$15 for general, \$7.50 for students, pensioners or concession holders</p>	<p>Strong suggestion and agreed on by the NPL standing committee.</p> <p>This brings matches in line with events at Sam Kerr and is a maximum limit, but clubs do not have to charge the full amount.</p>
Appendix C of NPLWA Current Rules	<p>Home grown player</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Loyalty players</p> <p>Minimum 5</p>	<i>Amendment</i>	<p>Home grown player</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Loyalty players</p> <p>Minimum 8 combined</p>	<p>Discussed and voted in by FW Women's standing committees. This rule was brought in midway through 2025 season based on feedback from clubs and is being increased by 1 player in 2026 with the intent to increase by a further 2 to 10 in future years.</p>
Appendix C of NPLWA Current Rules	n/a	<i>New Rule</i>	<p>Special dispensation for promoted clubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extra player in switching category and A-League W • 2 Extra players if switched from NTC • No homegrown and loyalty requirements in year 1 • 50% requirement in year 2 	<p>This rule is intended to give newly promoted Clubs the best possible chance to transition successfully into the higher competition.</p> <p>By reducing the common cycle of the same Clubs being promoted and then immediately relegated, the rule helps stabilise divisions, supports long-term development, and creates a more competitive and sustainable league structure overall.</p>
Appendix C of NPLWA Current Rules	NTC are exempt from Player Roster requirements.	<i>Amendment</i>	NTC must provide a roster however aren't required to meet PRC requirements	While NTC will not be able to meet the criteria for Loyalty player or Homegrown player due to the nature of the program, the introduction of a roster for NTC helps close loopholes in relation to players leaving the NTC program. As they will now be listed on a roster they will also need to be roster players at their new club and it is easier to track the 3 player rule.
Appendix C of NPLWA Current Rules	A player who has been previously listed on an NPLWA-W PRC in either the current season or previous season must be listed on the PRC regardless of age.	<i>Amendment</i>	A player who has been previously listed on an NPLWA-W PRC in either the current season or previous season must be listed on the PRC if they are over 18	This is to help alleviate scenarios before the new PRC rules were introduced, when clubs would list young players on a roster (to make up numbers). This then ties a player to being listed on player roster in all following years. However, the introduction of this rule would allow those players under the age of 18 to not be listed on a roster and be part of a 21's team. This gives them more opportunity to play at the appropriate level. This rule still applies for players 19 and over.

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Night Series Rules				
Article & Paragraph	Current Rule	Action	New Rule	Rationale
Article 8	<p>1. Entry is mandatory for and limited to NPLWA-M Clubs. Any Club that refuses to enter a relevant Team in the NPLWA-M Night Series Competition may be subject to a sanction at the discretion of Football West.</p> <p>2. The Teams will be organised into two (2) groups of six (6) Teams.</p> <p>3. Host Clubs will be selected to conduct group games.</p> <p>4. The Teams from each group will play every other Team in the same group once.</p> <p>5. The two highest placed Teams from each group will progress to the knockout stage.</p> <p>6. The winners of each group will play the runners-up of the other group in the Semi-Final.</p> <p>7. The winners of the semi-final will play each other in the NPLWA-M Night Series Grand Final.</p>	Amendment	<p>Entry is mandatory for NPL Clubs. Any Club that refuses to enter a relevant Team in the NPL Night Series Competition may be subject to a sanction at the discretion of Football West.</p> <p>Teams will be organised into three (3) groups of four (4).</p> <p>Matches will be played at venues determined by Football West.</p> <p>Teams from each group will play every other team in the same group once.</p> <p>The winner of each group and the best runner-up in the group stage will compete in the semifinal.</p> <p>The winners of the semi-final will play each other in the NPL Night Series Grand Final.</p>	<p>Changed format of 2026 NPL Men's night series and agreed upon by Standing Committees - simply clarifying in the rules</p>

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State League Rules				
Article & Paragraph	Current Rule	Action	New Rule	Rationale
Article 13		<i>New Rule</i>	A Professional Player may be registered outside a prescribed registration period if the Player is a goalkeeper, and the Club can supply evidence from a certified medical practitioner declaring that the two goalkeepers (main keeper and backup keeper) is unfit to play at the time of the registration.	This rule ensures clubs can replace goalkeepers in exceptional circumstances when both registered keepers are unavailable due to injury. It allows for a professional goalkeeper to be registered outside the prescribed period, with medical certification, maintaining player safety and competition integrity.

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Amateur Rules				
Article & Paragraph	Current Rule	Action	New Rule	Rationale
Article 18, paragraph 2	<p>To be eligible to participate in a semi-final or final, a Player must have played in a minimum of 6 different fixtures for that Team in question prior to that semi-final or final.</p> <p>This may include participation as a substitute or substituted Player. For clarity this will include participation in Amateur League matches for the Club's Amateur League team in the highest Division.</p>	<i>Amendment</i>	<p>To be eligible to participate in a quarter final, a Player must have played in a minimum of 4 different fixtures for the club prior to that quarter final.</p> <p>To be eligible to participate in a semi-final or final, a Player must have played in a minimum of 6 different fixtures for that club in question prior to that semi-final or final.</p>	<p>The SC have asked to implement the eligibility rules (although at a reduced number) from the Quarter Finals onwards.</p> <p>This rule for the first team cup reflects that there is no higher-level team to impact, and therefore player participation at this level does not distort competition integrity.</p>
Article 23, paragraph 2	<p>To be eligible to participate in a semi-final or final, a Player must have played in a minimum of 6 different fixtures for that Team in question prior to that semi-final or final.</p> <p>This may include participation as a substitute or substituted Player. For clarity this will include participation in Amateur League matches for the Club's Amateur League team in the highest Division.</p>	<i>Amendment</i>	<p>To be eligible to participate in a quarter final, a Player must have played in a minimum of 4 different fixtures for the team prior to that quarter final.</p> <p>To be eligible to participate in a semi-final or final, a Player must have played in a minimum of 6 different fixtures for that team in question prior to that semi-final or final.</p>	<p>This rule is necessary to prevent first team players from participating in the Reserve Cup. Allowing higher-level players to drop into reserve-level cup fixtures would create an unfair advantage and undermine the purpose of the competition.</p> <p>The restriction ensures the Reserve Cup remains fair, competitive, and representative of the players at that level.</p>

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Womens League Rules				
Article & Paragraph	Current Rule	Action	New Rule	Rationale
Article 19, paragraph 4	Each Team will play twenty one (21) rounds. The first section of seven (7) rounds will be known as the grading period, where teams will be fixtured against any teams in the Women's League Central Divisions. At the completion of these rounds, each Team will play a home and away match, with seven (7) other Teams in their Division.	Amendment	Each Team will play twenty one (21) rounds. Each team will play each other 3 times.	<p>Grading has been removed for the 2026 season in response to strong feedback from Clubs and participants. Grading was implemented for the 2025 season due to the removal of teams in the women's league to the new Under 18s girls league now this is not occurring returning to a promotion relegation system is in line with the outcomes of the Women's League review.</p> <p>This change simplifies the competition structure, reduces administrative requirements, and allows for a more flexible and inclusive approach to team placement.</p>
Article 19, paragraph 5 & 6	<p>5. At the conclusion of the grading period, Football West will allocate teams to their appropriate Divisions for the remainder of the season. If there are an uneven number of teams, Football West reserve the right post the grading to make any decisions it sees fit to allocate teams into their relevant divisions or alter the division size.</p> <p>6. Football West will utilise the Competition Management System and other methods of determination including but not limited to Points Per Game System for the grading. All decisions of the grading made by Football West are final and any such changes are at the discretion of Football West.</p>	Remove Paragraphs	n/a	<p>Grading has been removed for the 2026 season in response to strong feedback from Clubs and participants.</p> <p>This change simplifies the competition structure, reduces administrative requirements, and allows for a more flexible and inclusive approach to team placement.</p>
Article 20, paragraph 5	Once a Junior Girl's Player has taken to the field in nine (9) Matches of the Women's League Central (Division 2 and below. Following the ninth Match for the Women's League Central, the Player must choose whether to play in either the Women's League Division 2 or below Team or the Junior Girls Team(s) for which they are eligible. This rule is not applicable to a club's Under 18s team subject to Article 8 Paragraph 9.	Remove Paragraphs	n/a	<p>Allowing a junior player to help out a senior team does not provide a competitive advantage to either side. The junior gains experience and development opportunities, while the senior team benefits from additional numbers if needed.</p> <p>This arrangement supports player growth and match participation without compromising the integrity of the competition.</p>
Article 28, paragraph 2	To be eligible to participate in a semi-final or final, a Player must have played in a minimum of 50% of their Matches for the Team in question prior to that semi-final or final including with its associated Women's League Team.	Amendment	To be eligible to participate in a state cup match, a Player must have played in a minimum of 50% of their Matches for the Team in question.	This rule is primarily designed to prevent NPLW and U21 players from participating in WD1 matches for Clubs that field teams in both competitions. Allowing such movement would create an unfair competitive advantage in the lower-tier competition.

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				The restriction ensures that each competition remains fair and maintains its intended level of challenge and integrity.
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