



## SANFL & COMMUNITY FOOTBALL

# RETURN TO PLAY

## COVID IMPACTED COMPETITION MANAGEMENT GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

This guide has been developed to support community leagues and competitions navigate through the challenges that COVID may present in the management of fixturing and re-scheduling.

It aims to remove ambiguity around decision making, reduce the stress and anxiety on administrators/volunteers and clearly outline a way forward in a simple, concise, and easy to understand format.

### GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

- That the health and safety of the community remains the highest priority
- That whilst balanced competition is important, that the opportunity to participate whenever possible be of higher priority (particularly for junior programs and competitions)
- That where possible the Minor Round and Finals shall be conducted within the traditional timeframes
- Equality in the draw be of lesser importance than opportunity to participate whenever possible
- That a premiership will only be awarded once an agreed minimum of games is achieved
- That a minimum viable season which triggers a Finals series be the maximum number of games possible and not influenced by traditional fixture requirements and expectations
- That a Finals Series be played with a minimum of 1 week (1 v 2) and up to a traditional final's series of 4 weeks

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Impact of a COVID interruption on a single round

- Should an entire round of matches be abandoned, no points or percentage shall be awarded to any team
- The season shall recommence with the next scheduled round
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence

#### Impact of a COVID interruption on consecutive rounds

- Should consecutive rounds of matches be abandoned, no points or percentage shall be awarded to any team for the abandoned rounds
- The season shall recommence with the next scheduled round
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence

#### Impact of a COVID interruption on multiple rounds

- Should multiple rounds of matches be abandoned, no points or percentage shall be awarded to any team
- The season shall recommence with the next scheduled round
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence

#### Impact of a COVID interruption on individual matches within any round

- Should individual matches within any round be abandoned, teams shall receive the points allocated for a draw and the average weekly percentage of all participating teams of the same competition from that round of matches
- The individual games shall not be rescheduled
- The season shall continue until the original finals are scheduled to commence

#### Impact of COVID interruption on individual teams/players/officials

- In the instance where players and/or officials are unable to participate in a match or matches due to directed quarantine/isolation/border closures, the Governing League should determine at season commencement what the minimum requirement is to field an individual team (eg 80% of senior playing body available to play)



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#### Return to Play following a COVID interrupted round or match

- If 1-3 consecutive rounds have been abandoned, then the season may recommence at the next scheduled round at the discretion of the governing league.
- If 4-6 consecutive rounds have been abandoned, then the season shall recommence at the next scheduled round following a minimum of 7-day training period at the discretion of the governing league but not less than a minimum 7-day training period
- If more than 6 consecutive rounds have been abandoned, then the season shall recommence at the next scheduled Round following a minimum 14-day training period at the discretion of the governing league but not less than a minimum 14-day training period

#### Impact of a COVID interruption on individual finals matches

- A league may reschedule finals matches at their absolute discretion
- Where time does not permit for a finals game to be rescheduled, should an individual match, excluding the grand final be abandoned, the team with a higher ladder position at the end of the minor round season shall be deemed the premier by virtue of higher ranking

#### Impact of a COVID interruption on a grand final

- A league may reschedule grand final matches at their absolute discretion
- Grand finals should be completed by a date agreed upon by the governing league
- Where time does not permit for the grand final to be rescheduled and the match is to be abandoned, the team who entered the grand final first by way of victory, or if not applicable, by a higher ladder position, at the completion of the minor round season shall be deemed the premier

#### Final qualifications in a COVID interrupted season

- Should a season be impacted on by COVID the governing league may determine qualifications game requirements for players at their absolute discretion at any stage during the season

#### Awards & Votes

- Votes and awards should be awarded for games played and not prorated for missed matches

#### Consequence of a suspension in a COVID interrupted Season

- All suspensions MUST be served in accordance SANFL Community Football Regulations and suspensions apply to games played and not dates

#### Impact of COVID interruption on the Approved Player Points System

- The APPS qualification has been reduced from 25 game to 20 to reflect shortened seasons over 2020 and 2021 The APPS will be reviewed as standard practice again in 2022.

#### Impact of COVID Interruption on the Total Player Payment System

- Regardless of any rounds or matches being abandoned, the Total Player Point System regulations and categories shall not be affected

#### Matters not covered

Should any scenario occur which is not covered by this guide, then the matter shall be referred to the governing league to determine at their absolute discretion. However, SANFL should be consulted and notified of any scenarios that occur outside of this guide, so we can develop consistent advice and support across the community, that not only align with relevant health advice, but uphold the principles outlined in this guide.