



GROUND MARSHAL
HANDBOOK
APRIL 2026 _ V1





Importance of a Ground Marshal

The Ground Marshal plays an integral role in providing support to the Clubs, Players, Parents, Coaches, Assistants and Referees participating in Football of a high quality, welcoming and respectful sporting experience.

The Ground Marshal is a nominated club representative who will co-ordinate the efficient completion of match day fixtures. This person must be over the age of 18. A home club should appoint a relevant number of Ground Marshals, proportionate to attendance numbers and the competition.

It is important to note that although the Ground Marshal(s) has a role, it remains incumbent on all stakeholders to ensure a safe and respectful experience for all involved.

This document will provide a scope of duties, ensure the code of conduct is upheld and that RESPECT is in effect for all.

Minimum No. of Ground Marshals per Competition

Competition	Club	Minimum number of Ground Marshals
NPL		
NPL WA Men's First Team	Home	4
NPL WA Men's Under 18's and Under 21's	Home	2
NPL WA Women's First Team and Under 21's	Home	2
Night Series		
NPL WA Men's Teams	Home	4
NPL WA's Women's Teams	Home	2
Men's State League	Home	4
Women's League	Home	2
Amateurs	Home	2
All Night Series	Away	1
Men's State League		
First Team	Home	4
Reserves	Home	2
Under 18	Home	2
Women's League		
All	Home	2
Men's Amateur League		
First Team and Reserves	Home	2
First Team	Away	2
Reserves	Away	1
Men's Senior Sunday		
All	Home	2
Junior League (depending on field of play utilised)		
One field of play	Home	1
More than one field of play	Home	2

How to be a Ground Marshal

- Must be present and wearing a hi-vis vest which clearly indicates the role of Ground Marshal on the vest.
- Must arrive no less than 30 minutes prior to every kick-off.
- This applies to all teams.

Pre-Match Checks

- Ground Marshal must be an adult (over the age of 18 years old)
- Ground Marshal must always wear a clearly identifiable uniform (vest as described above) and be visible.
- Check that balls cannot get through goal nets. Especially bottom of side netting.
- Check that corner flags are safe. Also placed straight up & down and not easily knocked or blown over.
- Safety checks: Ensure 3m clearance from pitch to dangerous objects such as trolleys, ladders, bikes, prams, etc.

Additional Pre-Match Checks for U13-U18 & Seniors

- At least 9 chairs in each technical area.
- Stretcher & ice packs to be placed between technical areas just behind the halfway flag. If there is not enough equipment, be sure to know exactly where to get the stretcher or ice if required.
- Keep an eye on the match balls. They are only to be used for match play.
- Match balls aren't to be used for team warm-ups or other kids to play around with.
- Meet referees and show them to their change room and field of play



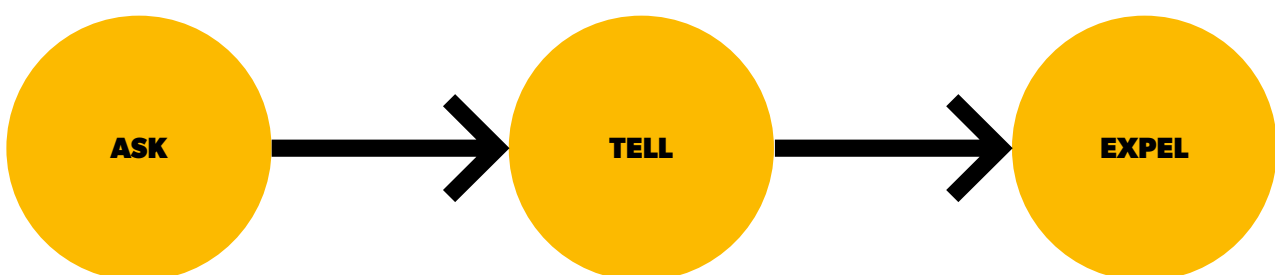
Ground Marshal Duties

Each Team (Home & Away) must appoint Ground Marshal(s) in line with the minimum number of Ground Marshal(s) required for the competition fixture, detailed in the relevant Rules of Competition.

- Reminder that all Ground Marshal(s) must be over the age of 18 years and cannot be working in the technical area coaching or managing a team while on duty as a Ground Marshal.
- The Ground Marshal(s) has the right to retain an authority and control that reflects the positive aspects of Football West and the Clubs' Code of Conduct. It is essential that the code of conduct sign is always in position in an area where there is a high degree of visibility.
- The Ground Marshal(s) is the only person permitted to approach the referees.
- A committee member and/or the clubs MPIO will always be in attendance as the go to person to lend support and advise on required action/s whenever a Ground Marshal feels ill equipped to handle a situation that has arisen.
- The Ground Marshal(s) must not consume alcohol or be under the influence of alcohol, smoke or vape when performing their duties.
- The Ground Marshal(s) must not remove people by force, as this may be referred to or investigated in line with Grievance, Disciplinary, and Tribunal.
- Ground Marshals must not place themselves at risk when managing incidents. Where behaviour escalates or there are safety concerns, they should not approach individuals alone and should seek support from another club official, venue staff or the MPIO.
- In situations involving aggression, refusal to comply or where there are concerns for personal safety, Ground Marshals should disengage and contact appropriate authorities (e.g. venue security, local rangers or police) as required.

How Team Ground Marshal Welcome the Opposition Team(s) and Match Officials

- Introduce yourself to opposition team and officials and be their point of contact with the home club. Please be sure to introduce any other relevant points of contact at the club.
- Introduce yourself to the Referee of your allocated field. Explain where the field, Referee rooms, toilets, canteen and changerooms are located.
- Make it clear to match support and players that shouting negative comments, voicing criticism to players, spectators or pointed questioning of referees is not allowed at your club's home grounds.
- Suggested process for managing the environment could include the following:



Specific Match Duties

- Be mindful where the First Aid facility and stretcher are located IF NOT IN the technical area.
- Ask animal owners to secure unleashed dogs to minimise risk to the animal, Players, Officials and Spectators in the designated areas.
- The Ground Marshal is always to escort the referee from the Referee room/club rooms to the field, including before match, half time and after match.
- When escorting the referee, the Ground Marshal is not to provide feedback on referee performance.
- Position yourself in your assigned area and resume an 'active' observer role circulating the allocated fields to ensure visibility.
- **Where disrespectful/negative behaviour should occur toward a Referee/Assistant Referee the following process should be followed:**
 1. Ask the offending person or group, respectfully, to stop the conduct whilst reminding the person or group that criticism or strong questioning of referees is not allowed.
 2. If the disrespectful/negative behaviour continues, instruct the person or group to cease the behaviour immediately. If possible, at this point, an important step would be to try and get another parent to start videoing the bad behaviour on their phone.
 3. At this point if the person conducting themselves in disrespectful/ negative fashion is not the team coach then you should involve the team coach to assist in ending this scenario. If it is the coach, then ask their Team Manager or the visiting Ground Marshal to assist if not already assisting.
 4. If the disrespectful/negative behaviour continues, expel the offending person or group from the ground immediately. The carpark is the closest they are allowed to be.
 5. Where the offending person or group refuses to heed the reasonable instruction, respectfully inform the Referee that the game is to be temporarily suspended until the offending person or group heed the instruction. If the offending person or group continue to refuse, the Referee may immediately abandon the fixture. Do not engage further, collect playing equipment such as match balls and exit the space accompanying the Referee at the same time.
 6. Report misconduct, including disputes, foul and abusive language by any persons at the ground. Report should be captured in the Incident Report Form, available on the Football West website.
- Keep the exclusion zone (1.5m from sideline) clear of people (including coaches), bags, etc. Only assistant referees are allowed inside, and players during an interchange.
- Keep the area between the technical areas clear. Only Ground Marshals allowed.
- When the spare ball is called for, send someone to retrieve the first ball and bring it back to the halfway flag. If it happens a lot, appoint another volunteer or two as a ball retriever.
- Ensure that subs wear bibs or similar, especially if they are standing.

Guide to Resolving Conflict

Ground marshal(s) may at times deal with volatile situations that require strategies to redirect hostile people and defuse confrontational situations. The first minute of an interaction often determines its direction and outcome and how people react to an interaction is largely dependent on the cues they pick up from you.

Try the following steps:

1. STOP

- Assess the risk and situation as I approach
- Decide whether to send for assistance
- Stay open-minded, intending to defuse the situation
- Remain calm
- Don't argue, accuse, or tell to 'calm down'

2. LOOK

- Are they drunk?
- Have I ever reacted like that?
- When I was that age...how did I behave?
- If I was brought up in that culture/environment would I act the same?
- Are their expectations of the ref, coach, players or club too high?
- Am I the focus of their anger?
- Has the person just displayed aggression towards an individual or group?

3. LISTEN

- Receive other people's comments without interruption
- Show empathy and use statements carefully.
- Validate and clarify.
- Recognise your own prejudices.
- Be quiet

4. RESPOND

- Remain calm and keep your language short and simple.
- Use non-threatening body language and tone of voice.
- Very rarely is using the word: 'NO' going to get you very far with the public.
- It is better to say: 'I need' or we need rather than 'you must' or you 'have to'
- Learn to feel comfortable with phrases such as: (a). 'I can help you better if (b). 'I need you to help me by slowing down just a little...' (c). 'I really don't think your comments.

In Summary

- Listen to what the problem is for them
- Say what the problem is for you
- Focus on the problem, not the person
- Look for answers so everyone gets what they need.
- If the situation can't be resolved in a rationale manner, report the incident.

Reference: Play by the Rules- R02I_Resolving_contlicLsteps_Ground_Marshall.pdf





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