



# BY-LAWS AFL BLIND



These By-Laws relating to AFL Blind have been formalised to provide official and binding rules for affiliated AFL Blind competitions nationally.

Governed by the AFL, AFL Blind provides people with blindness and low vision the opportunity to participate in Australian Football.

It is the responsibility of each state to develop their own by-laws for their affiliated AFL Blind competitions as appropriate, consistent with these By-Laws, and ensure that all appointed officials and players are fully aware of the contents of these By-Laws as well as any competition By-Laws, to enable the competition to be conducted efficiently and in the true spirit of sportsmanship.

As part of the AFL's recognition as the governing body responsible for the management and development of Australian Football, the AFL is committed to being accountable at the national level for providing all persons with technically and ethically sound sport programs, policies and services. These By-Laws have been prepared having regard to that commitment and are formally endorsed by the AFL.

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## 1. **Definitions**

In these By-Laws:

- (a) **MATCH** means a match played in an AFL Blind competition.
- (b) **POLICY HANDBOOK** means the National Community Football Policy Handbook (available [here](#)).
- (c) **PLAYER** means a player registered to play and/or participate in AFL Blind.
- (d) **TEAM** means a registered team competing in an AFL Blind competition.

The definitions set out in Policy Handbook will otherwise apply.

## 2. **Effect of National Community Football Policy Handbook**

The Policy Handbook will apply to AFL Blind unless expressly stated otherwise. To the extent of any inconsistencies between the Policy Handbook and these By-Laws, and where the application of a specific section of the Policy Handbook is clearly unworkable when applied in conjunction with these By-Laws, these By-Laws will take priority.

## 3. **Naming**

The adapted version of Australian Football for people with blindness and low vision is to be referred to as AFL Blind.

## 4. **Management**

AFL Blind is governed by the AFL who may determine any matter related to the code unless the determination of such matter is otherwise specifically provided for in these By-Laws or the Policy Handbook.

## 5. **Player Eligibility/Classification**

AFL Blind is an adapted version of Australian Football, which supports the participation of people with blindness and low vision. To compete in AFL Blind, the following eligibility and classification provisions apply:

- (a) A Player must be at least 15 years old as at the date of commencement of the relevant AFL Blind competition, unless otherwise approved by the AFL in exceptional and compelling circumstances.
- (b) A Player must have been allocated an eligible IBSA Sport Class in accordance with the AFL Blind Classification Rules Handbook (available on request). Refer to Appendix 1 for the Classification process. It is not sufficient to have a vision impairment.

<b>IBSA SPORT CLASS</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>AFL BLIND POINTS ALLOCATION</b>
B1	Visual Acuity is less than LogMAR 2.60	1
B2	Visual Acuity ranges from LogMAR 1.50 to 2.60 (inclusive); and/or the visual field is constricted to a diameter of less than 10 degrees	2
B3	Visual Acuity ranges from LogMAR 1.40 – 1.0 (inclusive); and/or the visual field is constricted to a diameter of less than 40 degrees	3

- (c) Players will be:
- i. classified into one of three Sport Classes (B1-B3) per above table, based on their level of vision impairment and how it affects the way they perform key Australian Football skills;
  - ii. given a point(s) allocation based on their Sport Class in accordance with the above table.
- (d) The Team point ceiling is the maximum cumulative point value of the six players on the playing field at a given time. A Team must play under the Team point ceiling at all times. The Team point ceiling is 14 points.
- (e) Teams with a player who is under 18 or female will be allowed a 1-point increase in the Team Point Ceiling. This increase is only valid while that player is on the field, a player is only able to use a maximum of 1 point (e.g. if a female player under 18, this will still only be a 1-point increase to Team Point Ceiling)
- (f) The AFL will provide a staff member at the interchange gates, to assist teams with monitoring the total number of points on field for their team before they make an interchange.

## **6. Squad Size**

Each Team must always have six (6) Players on the playing field during each Match, unless otherwise approved by the AFL in exceptional and compelling circumstances.

## **7. Player Code of Conduct**

All Players must comply with the code of conduct set out in Sections 9.1 and 9.2 of the [Policy Handbook](#).

## **8. Coaches and Officials Code of Conduct**

All Coaches and Football Officials must comply with the code of conduct set out in Sections 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 (for Coaches) of the [Policy Handbook](#).

## 9. Points

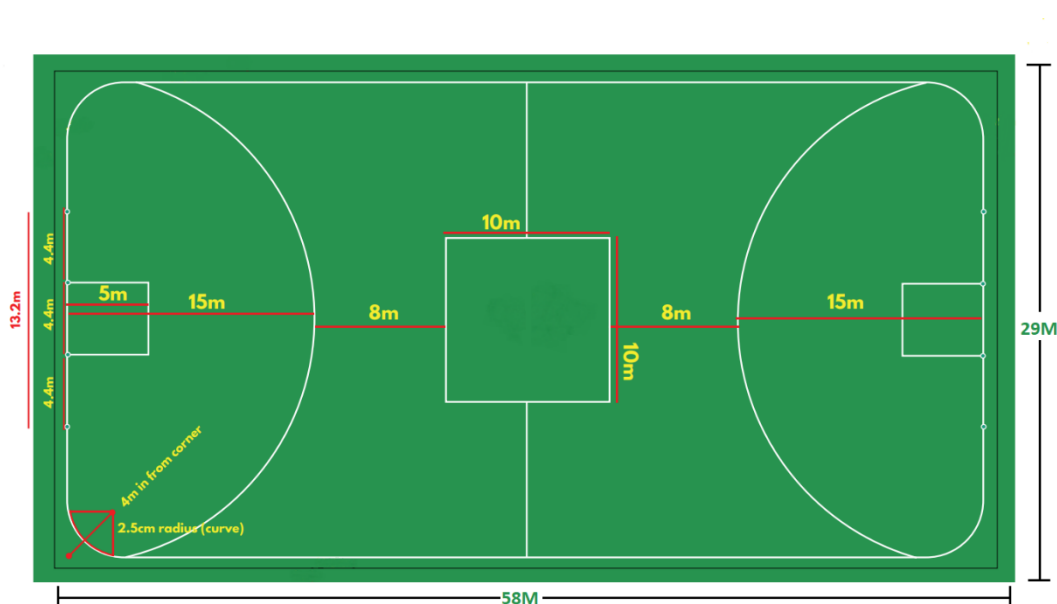
Points will be awarded for all AFL Blind Matches as follows:

- iii. Win – 4 Points
- iv. Draw – 2 Points
- v. Loss – 0 Points
- vi. Forfeit To – 4 Points
- vii. Forfeit Against – 0 Points

## 10. Playing Field

Each Match is recommended to be played on an indoor field, as per the specifications in the below diagram:

58 meters x 29 meters. 4.4meters in between each goal post.



## 11. Identifying Players

- (a) Each Player will wear coloured wristbands to identify their Player classification. Each Player is to wear a thick wristband on each wrist: White = B1, Red = B2, Blue = B3.
- (b) Should a Player not be wearing a wristband on each wrist, a free kick against will be awarded against the offending team.
- (c) B1 players must wear an eye mask too. Should a B1 Player not be wearing an eye mask, a free kick against will be awarded against the offending team.

## 12. Football Requirements

The Footballs used in each Match will be as follows: Audible Football Sherrin Size 4.

## 13. Length & Timing of Matches

- (a) All Matches will be played with no time on. The only time the clock may be stopped during a Match will be as follows:
- i. In the final quarter after any score. The clock is to stop after the goal umpires signal, with the clock to turn back on once the football is brought back into play following a behind. Or, once the football leaves the field umpires hand at the centre ball up following a goal. It is the responsibility of the score bench to activate time on and off following a behind or goal.
  - ii. At the Umpire's discretion to uphold the integrity of the Match (e.g. injury/time wasting).

Should a Team query whether the clock should be stopped, they need to approach the field umpire first, who will then consult with the score bench. Players are not to approach the score bench directly. If it is deemed the clock has been stopped prematurely or wasn't stop at all, the field umpire has the power to adjust the time clock with the score bench before resuming play.

- (b) Matches will include four (4), 10-minute quarters with four (4) minute quarter and three-quarter time breaks and a six (6) minute half time break.
- (c) Timekeepers shall sound the siren (1 blast) one (1) minute prior to and at the commencement of time for each quarter/half.
- (d) Teams are not permitted to leave the playing field during any of the intervals.

## 14. Rule Adaptations

AFLB will adhere to the Laws of Australian Football with the following adaptations and adjustments:

- (a) Disposal
- i. Should a Player not have the physical ability to complete a handball, for example, hemiplegia on one side of the body, that player is able to throw the football in an underarm manner. When throwing the football it must remain under shoulder height for the disposal to be legal.

(b) Scoring

To ensure an inclusive environment, scoring amounts will differ depending on a player's classification.

- ii. B1: Goal = 18 points, Behind = 12 points
- iii. B2: Goal = 9 points, Behind = 3 points
- iv. B3: Goal = 6 points, Behind = 1 point

Field umpires must indicate any score kicked throughout the game verbally to the score bench, to support with adding the correct score in line with the scoring Player's classification.

(c) Scoring Zone

Players will only be able to score inside their scoring zone on the field of play. When the football is in a Team's scoring zone, the goal umpire must rattle the rattlers, to be positioned in the centre of the goal posts. The rattlers assist

Players identify the centre of their goals and will indicate to Players that the football is inside the scoring zone, therefore allowing a shot at goal.

If a Player has taken a mark or been awarded a free kick inside their scoring zone, they are permitted to take a set shot at goal and kick from outside the scoring zone.

If a shot on goal is made outside the scoring zone during general play, and crosses the goal line, no score will be awarded. The umpire will provide a free kick against the attacking team, with the defending team to take the free kick at the top of their defensive scoring zone (top of the arch), not at the goal line. The same outcome will apply, if the football is possessed by the attacking team into their attacking zone, with the football incidentally not being touched by any of the attacking team players.

(d) Ball Up

A Player may not take full possession of the football at a ball up. The football must go to another Player or touch the ground before the Player winning the ball up can take possession of the football. A free kick against will be paid to the Player who takes possession of the football out of the ball up.

Players contesting the ruck are to do so by a standing start. Any type of run up is prohibited. A free kick against is to be awarded should a Player take a running start to a ruck contest.

When the field umpire throws the ball up, they must ask the Players in the ruck if they are ready, rucks should start with their feet together, similar to a 'ball-up' in basketball. When the umpire feels that the players are ready, they yell 'PLAY' and proceed to throw the ball up. A free kick against will be paid to a Player who does not contest the ball up from a standing start.

(e) Buzzer off

In the situation where the buzzer in the football turns off, the umpire is to stop play, turn the buzzer back on, and throw the ball up to recommence play. The ball up is to take place on field where the umpire first hears the buzzer turn off. If a Team is clearly in possession of the football when the buzzer turns off, they will retain possession when play recommences.

(f) Hit roof/fan

During general play, should the player disposing of the football hit the roof, a free kick against is to be awarded against the player disposing the football.

During a kick out or shot on goal, if the football hits the roof, the umpire is to stop play and throw the ball up. The ball up is to take place on the field inline where the football contacted the roof/fan.

(g) Tackling

- i. Tackling is prohibited. A free kick will be awarded against should a Player tackle another Player.

- ii. The equivalent to a tackle is a touch with two hands. A Player must not grab or tackle another Player.
- iii. The umpire is to yell 'tackle' once they feel the ball carrier has been touched/tackled.

(h) Shepherding

- i. Shepherding and bumping are prohibited. Should a player commit a shepherd or bump, a free kick against will be awarded.

(i) Too Far

- i. A player may stay in possession of the football for a maximum of 15 steps before they need to dispose of the football. Should a Player bounce the football or exceed the maximum step limit, a free kick will be awarded against the ball carrier.

(j) Holding the Ball

- i. If the ball carrier is touched/tackled, without prior opportunity, the umpires need to call out 'tackle', and the player must dispose of football straight away. If they don't, it his holding the football and a free kick is to be awarded against the ball carrier.

If the ball carrier has had prior opportunity, and is touched/tackled, it is holding the football and a free kick against is to be awarded.

Umpires are to approach the 'holding the ball' rule with a commonsense approach, having regard to the classification of the Players involved, before 'holding the ball' is adjudicated.

(k) Tapping off the Ground

- i. Tapping the football out in front of yourself to gain an advantage, is deemed to be prior opportunity. If a Player picks up the football after tapping it to themselves, and is then touched/tackled, the Player loses the right to dispose of the football immediately and will be penalised for 'holding the ball'.

(l) Handballing to yourself

- i. Handballing the football out in front of yourself to gain an advantage, is deemed to be prior opportunity. If a Player catches or picks up the football after handballing it to themselves, and is then touched/tackled, the Player loses the right to dispose of the football immediately and will be penalised for 'holding the ball'.

(m) Out of bounds

- i. Where a venue has safety nets around the perimeter of the playing field, where the ball is always in play, there is the possibility the football can dribble from within the field of play and around/behind a point post, where the football doesn't cross the goal line. In the event of this, there will be a ball up ten metres into play, in-line with the point post where the football rolled behind originally.

- (n) 5 Metre Penalty
- i. A 5-metre penalty may be applied on top of a free kick at the Umpire's discretion.
- (o) Player Safety
- i. When a Player is attempting to play the football, players must yell out the name of their team. Failure to do so, will result in a free kick awarded against the infringed Player.
- (p) Spirit of the Game
- i. Should a Player use their voice to deliberately deceive their opponent, a free kick-against will be awarded. For example, yelling at an opponent whilst having a set shot for goal.
  - ii. Should Players breach this Spirit of the Game By-Law, a 5-metre penalty or a free kick against is to be awarded, whichever is necessary at the point in time of the infringement.
- (q) Marking
- Adjustments have been made towards what constitutes a mark, dependent on a Players classification. A Player must make a deliberate play at the football for a mark to be awarded, and a mark cannot be awarded should the football touch a net or wall upon receiving.
- When receiving a kick, the following will apply when the football has travelled a minimum of five (5) metres, and has not been touched in transit:
- i. B1 & B2: The Player must show an attempt to mark the football, and the football has hit above or on a player's arms or hand, on the frontside of the body
  - ii. B3: The Player must mark the football, as per traditional football rules.
- When receiving a handpass, a mark can be awarded:
- i. B1: Travelled a minimum of one (1) metre and has not been touched in transit. For a mark to be awarded, the Player must make a deliberate play at the football, where the football can hit the Player above the knees and below the shoulders, without full control of the ball.
  - ii. B2: Travelled a minimum of three (3) metres and has not been touched in transit. The Player must take full control of ball for a mark to be awarded.
  - iii. B3: A mark will not be awarded to a B3 Player if they receive a handpass. Traditional rules when receiving a handpass will apply to B3 players.
- (r) Starting Structure
- i. At the beginning of each quarter and after every goal, Players from each team must set up in a 2-2-2 structure (like the AFL 6-6-6 rule). Two defenders must be in the defensive arc. Two midfielders must be between the arcs. Two forwards must be in the forward arc. A free kick will be awarded if a Team is not in the correct starting positions. The free kick will be taken from the centre and awarded to the ruckman.
- (s) Kicking Off the Ground
- i. Intent to move the football forward by kicking off the ground will be penalised with a free kick against.

(t) Unfair Advantage

- i. Should the ball carrier use the perimeter nets to gain an unfair advantage, for example, disposing of the football so it bounces towards a teammate or back to themselves, the umpire is to pay a free kick against the 'ball carrier'. The free kick is to take place from where the player disposed of the football.

(u) Blocking

- i. A defending Player must not intentionally stand in front of a B1 Player prohibiting them a clear path to access the football. A minimum of 3 metres in front of the B1 Player, in the direction of the Player with the football, must be provided. A Player standing the mark cannot be considered as blocking a B1 Player, should the distance between the Player on the mark and the B1 Player be less than 3 metres.
- ii. Should a defending Player unintentionally be standing in the 'clear path', the umpire is to issue a warning to move. Failure for the defender to move after a warning will result in a free kick.
- iii. A defending Player can stand next to or behind a B1 player and can defend the football once it is in motion. The 'Player Safety' rule is always in play, and the defending Player must call out the name of their team prior to spoiling the ball.

**15. Umpire Indirect Contact**

- (a) If the football touches an Umpire or any Football Official, and in the opinion of the field Umpire it has affected a score, play will be stopped, and the Umpires will determine if the score should be recorded;
- (b) If the football touches an Umpire or any Football Official, and in the opinion of the field Umpire it has not affected a score, the field Umpire shall call 'Play On' and the football shall remain in play; and

**16. Walkover/Forfeits**

- (a) In the case of there being a walkover or forfeit, the non-forfeiting team will receive four competition points. Teams involved will further receive the average 'for' and 'against' scored, for that round, in their round/division.
- (b) In the event that the average 'for' and 'against' cannot be taken (e.g. all games in the round were forfeited), the score line 30 - 0 will be recorded.

**17. Umpires**

For all Matches, a minimum of one (1) field Umpire and two goal Umpires will be rostered.

## **18. Commentary**

An in-venue PA system may be used, which should be limited to announcing:

- (a) After the field umpire has confirmed a score.
- (b) The total score for each team after score has been registered.
- (c) The time remaining on the clock for the quarter after the total score has been announced.

## **19. Jewellery**

- (a) No jewellery is to be worn on the ground whilst playing. If an Umpire notices a Player wearing jewellery, the Player will be asked to leave the ground and may only come back on once the jewellery has been removed.
- (b) Should the jewellery not be able to be removed, the Player will be required to place tape over the top of it.

## **20. Order Off Rues**

Players may be ordered from the playing field by a field Umpire for breaching the Laws of Australian Football, Policy Handbook or these By-Laws.

## **21. Yellow Card**

- (a) A Player shown a Yellow Card by a field Umpire must immediately leave the playing field and may return once ten (10) minutes of playing time has elapsed since their removal.
- (b) Players receiving a Yellow Card may be replaced.
- (c) If a Player commits a second Yellow Card offence, then the Umpire will show a Red Card.

## **22. Red Card**

- (a) A Player shown a Red Card by a field Umpire must immediately leave the playing field and is not permitted to return to the playing field for the remainder of the game. Players receiving a Red Card cannot be replaced for that Match.
- (b) Should a Player receive two yellow cards or a straight red card from the Umpire, the Player will receive an automatic one (1) Match suspension. The one (1) Match suspension is to be served directly after the game in which the incident occurred. The Tribunal increase any suspension should they deem the matter serious enough.

## **23. Notice of Report**

The head field Umpire may report a Player for breaching the Laws of Australian Football, Policy Handbook or these Rules. The head field Umpire should make their report to the 'Match Manager' at the completion of the Match in which the offence occurred.

## 24. Tribunal

- (a) AFL Blind will have set penalties in place should a Player act outside the Laws of Australian Football, Policy Handbook or these By-Laws. The set penalties are set out below.
- (b) At the AFL's request, the offending Player along with a team delegate must attend a tribunal hearing. The time and location of the tribunal hearing will be communicated to the Team manager from the relevant Player's Team. The tribunal may make any determination it deems appropriate having regard to the set penalties set out below.
- (c) Tribunal Members
  - i. The Tribunal will be made up of no less than two (2) members representing the AFL.
  - ii. The AFL at their absolute discretion may appoint an independent person to sit on the Tribunal and that person will be deemed to be a member of the Tribunal.
- (d) Set Penalty: 1 match penalty
  - i. Attempting to strike another person;
  - ii. Attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg;
  - iii. Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language;
  - iv. Disputing a decision of an Umpire;
  - v. Using an obscene gesture;
  - vi. Engaging in time wasting;
  - vii. Engaging in an act of staging;
  - viii. Engaging in a melee, except where the Player's sole intention is to remove a teammate from an incident;
  - ix. Wrestling another person;
  - x. Interfering with a Player kicking for goal;
  - xi. Intentionally shaking a goal or behind post when another Player is preparing to kick or is kicking for goal or after the Player has kicked for goal and the football is in transit;
  - xii. Wearing prohibited jewellery and equipment, improper uniform or equipment;
  - xiii. Send off from the Match (2 Yellow Cards or 1 Red Card).
- (e) Set penalty: 2 match penalty
  - i. Intentionally or carelessly striking another person;
  - ii. Intentionally or carelessly charging another person;
  - iii. Intentionally or carelessly engaging in rough conduct against an opponent which in the circumstances is unreasonable;
  - iv. Intentionally or carelessly bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front-on when that Player has their head down over the football;
  - v. Intentionally or carelessly tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg;
  - vi. Attempting to kick another person;
  - vii. Intentionally or carelessly scratching another person;
  - viii. Carelessly making contact with an Umpire;
  - ix. Instigating a melee;
  - x. Pinching another person.
- (f) Mandatory tribunal hearing
  - i. Intentionally or carelessly kicking another person;
  - ii. Intentionally or carelessly kneeling another person;

- iii. Intentionally or carelessly head-butting an opponent or making contact to an opponent using the head;
- iv. Intentionally or carelessly eye-gouging an opponent or making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the eye region of an opponent;
- v. Intentionally or carelessly making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of an opponent;
- vi. Intentionally or carelessly making unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an injured Player;
- vii. Intentionally or carelessly scratching another person;
- viii. Intentionally, recklessly or negligently making contact with or striking an Umpire;
- ix. Attempting to make contact with or strike an Umpire or official;
- x. Vilification of another Player, Umpire or official;
- xi. Spitting at or on an Umpire;
- xii. Spitting at or on another person;
- xiii. Using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an Umpire or official;
- xiv. Behaving in an abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an Umpire or official;
- xv. Failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by a field Umpire;
- xvi. Any act of serious misconduct (e.g. king hitting, head butting, etc.).

## **25. Coaches and Officials**

- (a) All Teams have the option of having the following Football Officials present at match day unless specified as required;
  - i. Head Coach (required);
  - ii. Assistant Coach;
  - iii. Team Manager-First Aider-Physio
  - iv. Water Carrier x 2.
  - v. Support Guide – B1 Players Only
- (b) No coaches are permitted to step onto the playing field during play to provide instructions to their Players. Water carriers are only permitted onto the playing field after a goal has been scored. Water carriers must exit the field of play prior to the football being thrown up to start play. Should a water carrier be on the field when the football is thrown up, a free kick is to be awarded against the infringed team.
- (c) For a B1 player, should they wish, they can utilise a support guide out on the field of play.

## **26. Support Guides**

The role of a support guide is to support B1 players engagement with the game. All support guides are to uphold these expectations:

- (a) No physical contact can be made between the support guide and Player unless the support guide foresees a safety issue and needs to move the Player.

- i. Should a support guide use physical contact where there is no safety issue, a warning will be issued, followed by a free kick, and finally a free kick and 5-metre penalty.
  - ii. A support guide may physically direct a B1 player to man the mark, after a behind has been registered.
  - iii. A support guide must not line a B1 player up for their set shot on goal, which is the responsibility of a Player's teammates.
- (b) Verbal instructions are limited to where people are on the field and the positioning of the football on the field. Directing players where to move is not acceptable.
- (c) All support guides must wear a yellow high-vis vest.

## **27. Concussion**

For the avoidance of doubt, Section 19 (Concussion) of the Policy Handbook will apply to AFLB.

## **28. Social Media Policy**

For the avoidance of doubt, Section 12 (Social Media) of the Policy Handbook will apply to AFLB.

## 29. Appendix 1 – Classification Assessment Process Summary

A player seeking a classification for AFLB has two options:

Option 1 Process - Player is NEW to Para-sport and/or does not have a current VI Classification outcome from another Para-sport or Blind -Sport.

<b>Step 1</b>	Player to access AFL VI Medical Diagnostics Information Form.
<b>Step 2</b>	Players make appointment with an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist to complete the form.
<b>Step 3</b>	Player submits the completed form and all additional reports to your appropriate AFL state body.
<b>Step 4</b>	AFL shares the paperwork with a VI Classifier to undertake the Classification Assessment Process. The Classifier provides a Sport Class and Sport Class Status, or requests more information, or requests player to attend Face-to-Face Classification Assessment.
<b>Step 5</b>	Once Classification Assessment is completed, AFL Classification Personnel advise the Player of the outcome and adds the outcome to the AFLB Classification Masterlist.

Option 2 Process - Player has a CURRENT and eligible Sport Class and Sport Class Status from a recognized Para-sport or Blind Sport and is applying for Mutual Recognition in Classification

<b>Step 1</b>	Player completes the AFLB Mutual Recognition in Classification Form and returns it to appropriate AFL state body.
<b>Step 2</b>	AFL and VI Classifier verify the information and determine whether the information will be approved to compete in AFLB.
<b>Step 3</b>	AFL communicate decision on MRC to the Player. If approved, the Player's Sport Class and Sport Class Status will be added to the AFLB Classification Masterlist. If the MRC is not approved, the Player will need to complete the AFL VI Medical Diagnostic Information Form. Refer back to option 1 for process.

