



2026 VRLRA MEMBER HANDBOOK



Last Updated: April 2026

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A Welcome Message from President, Blake Ridge

Dear Members,

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all returning members for the 2026 season, as well as to those joining the VRLRA for the first time. We hope the year ahead is an enjoyable and rewarding one for everyone involved.

It is my pleasure to present the 2026 Operational Handbook. This handbook is a key reference for all VRLRA members and is designed to support you in your officiating responsibilities throughout the season. It not only provides essential information but also reinforces our shared commitment to integrity, fairness, and excellence—standards we expect to be upheld across all levels of the game.

The past year saw continued growth in Rugby League participation across NRL Victoria competitions, with the VRLRA welcoming 63 new registrations. This positive trend is expected to continue into 2026 as both the VRLRA and Rugby League further grow in Victoria.

In 2026, we will continue to place a strong emphasis on referee development, education, and wellbeing. Ongoing coaching, feedback, and training opportunities will be provided throughout the season to support both new and returning members. Our collective aim is to create an environment where our members feel respected, supported, and confident. We encourage everyone to buy in and take advantage of these opportunities to ensure continued development.

I would like to sincerely thank our members for the time, dedication, and effort contributed week after week, as well as your families and friends whose support makes this possible. One important requirement throughout the season is ensuring your availability is kept up to date on the VRLRA Portal. A change to the process means members will now be marked **unavailable by default**, so you will need to actively **make yourself available**. Please work with the Appointments Panel to allow for accurate and efficient appointments.

This handbook has been developed to assist and empower our members by providing the information and resources needed to officiate with confidence. It includes important details such as competition laws, match conditions, payment schedules, and appointments processes, and I strongly encourage all members to read it thoroughly.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Rugby League and for upholding the values and integrity of our great game. By working together, we can ensure that every match is officiated fairly and with respect to all participants.

The VRLRA prides itself on its strong culture and supportive network. If you ever need assistance, want to debrief after a challenging match, or have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to a member of the Executive. Contact details can be found on page 7.

On behalf of the VRLRA Executive, I wish you every success for the 2026 season.

Blake

Section 1 – Introduction

This VRLRA Member Handbook is designed as a tool to assist all new and current Association members to navigate through the many issues, reporting protocols and behaviours of a Rugby League Match Official.

This is the fifth edition of the Handbook (First Edition 2022) which should be part of every Referee's match day equipment as it serves as a reference to Laws of the Game, Safeplay Code, relevant Rules and Regulations of the League to whom we provide a valuable service, and references match day protocols, processes and practices. Whilst we have experienced an incredible increase in members across the Melbourne Metropolitan and Murray Goulburn Leagues, availability remains an issue on a weekly basis; this year, it is hoped that we will have more members available to cover most – or all – matches each weekend.

Match Officials will need to enter their availability into the VRLRA Portal this season, as opposed to their unavailability, a change that will lead to far less declined appointments in Season 2026.

The 2026 Handbook presents the VRLRA Executive with an opportunity to revisit our core functions and the behavioural expectations from all Members, including:

- Dressing appropriately in Association gear (or approved NRL Vic gear) when arriving at match day venues, and when departing after commitments;
- Speaking with respect to all Club officials and participants, even when challenged as a Match Official;
- Always facilitating matches in a respectful, courteous and impartial manner;
- Conversing, when appropriate, with Club Ground Managers – again, always with respect;
- Being supportive of fellow Referees, especially when mistakes may have been made;
- Never using threatening, abusive or foul language when at Club venues – on or off the field;
- Working as a team unit when a Referee and two Touch Judges are appointed to matches;
- Ensuring due diligence – boots and nails are checked, coin toss is completed well in advance of scheduled kick-off time, arrival at the venue is at least 30 minutes prior to kick-off, and that you are the first person ready to start the game – remembering to check that team trainers are in place and that the official table is ready to go;
- Ensuring that you do nothing that may weaken or strain the current positive relationship between Referees and Clubs including, but not limited to, aggressive, over-officious or demeaning behaviour. Remember, they are volunteers giving of their time to the game;
- Individual and group training is both anticipated and expected; players, coaches and team/Club officials place a great deal of time and effort into their performances, so we should do the same. Prepare for every weekend well; prepare for every game well – this is the least that we can do for every participant trying to perform at their peak.
- Submitting reports in a timely manner to ensure members are fully compliant with NRL Victoria's Rules and Regulations.

Executive for Season 2026

Title	Name	Email	Phone
President	Blake Ridge	president@vrlra.com.au	0422 949 644
Vice President	Adam Baumgardner	vicepresident@vrlra.com.au	0409 135 134
Secretary	David Michalowsky	secretary@vrlra.com.au	0420 266 955
Treasurer	William Roache	treasurer@vrlra.com.au	0402 728 371
Executive Assistant	Joanne McFarlane	execassist@vrlra.com.au	0413 932 293

Association Coordinators 2026

Title	Name	Email
Recruitment and Retention	Whytnee Lundberg	-
Marketing and promotions	Brent Van Der Ross	marketing@vrlra.com.au
Appointments Panel	Brian Michalowsky / Brad Levy	appointments@vrlra.com.au
High Performance	Brad Levy	brad-levy@bigpond.com
Gear	Damien Fitzgerald	gear@vrlra.com.au
Social Media	Joanne McFarlane	social@vrlra.com.au
Training and skills	Matthew Hicks	matt@contriveconstructions.com.au
West side training	Matthew Hicks	matt@contriveconstructions.com.au
East side training	David Michalowsky	secretary@vrlra.com.au
North side training	TBC	TBC

Changing of Personal Details

Members must advise the Secretary in writing of any change of details. This may be submitted by email (secretary@vrlra.com.au). **Members need to ensure their details are correct and updated in MySideline.** Much of this information is then entered into the VRLRA Portal to ensure compliance with accreditation, WWCC, Patrons of the Game, and other areas that require cross-checking prior to members being appointed to matches.

This should be done within 14 days of any change of details. A member who has not changed their details and has missed an appointment as a result, will have no cause to complain.

Referees are being encouraged to supply an alternate email address. This email will be used when the initial email bounces. Appointments will be sent to both addresses.

Section 2 – Appointments

- Appointments shall be issued by Wednesday 8 pm. If there is an unforeseen delay, members will be advised.
- **All members are UNAVAILABLE unless they update their availability in the VRLRA portal before Tuesday 8am preceding the upcoming round.**
- Appointments will be entered into the VRLRA Portal, MySideline and sent to all members where an email address exists. Members will be notified by SMS and/or email. Usually, Senior competition appointments will also be posted on the Association’s social media platforms.
- **All members are to accept or decline their appointments for each week via the [VRLRA appointments portal](#). If your appointments are not confirmed in the VRLRA Portal, the fee will not be transferred to the payment system (i.e., you will not be paid).**
- If a member has some clear conflicts of interest, the Executive may decide only to send them their personal appointments.
- Members are required to update their Club commitments (where applicable) in the VRLRA’s “Affiliations” section. Where known, playing details such as Club name, team (age/division/colour) or, in the case of a member also being a coach, sports trainer or club team/club official, as much detail as possible needs to be provided to minimise conflicts and/or incorrect appointments.
- Unless Members advise otherwise, all Referees will be appointed to matches with due regard for location, experience, capabilities and other areas of participation.
- For Final Series in competitive age groups, appointments will be based on “best Referee for the best game” scenario.
- Members are reminded that late changes cause a flow-on effect across the board and should refrain from becoming indisposed unless necessary. Changes on match day must be approved by the Appointments Panel, and confirmed with them by no later than Sunday at 9pm to ensure payments are processed correctly.
- **As per previous years, a fine (amount to be determined by the VRLRA Executive) applies should a Referee not give enough notice or good reason (i.e.: personal emergency etc) for failing to update availability, accept and or decline appointments or fulfil their appointments.**

General Information regarding appointments:

Referees will only be appointed on completion and return of the 2026 availability status form and, if appropriate, their Working with Children number. All WWC details must be entered in MySideline. If renewing or applying for the first time, the Association address (5/18 Bute Street Murrumbeena Vic 3163) can be added on forms so a copy is sent for recording purposes.

Referees will be appointed to fixtures based on the most suitable Referee for the fixture as determined by the Appointments Panel, in 2026 this is Brian Michalowsky & Brad Levy of the VRLRA.

As appropriate, Referees' attitudes, commitment, attendance and participation at training, and general demeanour will be taken into consideration when determining appointments.

On match day, appropriate process/behaviours include:

- Reporting to the Ground Manager (or appropriate official, such as the Match Day Coach) at the ground, no later than 30 minutes prior to the Referee's first appointment of the day and by half-time of the previous match if coming from another ground, as well as reporting to the prior match Referee no later than at the half time break of the previous game.
- Remaining at the ground until the next game has commenced, unless notified by the Appointments Panel. If the next Referee has not arrived by half time of the game prior to his/her appointment, the Appointments Panel should be notified.
- Notifying the Referee Coach (where applicable) at the venue - by telephone - if you will be late to a fixture.
- Being dressed in on-field uniform and ready to check players 20 minutes before the advertised starting time of the fixture.
- Referees must be dressed in Association attire for both on-field and off-field, as per the guidelines.
- Referees must not arrive or leave a ground in their on-field attire unless coming from, or going to, another ground to which they are appointed.
- Respect Protocols – outlined in a separate section of this Handbook – are to be enforced by Match Officials prior to, and at the completion of, each match. It is imperative that teams are, therefore, ready to take the field for the coin toss and handshakes with opposing team players and coaches, several minutes before the scheduled kick-off time.

Touch judges may be appointed to any fixture (Under 13s to Seniors) depending on their age and level of experience.

Eligibility for FINALS appointments will depend on Referees completing appointments in the majority of trial/Pre-Season weeks (when held) and the majority of competition rounds. This will be measured proportionally when a member joins or becomes active mid-season.

Consideration will be given to Referees who miss games due to injuries sustained through Refereeing and training.

CMO reports will be entered online via the CMO Reports section of the VRLRA Portal, and the Referee will be notified when a report has been raised by an Association Coach. Coaches are most likely to raise the written report in subsequent days, and will provide a verbal report on the day; Match Officials must not leave the ground until they have spoken with the coach.

Section 3 – Match Day

Preparation, Arrival and Departure including WWCC

Any member appointed to, or present at a ground, or attending a meeting, training or event in their capacity as a Referee must not wear any item of clothing that is, or could be linked to, a club within NRL Victoria. Any member who is also a player may not wear Refereeing uniforms in their capacity as a player or in the presence of their team.

When a member is acting in an alternate capacity (Player, Coach, Manager, Trainer etc), their behaviour in that role is still considered as reflecting on the Association and shall be subject to the same disciplinary procedures as all members.

No member over the age of 18 may be an Active Referee, Referee Coach or Committee Member without first providing a Working with Children Card as provided by the Victorian Government (unless exempt, e.g., Teachers, Police Officers, etc). A person who turns 18 during the season or joins the Association will have 4 weeks to provide this clearance.

Members must always behave in a manner which reflects well on the Association and its positive relationship with NRL Vic Clubs and volunteer participants.

It is expected that Match Officials will prepare appropriately for all matches, including the arrival at venues at least 30 minutes prior to their first appointed match, and that they will be dressed in Association-provided gear (Association track suit, polo etc.) and that they will leave in the same gear following the last appointed match for the day (unless travelling to another venue to officiate in additional matches).

Prior to the commencement of any match, the Referee needs to sight the relevant Sports Trainers assigned to the game; **the onus will be on the Clubs to ensure trainer compliance, not the Referee.**

For matches 6 and 7 years:

- 1 Trainer (min. League First Aid qualification) for up to 4 matches on an international size field;

For matches 8 and 9 years:

- 1 Trainer (min. League First Aid qualification) for up to 3 matches on an international size field;

For matches 10 – 12 years:

- 1 Trainer (min. League First Aid qualification) per match;

For matches 13 - 15 years:

- 1 Trainer (min. League First Aid qualification) per team, per match;

For matches 16 years and above:

- 1 Trainer (min. Level 1 Sports Trainer qualification) per team, per match.

Shirt Colour	Accreditation
Yellow	LeagueSafe Trainer
Green	League First Aid
Blue	Level 1 Sports Trainer
Orange	Level 2 Sports Trainer

Dismissals and Replacements

It is a requirement that when a player has been formally dismissed from a game, that a dismissal report be completed.

In all cases where there is a replacement (**6-12 years**), dismissal (**13 years and above**) or Code of Conduct breach, the Referee must notify the Secretary (David Michalowsky) via phone call or text message (0420 266 955).

Dismissals and replacements are now handled via online forms located on the “Resources” page on the VRLRA web site. Click the following link to navigate to the “Resources” page: [Resources \(vrlra.com.au\)](http://vrlra.com.au)

Where possible the online form/s should be submitted on the same day/night of the incident taking place, but no later than 10am on the Monday following the match.

Replacement Reports (6 – 12 Years)

It is a requirement that when a player is replaced for the remainder of the game (not for a period of play), that a report be sent – like a dismissal report in senior grades. Again, the online form needs to be submitted within 24 hours of the on-field replacement (but preferably on match day/night).

Referees are to note any dismissal/replacement for the match on MySideline; the Referee need only reference that dismissals/replacements have been accurately included in the match details by the team representatives at the Official Table on match day. They should then complete the more detailed online form of the incident/dismissal.

Incident Reports

Incident Report forms are available online and can be found on the Resources pages of our web site: [Resources \(vrlra.com.au\)](http://vrlra.com.au)

Referees must submit an Association-developed Incident Report if:

- An incident requires reporting, and subsequent action by the VRLRA and/or NRL Victoria;
- The Member is reporting poor match day operations at a venue;
- The Referee has prematurely terminated the match for any reason.

Each report must be accurately completed. It must contain the details of the incident and must be factual. Reasonable effort must be made to identify any person in breach of the relevant Code of Conduct (player, trainer, coach, team official, etc.). If this cannot be confirmed, the report should say that identification could not be confirmed.

Reports should not rely on hearsay when identifying a person. An identification that is done this way should name the person who identified them.

If a game is terminated early by someone other than a Match Official, the Referee should send a note to the Secretary explaining:

- The reason for termination, and
- The person authorising the termination of the game

If you have any questions regarding dismissals/replacements, Code of Conduct or incidents, please contact the VRLRA Secretary (secretary@vrlra.com.au).

Cancellations/Adverse Weather Conditions/Poor Ground conditions

NRL VIC Rules and Regulations - Section 14. Cancellation of Matches, Postponing Matches, and Uncompleted Matches

14. Cancellation of Matches, Postponing Matches, and Uncompleted Matches

- 14.1 Matches may only be cancelled due to the following reasons:
- Closure of grounds by council
 - Ground conditions are determined to be unsafe (see 14.6)
 - Adverse weather (see 14.10)
- 14.2 Any game cancelled by the reasons stated in 14.1 shall be declared No Result and teams allocated competition points as prescribed in 16.1 and a match score of 0-0.
- 14.3 Any game cancelled by the reasons stated in 14.1 may be postponed to be played at a later date subject to written request being made to NRL VIC no later than 5.00pm of next business day after the originally scheduled game. Approval may be considered subject to approval of both competing teams/clubs and availability of referees, otherwise original schedule will remain.
- Clubs must provide confirmation to NRL VIC of agreed time and date of re-scheduled game no later than 5.00pm five (5) business days after originally scheduled game. Should clubs fail to agree or meet these conditions No Result will be recorded against the game as per 14.2.
- 14.4 Any game may be postponed for any other reason deemed appropriate by NRL VIC and played at a later date subject to written request being made to NRL VIC no later than 5.00pm of next business day after the originally scheduled game. Approval may be considered subject to approval of both competing teams/clubs and availability of referees, otherwise original schedule will remain. Clubs must provide confirmation to NRL VIC of agreed time and date of re-scheduled game no later than 5.00pm five (5) business days after originally scheduled game. Should clubs fail to agree or meet conditions of 14.4 the game shall be declared Abandoned with no competition points awarded as prescribed in 16.1.
- 14.5 Any postponed match must be completed with result formally submitted to NRL VIC by 5.00pm of Tuesday immediately prior to the first week of scheduled finals. Any team who confirms in writing with NRL VIC to play a postponed match and does not fulfill its requirements to do so will be deemed to have forfeited the match and all applicable rules under 15 Forfeits shall apply. Should the postponed match not proceed other than for reasons of forfeit the game shall be declared Abandoned with no competition points awarded as prescribed in 16.1.
- 14.6 For a match to be cancelled where ground conditions are determined to be unsafe under 14.1 b., **this shall only be on the basis that the ground is declared unsafe** and not on the basis the ground is not considered to be in most ideal condition for play. A ground can be declared unsafe at any time and can only occur when:
- The Official Ground Manager determines the ground to be unsafe (note 11.4).
 - If both teams declare and agree the ground unsafe.
- 14.7 If only one team declares the ground unsafe and refuses to play this team shall be determined as forfeiting the match.
- 14.8 A referee does not have the authority to declare a ground unsafe and cancel a match.
- 14.9 Referee fees will only be payable for matches cancelled where ground conditions are determined to be unsafe under 14.1 b. This will be the responsibility of the host club. Referees' fees will not be due for matches cancelled for any other reason.

- 14.10 A match may only be cancelled due to adverse weather under 14.1 c. by the referee. Adverse weather is determined as extreme weather that has potential to affect the health and wellbeing of participants (examples being extreme heat, lighting strike, etc.) or conditions become unplayable where it is not possible for players to conduct an ordinary game of rugby league (examples being extreme gale force wind, excessive puddles or muddying where it is not possible to play-the-ball or kick the ball or other basic elements of the game is not possible, etc. Not being able to see lines is not an acceptable reason to cancel or cease playing or stop a match).
- 14.11 A match that has been forfeited for any reason by either team, or once match is started and is unable to be completed due to insufficient number of players in a team (note 15.5), then the match shall not be considered a cancelled match and cannot be postponed to be played at a later date.
- 14.12 Should a match not be able to be completed after commencement (i.e..kick-off has occurred) through no fault or deliberate action of either or both teams then the result shall be the score of the match at the time the match was unable to be continued (note 15.5).

In First Grade matches, if play cannot recommence within forty (40) minutes of when play was unable to continue (Time Off being called) and council restrictions or other key match operational matters do not impede the remaining match time being played – and both teams and Match Officials agree, and are able, may continue to play the remainder of the game.

Player of the Match Votes

Referees who officiate in Senior Men’s (First Grade, Second Grade and Third Grade), Senior Women’s (First Grade and Second Grade) and all competition-age grades from Under 13 to Under 18 Boys and Girls matches are required to allocate “Player of the Match” votes on a 3-2-1 basis.

Votes should be noted by the Referee and sent via the Microsoft Form provided by NRLVIC no later than 12 noon on the Monday following the match. The special online form link will be sent in advance to all registered Match Officials prior to the commencement of Round 1, and on a regular basis from the Association Secretary throughout the season as a reminder.

Tough Love Policy

NRL Victoria takes a zero-tolerance approach on the following:

- (1) Zero tolerance of striking or punching
- (2) Zero tolerance of fighting or melees
- (3) Zero tolerance of attempted striking or punching
- (4) Zero tolerance of Match Official abuse

Players must be dismissed from the field for any of these offences and will be dealt with under the NRL Vic Tough Love Policy by the League.

The full Tough Love Policy is attached at the back of this Handbook (Page 28).

Match Duration and Time-off

The following table outlines the duration of matches and where time-off is taken:

Age Group	Game Time	Time Off	Ball Size	Field Size (meters)	Players on Field	
					Min	Max
Men's 1 st Grade	2 x 40 min (10 min half time)	Y	5 (int)	100 x 68	9	13
Men's 2 nd & 3 rd Grade	2 x 35 min (10 min half time)	N	5 (int)	100 x 68	9	13
Women's 1 st Grade	2 x 30 min (10 min half time)	Y	5 (int)	100 x 68	9	13
Women's 2 nd Grade	2 x 20 min (5 min half time)	N	5 (int)	100 x 68	7	9
Women's League Tag	2 x 25 min (5 min half time)	N	5 (int)	100 x 68	8	11
Men's U20	2 x 30 min (10 min half time)	N	5 (int)	100 x 68	9	13
Boys' U18	2 x 30 min (10 min half time)	N	5 (int)	100 x 68	9	13
Boys' U17	2 x 30 min (10 min half time)	N	5 (int)	100 x 68	9	13
Boys' U16, U15, U14, U13	2 x 25 min (5 min half time)	N	5 (int)	100 x 68	9	13
U12	2 x 20 min (5 min half time)	N	4 (mod)	100 x 68	11	13
U11, U10	2 x 20 min (5 min half time)	N	4 (mod)	80 x 48	8	11
U9, U8	4 x 8 min (3 x 2 min breaks)	N	3 (mini)	68 x 30	6	8
U7 tag, U6 tag	4 x 8 min (3 x 2 min breaks)	N	3 (mini)	40 x 20	6	6
Girls' U18, U16, U14 (Div 1)	2 x 20 min (5 min half time)	N	5 (int)	100 x 68	8	11
Girls' U14 (Div 2)	2 x 20 min (5 min half time)	N	5 (int)	80 x 48	5	7
Girls' U12	2 x 20 min (5 min half time)	N	4 (mod)	80 x 48	5	7
Girls' U10	2 x 20 min (5 min half time)	N	4 (mod)	68 x 30	5	7
Girls' U8 tag	4 x 8 min (3 x 2 min breaks)	N	3 (mini)	68 x 30	5	7

Please note that the Match Referee has the discretion to start the clock (using common sense) at the scheduled starting time. NRL Victoria has advised that if anyone interferes with this process, then this should be reported, as it is now explicitly listed as an offence under the League's Rules and Regulations.



Section 4 – Education/Accreditation

All members must be registered in MySideline and be either members of the VRLRA or NRL Vic Referees. Registration provides the League with access to accurate accreditation details so that members cannot be appointed to matches for which they are not eligible. It also provides the Match Official with the appropriate insurance cover under the NRL Victoria policy.

It is expected that all Referees participate in an annual training and development session so they can be updated on aspects of Officiating such as:

- National methodology (Tackle types, Tackle identification, positioning, vocab to the ruck, infringement indicators, etc)
- Laws of the Game – updates on new Laws for the 2026 Season
- Safeplay Code – update on changes to the Code, and any aspects of the Code which merit revisiting
- Accreditation changes and Member status
- Touch Judging – changes and refresher on roles and responsibilities
- Updates to the 2026 VRLRA Handbook
- Compliance issues

NOTE: The 2026 Annual Update will be held from 11:30am on Sunday 19th April 2026 (Venue: Arthur Beachley Reserve, 29 Ardoyne Street Sunshine).

Agenda:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
11:00 - 11:05	Welcome	Blake (VRLRA President)
11:05 - 11:30	Organisation update, Law change, focus areas, pathway opportunities	Tony Hardy (NRL Lead Referee Development Officer)
11:30 - 12:00	Nutritional education	Georgia (Melbourne Storm Club Nutritionist)
12:00 - 12:30	Physio education	Liam (Melbourne Storm Head Physiotherapist)
12:30 - 13:15	BBQ Lunch, Cadbury & Gear handout	Brent (VRLRA Marketing & Sponsorship Coordinator) and Damien (VRLRA Gear Coordinator)
13:15 - 13:45	NRL Victoria process update	Lynne Simpson (NRL Victoria Competitions Coordinator)
13:45 - 14:00	VRLRA Portal process and demonstration	Will (VRLRA Treasurer)
14:00 - 14:15	Appointments Panel	Brian (VRLRA Appointments Panel Coordinator)
14:15 - 14:30	Training & Skills	Matt (VRLRA Training & Skills Coordinator)
14:30 - 15:00	Spare time window and Close	Blake (VRLRA President)

Referee Respect 2026

Aims:

1. To improve the Rugby League environment at all levels
2. To compel participants to take greater responsibility for their actions
3. To promote the core values of our Code and to educate parents, coaches, players, and officials on the philosophies of the junior game
4. To promote a greater level of compliance around the Game's Code of Conduct
5. To recognise and reward clubs which clearly demonstrate the highest standards of RESPECT and proper behaviour at matches
6. Valuing the rich history of Rugby League
7. Setting high standards of decency, whatever our role within the game
8. Acknowledging and appreciating that participants all have a role to play
9. Always demonstrating due regard for the feelings and rights of others.

In 2026, Referee Respect Rounds will be scheduled by NRLVIC (dates to be determined), and consideration is being given to a range of initiatives. More discussion and information will be provided at the Annual Update on Sunday 19 April 2026.

As a minimum in the 6 – 18-year age groups, players should meet in the middle of the field, listen to instructions from the Referee shake hands and then captains perform the coin toss.

This works especially well when players have been checked by Touch Judges (nails, boots, jewellery) well prior to kick-off time.

Touch Judges, where appointed, should accompany the Referee to the centre of the field for the coin toss and handshakes. Coaches should also be encouraged to take part in these Respect Protocols.

Handshakes are also highly encouraged at the completion of each game, encouraged by the Referee, where required.

Section 5 – Fees, Gear, Payments, Training and Meetings

Membership Fees

Note that there are membership fees payable to the Association, depending on the type of member, i.e., returning member, Life Member, new member, etc. Fees will be determined by the Association Executive on an annual basis and advised to members prior to the start of each season. Membership fees will be deducted from your first match payment/s unless paid prior to the start of the season.

Additionally, the Association deducts a small percentage of match fees for the running of the Association, including administration fees, end of season Presentation and trophies, training equipment and BBQ’s, travel for Referees if officiating interstate at selected events/carnivals, etc.

Member fees for the 2026 season are listed below:

Returning

All returning members	\$75.00
Non-Active (Social)	\$25.00
Life Member	Nil

New

All new Match Officials	\$125
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New Member fee includes on-field uniform (jersey, shorts, socks) plus 1 x whistle and 1 x flag

Gear - On and off field gear can be purchased from the Association via the online portal, [Gear Order \(vrlra.com.au\)](http://Gear Order (vrlra.com.au)). If you have any questions re your order, please contact the Association’s Gear Steward – Damien Fitzgerald via email gear@vrlra.com.au.

On-field gear		Off-field gear	
On-field jersey	\$50.00	Training tee	\$40.00
On-field shorts	\$35.00	Training shorts	\$40.00
On-field socks	\$15.00	Polo	\$40.00
Whistle	\$22.50	Track top	\$65.00
Wrist lanyard	\$5.00	Trackpants	\$50.00
Flag	\$15.00	Hoodie	\$65.00
Comms vest	\$70.00	Spray jacket	\$60.00
Comms armband	\$30.00	Cap	\$25.00
Comms headset	\$110.00	Beanie	\$25.00
Comms moulded insert	\$10.00	Backpack	\$55.00
On-field pack(1)	\$95.00	Off-field pack (2)	\$335.00

(1) On-field pack includes jersey, shorts and socks

(2) Off-field includes tracksuit top and pants, polo shirt, training top, training shorts, backpack, hoodie and either cap or beanie

Bank Details

Acct Name: VRLRA
 BSB: 633000
 Acct Number: 167193028

Payments

The 2026 payment and fee schedule – for Referees, Touch Judges and Referee Coaches – appears below for reference. Members are to ensure bank account details and nominated payment schedule has been provided to the Association Treasurer, William Roache. Members are paid via Direct Deposit only into a nominated bank account either Fortnightly, Monthly, or End of Season as per the below schedule. Finals will be paid separately after Grand Final fees have been paid to the Association.

Payment Schedule	
14 April 2026	Trials, Pre-Season, NSW Junior Reps
12 May 2026	Fortnightly Payment #1
25 May 2026	Fortnightly Payment #2 & Monthly #1
16 June 2026	Fortnightly Payment #3
30 June 2026	Fortnightly Payment #4, Mid-Year & Monthly #2
14 July 2026	Fortnightly Payment #5
28 July 2026	Fortnightly Payment #6 & Monthly #3
11 August 2026	Fortnightly Payment #7
25 August 2026	Gala Day & Season Payments
29 September 2026	Finals Payment Expected
10 November 2026	Harmony Cup Payment Expected



Match fees

Note that a small percentage is deducted by the Association on each match officiated by Referees and Touch Judges to cover the cost of administration, training, BBQ, presentation and other expenses incurred during the course of the season. CMO fees are unaffected.

Competition	Referee	Touch Judge	CMO	Mentor
Under 6's, 7's, 8's, 9's	\$29.00	N/A	\$16.00	\$10.00
Under 10's	\$30.00	N/A	\$16.00	\$10.00
Under 11's	\$33.00	N/A	\$16.00	\$10.00
Under 12's	\$36.00	N/A	\$16.00	\$10.00
Under 13's	\$43.00	\$26.00	\$22.00	\$14.00
Under 14's	\$47.00	\$29.00	\$22.00	\$14.00
Under 15's	\$51.00	\$31.00	\$22.00	\$14.00
Under 16's	\$57.00	\$35.00	\$22.00	\$14.00
Under 17's	\$61.00	\$37.00	\$22.00	\$14.00
Under 18's	\$69.00	\$42.00	\$28.00	\$17.00
Under 20's	\$79.00	\$48.00	\$28.00	\$17.00
Men's 2nd, 3rd Grade, Pre-Season	\$79.00	\$48.00	\$28.00	\$17.00
Men's 1st Grade	\$119.00	\$72.00	\$33.00	\$21.00
Girls/Women				
Girls Tag	\$34.00	\$21.00	\$16.00	\$10.00
Girls Under 12's	\$33.00	N/A	\$16.00	\$10.00
Girls Under 14's	\$38.00	\$23.00	\$19.00	\$12.00
Girls Under 16's	\$46.00	\$28.00	\$19.00	\$12.00
Girls Under 18's	\$46.00	\$28.00	\$22.00	\$14.00
Women's Tag	\$59.00	\$36.00	\$24.00	\$15.00
Women's 2nd Grade	\$59.00	\$36.00	\$24.00	\$15.00
Women's 1st Grade	\$79.00	\$48.00	\$28.00	\$17.00
Masters	\$41.00	\$25.00	N/A	N/A
9's - U16	\$21.00	\$13.00	N/A	N/A
9's - U18	\$21.00	\$13.00	N/A	N/A
9's - Seniors	\$35.00	\$21.00	N/A	N/A



Training

Training will be advised in advance and will generally be held in North, East and West Melbourne locations, with some sessions combined – particularly when important information needs to be imparted or re-emphasised to members.

Attitude towards attendance at training will count for appointment priorities where two or more members may be vying for certain positions come Final Series time. Obviously, there are exemptions from training for those who may work night shift or have conflicting appointments, however, as a general rule, members should make the effort to attend as many sessions as possible. There will be many occasions where situations have arisen across a weekend that can be imparted to attendees at training, so they are aware of various – application of a Law, incidents, venue issues, etc.

Group training sessions will be scheduled during the Season, whilst regular sessions will be held on the East (South East Titans, Greaves Reserve, 6:30 pm start) and West (Werribee Bears, Haines Drive Reserve, 6:00 pm start). Training will be held on Wednesday evenings. North training TBC.

Meetings

Executive Meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month, commencing in January 2026.

General Meetings will be held on Tuesday 09 June, and Tuesday 11 August – either Face-to-Face or via a video conferencing system.

The VRLRA Annual Update will be held for Sunday, 19 April 2026.

The VRLRA AGM will be held on Sunday 15 November 2026.

Section 6 – Child Protection

The below provides guidance to Members on acceptable behaviours and appropriate boundaries when working with - or around - children.

All NRL Victoria Child Safety resources can be found at [Membership | NRL Victoria](#); the League’s “Child Protection Commitment Statement” is:

Every person in the Rugby League community has a responsibility to understand their role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in our care.

NRL Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of children and takes a zero-tolerance stance on abuse. We strive to foster a culture where children feel safe and empowered.

We also seek to ensure the cultural safety of First Nations children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

Association Members will:

- Act in the best interests of all children
- Treat every child with dignity and respect, regardless of national origin, religion, age, ability, gender, language, culture and economic status
- Respect the special relationship between children and their families and incorporate this perspective in all interactions with children
- Conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a positive role model and a representative of the Association
- Be alert! Be sensitive to children and any signs that may indicate child abuse
- Listen to children, take their concerns seriously and allow them to have a say in decisions that affect them
- Be visible when working with children
- Avoid being alone with children where possible, and ensure other adults are present when working with children

Association Members **will not**:

- Engage in any behaviour that is intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or place a child in risk of abuse.
- Condone or participate in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Act in a way that shows unfair differential treatment or favouring particular children to the exclusion of others.

Member Protection Information Officers:

Association MPIO’s are David Michalowsky (also Child Safety Officer), Sally Sealy and Jonathan Nicholls. If you have any concerns, either one of these volunteers (or the Executive), can help direct answer any questions or assist in directing you to where you can raise any concerns.



Patrons of the Game – Child Safety Education

The NRL is a child safe organisation and is committed to promoting a safe environment for all children and young people.

In line with the NRL's [Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#), all patrons of the game are required to complete this course.

Who are patrons of the game?

- Coaches
- First Responders
- Match Officials
- Club volunteers

Course Content

This is compulsory online course for any patrons of the game that are working with children under the age of 18.

The Course can be accessed by logging on to the following link: [NRL Learning Centre - Child Safety - Patrons of the Game \(playrugbyleague.com\)](https://playrugbyleague.com)

Section 7 – Pathways and Officiating Opportunities

In 2026, Melbourne Storm will field six teams in the NSWRL Development & High-Performance competitions, including NSW Cup (Open age Men's), Jersey Flegg (U21 Male), SG Ball Cup (U19 Male), Tarsha Gale Cup (U19 Female), Harold Matthews Cup (U17 Male), and Lisa Fiaola Cup (U17 Female).

This means that Referees and Touch Judges from Victoria will be provided the opportunity to officiate in matches – both in Melbourne and in NSW.

A small squad of Match Officials will be selected to train and participate in these representative fixtures, drawing on training programs and development tools provided by the High-Performance team at the NSW and National Rugby Leagues.

Selection of Match Officials will be based on several factors:

- Level of fitness
- Mastery of the national Methodology
- Aptitude – both on and off the field
- Proven record at a high-performance level of officiating (including in local senior NRL Victoria Competitions)

All matches are recorded, and a thorough analysis of performance is provided to each Match Official to ensure appropriate feedback and ongoing development.

Victoria will also be provided with the opportunity to nominate Match Officials to the CAS (Combined Affiliated States) Carnivals featuring Senior Men's, Senior Women's events which will be held in Melbourne in June 2026, (as well as Boys and Girls CAS Carnivals in September 2026) and also to various carnivals featuring Under 16 and Under 18 Schoolgirls and Under 15 and Under 18 Schoolboys.

We will continue to seek other opportunities for our Match Officials including in:

- National Under 12 School Championships
- NSW Combined Catholic Colleges – Under 15 and Under 18 Trials
- NSW Combined High Schools – Under 15 and Under 18 Trials
- Laurie Daley and Andrew Johns (NSW Country) Competitions
- Various carnivals played in NSW and Queensland – on an invitational basis
- Other State League Competitions – WA, SA and NT
- Exchanges with other Associations across NSW and Queensland.
- NSW-based High-Performance Officiating Camps

Section 8 – Other Matters

1. Remember, the **Sin Bin is not used for foul play**: this means it must NOT be used for the following:
 - Kicking
 - Tripping
 - Striking
 - High Tackle
 - Dropping Knees
 - Dangerous Throw

For Foul Play, the Referee can only use the power of dismissal if warranted. However, the Sin Bin can be used for repeated infringements.

2. Should a match be **forfeited** on game day, and teams are willing to participate in a “scratch match” with an even number of players (and not playing for competition points), Referees should facilitate the match if requested.

3. **Changes to Match Conditions 2026:**

- (i) **In First Grade matches, if play cannot recommence within forty (40) minutes of when play was unable to continue (Time Off being called) and council restrictions or other key match operational matters do not impede the remaining match time being played – and both teams and Match Officials agree, and are able, may continue to play the remainder of the game.**

- (ii) **Differences between Girls Playing conditions can be [accessed here](#)**

4. **Understanding the “Points Differential Rule: (NRL Victoria Rules & Regulations 2026 – 13.6**

The Points Differential Rule shall apply to all age groups from Under 13s to Under 18s only under the following conditions only when the points differential in the match score between the teams reaches 40: i. a. The trailing team's coach will have the option to enforce the following in part or in full at their sole discretion; Team numbers of both teams will be equalised if trailing team has less available players on field of play (e.g. the trailing team has only 9 players able to take to participate on field, the leading team must field only 9 players); and/or ii. A tap restart by the trailing team at halfway will occur following any tries being scored by the leading team. b. The referee must be informed of the decision at the time it is enforced, however it is at the trailing team's coach's discretion only and once enforced cannot be reversed; c. d. The leading teams' coach must adhere to this if enforced and is encouraged to consider the following adjustments prior this occurring (but not limited to); i. Playing players in different positions ii. iii. Giving more game time to bench players Reduce number of players on the field iv. Instruct players to submit to tackle upon touch Should any items of 13.6.a. be implemented during a Boys' Under 18 match, the interchange limits under 25.4 shall not apply for the remainder of the match.

5. Referees should be familiar with differences between the 6 – 12 years Laws, International Laws, and where areas of the Safeplay Code may overlap both the Modified and International Laws. These were raised at the 2025 Annual Referee Update and can be accessed if in any doubt.

REMINDER: Latest Law & Methodology changes for local community Rugby League matches:

Law changes:

Offside infringements at scrums – a full penalty will be awarded for offside scrum infringements by the defensive team anywhere on the field.

Any team which deliberately locks the ball in the scrum to trap defenders in an offside position will also be penalised (this will also be a full penalty).

Methodology change:

All defending players (except those who have taken up a position as Marker(s)) must retire 10m* from the point at which the ball is played, or to their own goal line. To comply with this requirement, all defending players must have both feet in line with – or behind – the Referee marking the 10 metres*. The Referee will call “go” once the ball has been played backwards and then the defensive line is entitled to move forward. (*5 metres in the 13 and 14 year age groups).

If the defensive line is within 10m* of their own goal line, the players:

- Must be touching the goal line with a foot, and
- The defenders cannot place their front foot past the centre of the ruck

Rugby League Policies and Guidelines

(All policies can be found at www.playrugbyleague.com/policies/)

All participants in NRL VIC competitions and activities are bound by Policies, Rules and Regulations as set out by the Rugby League Authorities to which NRL VIC is affiliated to and to applicable Government requirements. This includes, but not limited to, the following which may be amended, updated, or added to at any time:

a) NRL National Code of Conduct	l) NRL National Registration Policy
b) NRL National Safe Play Code	m) NRL Leagues Anti-Doping Policy
c) NRL Member Protection Policy	n) NRL Unmanned Aerial Drone Policy
d) NRL On-Field Policy	o) NRL Sports Glasses/Goggles Policy
e) NRL Return to Play Policy	p) NRL Mouthguard Policy
f) NRL Infectious Disease Policy	q) NRL Neck Injury & Cervical Collar Policy
g) NRL Sun Protection Policy	r) NRL Management of Concussion Guidelines
h) NRL Mixed Gender Policy	s) NRL Pregnancy Policy
i) NRL Privacy Policy	t) NRL Heat Guidelines
j) NRL Travel and Tour Policy	u) NRL Electrical Storm Safety Guidelines
k) NRL National Clearance & Permits Policy	v) NRL National Coach Accreditation Policy



2026 Female Competitions

Junior Female Competitions

The 2026 NRL Junior Female Competitions shall operate under 2026 NRL Victoria Competition Rules and Regulations except where outlined in this Addendum.

Please refer to the [infographics](#) for the Game Playing Conditions.

2026 League Tag Competitions

League Tag Competitions

The 2026 NRL League Tag Competitions shall operate under the 2026 NRL Victoria Competition Rules and Regulations except where outlined in this addendum.

Game Playing Conditions are as per the following table:

Junior Girls (12-16)	Junior Mixed (12-16)	Senior Women's (17+)	Senior Mixed (17+)
Max 7 Per Team Min 5 Per Team	Max 7 Per Team Min 5 Per Team Max of 4 of any one individual gender on field at any time	Max 9 Per Team Min 7 Per Team	Max 9 Per Team Min 7 Per Team Max of 5 of any one individual gender on field at any time
68m x 30m		68m x 48m	
2 x 15 mins		2 x 20 mins	
Defence = 5 metres		Defence = 10 metres	
Kick Off restart by non-scoring team after try scored			
General play kicking allowed (no "bombs")			
Ball into touch – Handover 5 metre in			
Penalties – no kicks for touch: tap kick only			
Play The Ball (PTB) – to be taken where tagged. No need to replace tag until after the PTB			
All additional International League Tag Laws apply			
1v2 final		Normal finals series (as determined by NRL VIC)	

Appendix 1: Tough Love Regulations

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1. This document outlines Regulations and Penalties under NRL VIC's Tough Love Policy for any match played under the auspices of NRL Victoria.
- 1.2. The procedures outlined in this document do not limit action processed through other NRL VIC policies, including but not limited to, the NRL VIC Code of Conduct, and NRL VIC Judiciary Procedures and Penalties.
- 1.3. The objectives of these Regulations are:
 - (a) To reduce the amount of violence in games played in NRL VIC.
 - (b) To take pressure off young and inexperienced referees and match officials.
 - (c) To make the Rugby League experience safe, fair and fun for all.
 - (d) To encourage increased participation in the game.

With the desired outcomes to be:

- Reduced on field violence.
- Elimination of unsavoury behaviour towards referees.
- Stop "all in" melees.
- Remove repeat offenders from the game (both teams and individuals).
- Reduce the number of matches being threatened with abandonment due to poor behaviour.
- Stop spectators from entering the field.
- Educate players at a young age that violence in our game will not be tolerated.

2. Laws of the Game

- 2.1. The Laws of the Game state the following regarding Misconduct:

"SECTION 15 - PLAYER'S MISCONDUCT - 1. A player is guilty of misconduct if he: a) Trips, kicks or strikes another player."

Note: Offences under Section 15, 1.a) of the Laws of the Game as per above are considered to be Foul Play and may warrant instant dismissal.

The Sin Bin is NOT to be used for these offences.

3. Zero Tolerance of Striking and Kicking

- 3.1. NRL VIC adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards Striking and Kicking.
- 3.2. Any player who kicks or strikes another player during a match will be automatically dismissed from the field. If that player is subsequently found guilty of either Striking or Kicking, **the MINIMUM penalty will be a Grade 1 Striking or Kicking Offence under NRL Victoria's Judiciary Penalties and Procedures.**
- 3.3. Any player who attempts to kick or strike another player without making connection with the player will be automatically dismissed from the field and charged with Contrary Conduct. If that player is subsequently found guilty, **the MINIMUM penalty will be a Grade 1 Contrary Conduct Offence under NRL Victoria's Judiciary Penalties and Procedures.**
- 3.4. Any player found guilty of breaching 3.2 and/or 3.3 for the third time in a season will incur an automatic **MINIMUM twelve-month suspension** from the game.

4. Zero Tolerance of Fighting and Melees

- 4.1. NRL VIC adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards Fighting and Melees.
 - 4.2. A Melee is considered to be Misconduct involving more than two players at any one time.
 - 4.3. A **“TIME OUT”** system will be introduced whenever a severe “Melee” occurs as follows:
 - (a) The referee will signal a “TIME OUT” period and call for the ground manager to bring both coaches’ onto the field.
 - (b) Teams are to be taken to opposite ends of the field and spoken to by their respective coaches.
 - (c) The referee will then dismiss from the field offending players under these regulations (3.2).
 - (d) The ground manager and referees will decide when play will resume.
 - 4.4. A repeat “Melee” will result in the match automatically being abandoned.
 - 4.5. If a match is abandoned after a time out period, the respective coaches from the offending teams will be charged under the NRL VIC Code of Conduct.
 - 4.6. Additional Code of Conduct charges and Penalties applied to teams, players, coaches and/or clubs for abandoned games will be at the discretion of NRL VIC.
 - 4.7. Any matches abandoned as a result of these regulations will not be replayed and the result of the match shall be determined at the discretion of NRL VIC.
 - 4.8. Any team that has had more than two abandoned matches in a season will be automatically disqualified from that competition for that season.
 - 4.9. Any player or official who runs onto the field of play from the team “bench” area (including “Sin Bin”) during a match, irrespective of making physical contact with another player or official, will be automatically sent from the field and incur a **MINIMUM six match suspension** if found guilty.
5. **Zero Tolerance of Match Official Abuse**
- 5.1. NRL VIC adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards the abuse of match officials.
 - 5.2. Any player or official found guilty of touching a referee, touch judge or appointed match official in an aggressive or inappropriate manner will be **disqualified from the game for a MINIMUM period of twelve months**.
 - 5.3. Any player or official found guilty of contact with a referee, touch judge or appointed match official whereby the aggressive contact was directed at:
 - head and/or
 - neck area and/or
 - groin,

OR contact was made with significant force resulting in:

 - injury, or
 - risk of injury, and/or
 - placing person in a vulnerable position

they will be **disqualified from the game for a MIMIMUM period of five (5) years**.
 - 5.4. Any player or official who verbally abuses or intimidates a referee or match official will be dismissed from the field. If that person is subsequently determined to be guilty of the offence, **the MINIMUM penalty will be a one match suspension**.

- 5.5. Any spectator who verbally abuses or intimidates a referee or match official will be dismissed from the venue. If that person is subsequently determined to be guilty of the offence, **the MINIMUM penalty will be a one match suspension.**
 - 5.6. Any player or official found guilty of verbally abusing or intimidating a referee or match official for the third time in a season will incur an **automatic MINIMUM twelve month's suspension.**
6. **Trainers, Coaches and Managers**
 - 6.1. If a Trainer, Coach or Manager touches any player or official during a Melee (as defined in 4) an **automatic MINIMUM six match suspension** will apply if that person is found guilty of such an offence.
7. **Spectators**
 - 7.1. Any spectator who is found guilty of entering the Playing Area with intent will automatically be banned from attending any Match Day Venue (as defined in Scope of Sanctions Policy) for a **MINIMUM period of twelve months** and will be liable to pay a fine under the NRL VIC Code of Conduct.
 - 7.2. In addition, the team and/or club that the person offending under 7.1 is associated with will be charged under the NRL VIC Code of Conduct.
8. **Exceptions for Dismissals**
 - 8.1. Exceptions for Dismissals shall only apply to Players in Mini and Mod matches (i.e., matches for age groups Under 12s and below where players shall be "replaced" for the remainder of the match). These players are reported under the NRLVIC Code of Conduct Process. All other participants such as coaches, trainers, spectators, etc. dismissals shall apply. All other aspects of these regulations shall still apply to Mini and Mod matches.

Appendix 2 – Grading of Offences that Result in a Dismissal

Misconduct Gradings

- Referees should not apply gradings based on what they think the length of suspensions should be and submit based solely on grading description. Basing gradings on suspensions and not grading description presents a risk to challenge by player at judiciary hearing
- Providing a strict guide to gradings is difficult as there a multitude of facets to consider
- Grading assessments for Misconduct need to consider the following:
 - **Outcome** – e.g. opponent is injured as a result of misconduct and cannot return to play (most severe), no impact to opponent (least severe)
 - **Risk** – potential for opponent to be injured severely even if they are not (e.g. spear tackle, where player is forcibly driven into ground from the vertical (extremely high risk), but player is not hurt – still most severe)
 - **Intent** – high tackle categories already cover intent, for other charges if there is clear intent/premeditation (most severe), reckless (severe), careless (least severe).
 - **Context** – ground/weather conditions may affect a player’s ability to take action to avoid contact, provocation of opponent, self-defence action rather than retaliation, etc.
- Each incident should be treated on its own merits based on a mix of the above

Before Player is Dismissed – Multiple Misconduct Incidents

- A referee may make multiple misconduct charges for incidents occurring prior to dismissal.
- When submitting charges for multiple incidents the Referee can do so in 1 of 2 ways:
 - submit misconduct report for each incident; OR
 - submit one report with each charge marked BUT, in the description, **CLEARLY** articulate the separate incidents
- Example of multiple misconduct incidents may be (albeit unlikely but possible):
 - Player makes head high tackle – charge 1
 - Scuffle follows, then player kicks another player – charge 2
 - Order is re-stored, but a secondary scuffle in another group happens, and player then goes and strikes another player – charge 3
 - Order is re-stored, Referee about to control situation, player then motions an offensive gesture to crowd in contrary manner – charge 4
 - Referee calls player over, and before referee dismissed, player abuses referee – charge 5
- Note that because a player makes multiple strikes on an opponent or strikes multiple opponents in same scuffle this **does not constitute multiple charges** and would only be a single charge.
- However, a player can answer more than one of the same charges should each incident be clearly separate incidents, for example:
 - Player strikes a player (first Striking charge 1), scuffle ensues, and order restored. A new clearly separate scuffle occurs, and same player strikes a player (second Striking charge)

After Player Is Dismissed – Code of Conduct

- Once the Referee has made the signal for a player to be dismissed from the match, any action after this point by the player is subject to the Code of Conduct.
- For example, after Referee has directed the player to leave; the player - when leaving - may breach the Code through actions such as abuse of the Referee, gestures of contrary nature to any persons, physical altercations, etc.
- A separate Code of Conduct report should be submitted in addition to any misconduct charge(s)

These reports are now submitted via the “Resources” page on the VRLRA website. Please click the following link to view the reports: [Resources \(vrlra.com.au\)](https://vrlra.com.au)



Appendix 3 – Dismissal, Code of Conduct & Incident Reports

Appendix 3 –

These reports are now submitted via the “Resources” page on the VRLRA Website. Where possible, these should be submitted on the day that the incident occurred or, at the latest, within 24 hours of the match.

[Resources](http://vrlra.com.au) (vrlra.com.au)

Appendix 4 – The Safeplay Code

The Safeplay Code is to be enforced across all 6 to 15 years' matches, and a penalty must be awarded where play breaks down.

In summary:

- Tackles above the armpits are not permitted
- Dangerous tackles:
 - The tackler's legs cannot be used to trip, or in a throw movement
 - Adopting a crotch hold is not permitted
 - Shoulder charges are not permitted
 - A ball-carrier cannot be lifted
 - Ankle taps are not permitted
- Aggressive palms are not permitted. The ball-carrier cannot "thrust" out an arm to contact the defender above the shoulder
- Slinging/swinging is not permitted, nor is a player able to push an opponent
- Dangerous flops are not permitted. A defender cannot drop or fall on a player who is lying on the ground (placing a hand on the player to affect the tackle is most suitable).
- Surrender in the tackle: the ball-carrier may surrender in the tackle, Defenders must not complete the tackle.
- Verbal abuse/foul language is not permitted. The use of threatening or abusive language is not permitted.
- Scrums: pushing and pulling in, or rotating a scrum is not permitted.

Appendix 5 – NRL Victoria 9’s Laws

1. Teams are permitted to nominate and have fifteen (15) players participate in any one game. A maximum of nine (9) players are permitted on field at any one time (accordingly maximum of six (6) interchange players). A minimum of seven (7) players per team on field are required.
2. All games including preliminary rounds and Grand Final shall be of nine (9) minutes each way with a half-time break of one (1) minute.
3. The International Laws of the Game will apply with the following exceptions:
 - a. Scrums will be formed by three players only. Scrums will only be formed in the event of a double knock on.
 - b. All kicks for goal shall be taken by way of a drop kick.
 - c. The re-start of play from the halfway line after points have been scored will be by a tap kick, by the non-scoring side, but there will not be any requirement for the ball to travel ten meters forward from that kick.
 - d. After a try has been scored, both teams and the referee will take up normal positions for the re-start of play. One touch judge will remain behind the goal posts to adjudicate on the kick for goal and play will be re-started immediately the Touch Judge has given his decision, (which shall be final), and the kicker has returned to an inside position which he must do without delay.
 - e. If an interchange is affected when a kick at goal has been taken, the interchanging player coming on to the field is not allowed to take the kick.
 - f. Periods of temporary suspension (Sin Bin) will be for five (5) minutes.
 - g. Any period of temporary suspension expires at the end of the game.
 - h. The 6 tackle law will be replaced by the 4 tackle law.
4. Unlimited Interchange. Up to six players from among the nominated squad may be used on an unlimited interchange basis throughout the match.
5. Teams must sign on prior to their first match. Only players registered to NRL Victoria will be permitted to participate.
6. In the event of a serious injury and the suspension of play preventing further play then the result of the game at the time of suspension shall stand.
7. In the result of a drawn match, the winner will be the team that placed highest on the NRL Victoria Spirit of League Award the previous year.
8. A player dismissed from the field during the course of a match will not be eligible to play again until judiciary procedures have been completed.
9. Any disputes regarding the playing conditions of this competition or events not covered in these playing conditions, will be referred to NRL Victoria for decision. This decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Appendix 6– Law Variations to Masters Rugby League

The game is for players over the age of 30 years for females and 35 years for males. The game is totally non-competitive. Scores are not kept; there are no results and no competitions. All the rules are designed to remove potentially dangerous elements of the game to allow players of ALL age groups to participate together.

All players are reminded that the safety of teammates and opponents is paramount and therefore any over-aggressive or inappropriate rough play is forbidden. The emphasis is on safe and enjoyable play with all players who come onto the field being able to leave the field together. All players, team officials and referees commit to participate according to the letter and the spirit of the Laws.

Note: all rules are as per ‘international rules’ unless an agreement between both teams and the referee has been approved prior to playing (possibly due to reduced playing numbers).

1. Full field
2. 11 a-side (flexible depending on available players)
3. Unlimited interchanges
4. Interchanges may occur at any time
5. If team numbers are low on either side, players may be ‘loaned’ to the opposition

Coloured shorts are not determined by age. You can wear them regardless of age. a) Club shorts (full contact) b) Red shorts (hold) c) Gold shorts (touch)

No other coloured shorts can be worn for Red or Gold players and shorts **MUST** be supplied by the player/team.

Making the Tackle Club Colour short players tend to tackle each other normally. RED short players must attempt to physically stop the ball-carrier by a grip tackle between the waist and the shoulder. The ball-carrier should respond immediately to the Held call from the referee. If in the opinion of the referee the RED short player has made sufficient contact, he will call Held. Players should not attempt to drive through the tackle. GOLD short players must make a Touch tackle only. Once touched, the ball-carrier must return to the point of the touch to play-the-ball.

Being Tackled RED short players should be tackled by a grip tackle between the waist and the shoulder to stop progress. Under normal circumstances, RED short players should not be taken to the ground. If this occurs deliberately, the tackler will be penalised. RED short players should not attempt to drive through the tackle. GOLD short players should only be Touch tackled and this should be done with great caution. Once touched, the tackler should call the Touch and hold the mark; the ball-carrier must return to the point of the touch to play-the-ball. All tackles are to be made safely and in order to stop progress, not to attack the ball-carrier. In all cases, the player must respond immediately to the Held call. There is no lifting or throws allowed. The ball shall not be stolen from the ball-carrier at all.

A maximum of two GOLD short players is allowed on the field per team at any one time and they must be spaced apart in the defensive line.

There can be no “drag down” tackles from behind of any kind

MODE OF PLAY

Running with the Ball Players may run as hard as they wish, but are not allowed to try and run over the top of other players. If in the opinion of the referee a player has deliberately

run directly at an opponent in an overly aggressive manner, the player will be penalised and may be removed from the game. Players are not allowed to fend or hand-off

Sixth Tackle There are no turnovers. Sixth tackle results in a scrum to the defending side.

Kicking You can only kick on the last tackle. For ALL kicks, the receiving team must receive the ball. The receiver must not be challenged and must be allowed to run at least five (5) metres. 40:20 rule does not apply. If the receiving team makes no attempt to claim the ball and kicking team players are onside, the referee may call “play on” and the kicking team may re-gather the ball. The referee will only call “play on” when they are certain there is no risk of player collision.

CONVERSIONS There are no kicks at goal.

TIMEKEEPING Duration of Games The game is 20 minutes each way with a 5 minute half time break. Each team will have a minimum of two games per event.

KICK-OFF AND DROP-OUT From kick-offs and goal line dropouts, if the ball bounces out untouched by the receiving team, the scrum or tap goes to the receiving team.

TOUCH AND TOUCH-IN-GOAL As per International Laws **KNOCK-ON AND FORWARD PASS** As per International Laws

TACKLE AND PLAY-THE-BALL Tackling All tackles should be modified to remove any element of “drive” or lifting. No tackles can be made above the armpits. Maximum of two players allowed in any tackle; any more will be punished with the award of a penalty

Play-the-Ball Markers must remain passive and must not move until the first receiver has received the ball or the dummy-half has started to run. All other defenders must retire five

(5) metres minimum at the play-the-ball. The dummy-half may run with the ball or pass and be tackled or touched in possession.

The dummy-half may not run and score.

SCRUM As per ‘International Rules’ unless playing team numbers are reduced. Then it becomes 3 forwards only. All scrums are uncontested with the team feeding the ball.

Appendix 7– VRLRA Calendar of Events Season 2026

Yearly Calendar 2026								
Week Beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Notes
5 January 2026		Executive Meeting						
12 January 2026								
19 January 2026								
26 January 2026	Public Holiday Australia Day				Coordinator Reports Due			
2 February 2026		Executive Meeting				SG Ball, H Matts, TG Cup and LF Cup		
9 February 2026								
16 February 2026								
23 February 2026					Coordinator Reports Due	U20		
2 March 2026		Executive Meeting		NSW Cup		U20		
				Storm V Eels		SG Ball, H Matts, TG Cup and LF Cup, Flegg		
9 March 2026	Public Holiday Labour Day					SG Ball, H Matts, TG Cup and LF Cup		
						U20		
16 March 2026					Storm V Broncos	U20		
23 March 2026						TG Cup and LF Cup		
30 March 2026						NSW Cup		
						U20		
6 April 2026	Public Holiday Easter Monday				Coordinator Reports Due	SG Ball, H Matts	Easter Sunday	
						Easter Saturday		
13 April 2026		Executive Meeting				Storm V Warriors	VRLRA Annual Update	
		Pre-season Match Pay Run				NSW Cup, Flegg		
						U20 Grand Final		
20 April 2026			Weekly VRLRA Training Begins		NSW Cup, Flegg	ANZAC Day		
						Storm V Rabbitohs		
27 April 2026					Coordinator Reports Due	RD1 Seniors	RD1 WLT	
						RD1 Juniors		
4 May 2026		Executive Meeting				RD2 Juniors	RD2 WLT	
						RD2 Seniors		
						Flegg		
11 May 2026		Fortnightly Pay Run #1				Storm V Tigers		
18 May 2026						NSW Cup	Mothers Day	
						RD3 Seniors		
25 May 2026		Fortnightly Pay Run #2 Monthly Pay Run #1	SOO1 - Syd No Training		Coordinator Reports Due	RD3 Juniors	RD3 WLT	
						RD4 Seniors		
						RD4 Juniors		
1 June 2026		Executive Meeting			Storm V Knights	Storm V Roosters	RD5 WLT	
						NSW Cup, Flegg		
						RD5 Seniors		
8 June 2026	Public Holiday King's Birthday	General Meeting				RD5 Juniors	RD6 WLT	
						RD6 Seniors		
15 June 2026		Fortnightly Pay Run #3	SOO2 - Melb No Training			RD6 Juniors	RD6 WLT	
						RD7 Seniors		
22 June 2026						Storm V Raiders	RD7 WLT	
						RD7 Juniors		
						NSW Cup, Flegg	RD8 WLT	
						RD8 Seniors		



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REFEREES

						RD8 Juniors		
29 June 2026		Fortnightly Pay Run #4 Monthly Pay Run #2 Mid Year Pay Run				City V Country Seabrook Reserve		NRL Victoria BYE
						VRLRA mid year recognition		
6 July 2026		Executive Meeting	S003 - Bris No Training			RD9 Seniors	Storm V Titans RD9 WLT	
						RD9 Juniors	Flegg	
13 July 2026		Fortnightly Pay Run #5				RD10 Seniors	RD10 WLT	
						RD10 Juniors	Female Footy Festival	
20 July 2026						RD11 Seniors	RD11 WLT	
						RD11 Juniors		
27 July 2026		Fortnightly Pay Run #6 Monthly Pay Run #3			Storm V Bulldogs	RD12 Seniors		
					Coordinator Reports Due	RD12 Juniors	RD12 WLT	
					NSW Cup	Flegg		
3 August 2026		Executive Meeting				Storm V Eagles		
						NSW Cup, Flegg	RD13 WLT	
						RD13 Seniors		
						RD13 Juniors		
10 August 2026		General Meeting Fortnightly Pay Run #7				RD14 Seniors	RD14 WLT	
						RD14 Juniors		
17 August 2026				Storm V Panthers	NSW Cup, Flegg	RD15 Seniors	RD 15 WLT	
						Junior Semi Finals		
24 August 2026		End of Regular Season Pay Run			Coordinator Reports Due	Senior Semi Finals	WLT Semi Finals	
						Junior Galas/Prelim Finals		
31 August 2026		Executive Meeting				Senior Prelim Finals	Fathers Day	
						Junior Grand Finals	WLT Prelim Finals	
7 September 2026						Senior Grand Finals		
14 September 2026						VRLRA Presentation		
21 September 2026				NRL Victoria Junior Awards	Public Holiday AFL Grand Final			
28 September 2026		Finals Pay Run (Expected)			Coordinator Reports Due			
5 October 2026		Executive Meeting				NRL Victoria Senior Awards		
12 October 2026								
19 October 2026					NRL Victoria Harmony Cup IV	NRL Victoria Harmony Cup IV	NRL Victoria Harmony Cup IV	
26 October 2026								
2 November 2026		Public Holiday Melbourne Cup						
9 November 2026		Harmony Cup Pay Run (Expected)					VRLRA AGM	
16 November 2026								
23 November 2026								
30 November 2026								
7 December 2026								
14 December 2026								
21 December 2026					Public Holiday Christmas Day	Boxing Day		
28 December 2026	Public Holiday Boxing Day							

V4.0 Apr 26

All Storm home games to be played at AAMI Park unless otherwise stated.

Training held each week starting 22nd April at South East Titans, Werribee Bears and Hume Eagles home grounds unless otherwise stated.