



**CAPITAL  
FOOTBALL**

**CLUB VESTED OFFICIAL  
SUPPORT GUIDE**

# GAMEDAY SAFETY

Everyone has a right to be safe when working or volunteering in sport. Clubs have legal obligations in relation to safety during gameday activities, including under Australian OH&S and Workplace Safety laws and must provide a safe and healthy working environment for their volunteers and employees. This handbook provides guidance on assessing and managing associated risks.

## FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA AND CAPITAL FOOTBALL STANDARDS OF RESPECT

The football family is bound by certain codes of behaviour including the FA's XI Standards of Respect and Spectator Code of Conduct.

[XI Standards of Respect](#)

[Spectator Code of Behaviour](#)

[Spectator Code of Conduct](#)

This document seeks to ensure that these behaviours are upheld.

## IMPORTANCE OF A CLUB VESTED OFFICIAL

The Club Vested Official plays an integral role in providing support to the clubs, players, parents, coaches, and referees participating in Football for a high quality, welcoming and respectful sporting experience.

The Club Vested Official is a nominated club representative who will co-ordinate the efficient completion of match day fixtures. Clubs must appoint the relevant number of Club Vested Officials as outlined in the CF Competition Regulations.

It is important to note that, although the Club Vested Official is a critical role, it remains incumbent on all stakeholders to ensure a safe and respectful experience for all involved.

## CLUB VESTED OFFICIAL: OVERVIEW

- The Club Vested Official(s) shall, when performing duties maintain unbiased opinions / views and ensure appropriate behaviour befitting the role and as a representative of the Club.
- Act in the best interests of the players' enjoyment and experience of the game whilst also respecting that all decisions from the referee are final.
- Must be present and wearing a highly visible coloured vest which clearly indicates the role of Club Vested Official.
- Must arrive no less than 15 minutes prior to every kick-off.
- Must be an adult (18 years old or over)
- Cannot be working in the "technical area" coaching or managing a team, or be a player from a competing team, while on duty as a Club Vested Official.
- Has the right to retain an authority and control that reflects the positive aspects of the Club, Capital Football, and the Clubs "Code of Conduct". It is essential that the Codes of Conduct and/or Conditions of Entry are always in position in an area where there is a high degree of visibility.
- Only Club Vested Official(s) can approach the referees.

- A committee member and/or the clubs MPIO will always be contactable as the “go to” person to lend support and advise on required action/s whenever a Club Vested Official feels ill equipped to handle a situation that has arisen.

## **WELCOME THE OPPOSITION TEAM(S) AND MATCH OFFICIALS**

- Introduce yourself to opposition team and officials and be their point of contact with both clubs. Please be sure to introduce any other relevant points of contact at the club.
- Introduce yourself to the Referee of your allocated field. Explain where the field, Referee rooms, toilets, canteen and changerooms are located.
- Make it clear to all guests that shouting negative comments, voicing criticism of players, spectators or pointed questioning of referees is not allowed at your club’s home grounds.

## **SPECIFIC MATCH DUTIES**

- Be mindful where the First Aid facility and stretcher are located, IF NOT in the technical area.
- Ask animal owners to secure unleashed dogs to minimize risk to the animal, players, officials, and spectators in the designated areas. If dogs are prohibited at the venue, remove as per ACT Government guidelines.
- The Club Vested Official is always to escort the referee from the Referee room/Pavilion/club rooms to the field, including before the match, at half-time and at full-time.
- Keep the area between the technical areas clear. Only Club Vested Officials allowed.

## **DISCIPLINE AND RESPECT**

- It is the responsibility of the Club Vested Official to maintain control of their team’s spectators by preserving order and good discipline at each match.
- Position yourself in your assigned area and resume an ‘active’ observer role circulating the allocated fields to ensure visibility.
- Where disrespectful / negative behaviour occurs towards a Referee/Assistant Referee the following process should be followed:
  1. Ask the offending person or group, respectfully, to stop the conduct whilst reminding the person or group that criticism or strong questioning of referees is not allowed.
  2. If the disrespectful / negative behaviour continues, instruct the person or group to cease the behaviour immediately.
  3. At this point if the person conducting themselves in disrespectful / negative fashion is not the team coach then you should involve someone else from that club to assist in ending this scenario. If it is the coach, then ask their TM or the visiting Club Vested Official to assist if not already assisting.
  4. If the disrespectful / negative behaviour continues, expel the offending person or group from the ground immediately.
  5. When asking an offending person or group to leave the ground, it is important to remain calm, not to meet their anger with anger, and to clearly spell out that they risk abandonment of the game if they continue.
  6. Where the offending person or group refuses to heed the reasonable instruction, respectfully inform the Referee that the game is to be immediately abandoned. Do not engage further, collect playing equipment such as match balls and exit the space accompanying the Referee at the same time.

7. Report misconduct - including disputes, foul and abusive language by any persons at the ground.
8. Conversations of this type can be stressful and challenging, particularly in a group situation. For more information on handling conflict, see below. If at any time you feel in physical danger, we encourage you to call 000 and report the matter to the police.

## **SELECTING VOLUNTEERS TO FULFIL THE GAMEDAY MARSHAL ROLE**

On Gameday at all levels of Capital Football, clubs rely on volunteers to complete a range of roles to ensure an enjoyable football experience for all participants.

In most cases, clubs will appoint parents/guardians/volunteers based on a cycle of duties that all parties are required to complete at least once per season. Clubs should discuss and identify each individual's capability with the team and appoint volunteers to the roles that they are most comfortable performing. As an example: parents/guardians/volunteers that are familiar with the Laws of the Game will be more suited to an Assistant Referee Gameday role than a volunteer that is unaware of the 'Laws of the Game'. Similarly, a CVO should be comfortable with the key attributes required to complete the CVO role.

## **THESE ATTRIBUTES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:**

- Act empathetically under pressure
- Objective
- Good listener
- Can engage with people that they have never met before.
- Understands the rights and responsibilities of all participants and stakeholders at the venue.
- Can be assertive without being aggressive.
- Comfortable with conflict management
- Understand the requirements of the Gameday coaching team and technical area staff.

Some clubs may have smaller pools of volunteers that only cycle through the roles that they are best suited to rather than everyone having at least one turn at each role, some volunteers may fulfil the role they're most suited to on a more regular basis. Therefore, a team might have a pool of 4 CVO's that share the role on a 5-week rolling cycle and these volunteers never complete the other voluntary roles on behalf of the team (I.e., they never perform the Assistant Referee role or complete Canteen Duty)

By aligning the capability of volunteers to the Gameday role that best suits them, a Club gives all parties that best opportunity for a Gameday to reach its full potential and provide an enjoyable experience for all parties.

## **GUIDE TO RESOLVING CONFLICT**

Club Vested Officials may at times deal with volatile situations that require strategies to redirect hostile people and defuse confrontational situations. The first minute of an interaction often determines its direction and outcome and how people react to an interaction is largely dependent on the cues they pick up from you. Try the following steps...



## **STOP**

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



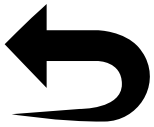
## **LOOK**

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



## **LISTEN**

- Are they drunk?
- Have I ever reacted like that?
- When I was that age...how did I behave?
- If I was brought up in that culture/environment would I act the same?
- Are their expectations of the ref, coach, players, or club too high?
- Am I the focus of their anger?
- Has the person just displayed aggression towards an individual or group?
- Receive other people's comments without interruption.
- Show empathy and use statements carefully.
- Validate and clarify.
- Recognise your own prejudices.
- Be quiet.



## RESPOND

- Receive other people's comments without interruption.
- Show empathy and use statements carefully.
- Validate and clarify.
- Recognise your own prejudices.
- Be quiet.
- Remain calm and keep your language short and simple.
- Use non-threatening body language and tone of voice.
- Very rarely is using the word: 'NO' going to get you very far with the public.
- It is better to say: 'I need' or we need rather than 'you must' or you 'have to'
- Learn to feel comfortable with phrases such as:
  - (a). 'I can help you better if....'
  - (b). 'I need you to help me by slowing down just a little...'
  - (c). 'I really don't think your comments.....'

## IN SUMMARY

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