

# CIRCULAR

## 05/2026 Behaviour Expectations

Attention	NPL Club Presidents
Date of Circular	16 April 2026
Emailed to	NPL Club Presidents, NPL Club Administrators, CC: CF Board, All Club Presidents
CF Contact	Samantha Farrow, Chief Executive Officer <a href="mailto:ceo@capitalfootball.com.au">ceo@capitalfootball.com.au</a> Angelo Konstantinou <a href="mailto:angelo.konstantinou@capitalfootball.com.au">angelo.konstantinou@capitalfootball.com.au</a>
Action Required	Clubs must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately brief all players, coaches, officials, and supporters on the behavioural expectations outlined in this Circular.</li> <li>• Ensure full compliance with all matchday requirements, including the appointment, visibility, and effective performance of Club Vested Officials (CVOs).</li> <li>• Actively manage and control spectator behaviour at all fixtures.</li> <li>• Cooperate fully with Capital Football investigations, including providing information, reports, and statements when requested.</li> </ul>
Summary	This Circular outlines Capital Football’s expectations regarding behaviour across all competitions and the mandatory measures required to address recent incidents. Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, officials, members, and spectators and must actively manage matchday environments. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in sanctions, including fines, competition penalties, and further disciplinary action.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS.....	3
CLUB VESTED OFFICIALS.....	4
MATCHDAY INCIDENT ESCALATION PROCESS.....	5
MATCH IMPACT AND DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES.....	5
IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT .....	6
RELATED DOCUMENTS.....	6

Capital Football has identified unacceptable behaviour across recent NPL fixtures, including incidents observed via match broadcasts and formal complaints received.

**This communication constitutes a formal directive to all clubs.**

**This is the first and only warning.** Any further substantiated breaches will result in immediate enforcement of sanctions. Current matters remain under investigation and will be progressed in accordance with the Disciplinary and Disputes Regulations.

**This directive is in effect immediately and applies to all matches from this point forward.**

Football environments must be safe, respectful, and controlled at all times. This is a shared responsibility across all participants in the game, including clubs, players, officials, and spectators. These standards rely on the active support and accountability of all involved.

Capital Football does not control the behaviour of individuals. Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, officials, members and spectators. Capital Football administers the competition and enforces the regulations and sanctions where standards are not met.

Compliance with these expectations forms part of each club's affiliation obligations. Failure to meet these standards constitutes a breach of those obligations.

## **CLUB RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, officials, members, and spectators at all matches.

Any abusive, discriminatory, intimidating, or offensive behaviour, or any conduct that brings the game into disrepute, is a breach of Capital Football regulations.

Clubs are strictly liable for this behaviour, regardless of whether individuals are identified. Where misconduct occurs, the club will be charged and sanctioned.

Clubs are responsible for all spectators at their fixtures, regardless of whether those individuals are registered members, known to the club, or can be identified. The position that individuals are "not affiliated" with a club will not be accepted as a defence and does not remove club liability.

For the purposes of these requirements, a spectator includes any person present at or in the vicinity of a match who is not a match official or participating player, as defined in the Capital Football Disciplinary and Disputes Regulations.

Clubs are required to ensure that their players, officials, and supporters comply with all applicable Capital Football regulations, codes of conduct, and competition rules, and must actively implement and enforce these standards within their club environment.

Clubs must take proactive and immediate steps to provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment at all fixtures. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of club affiliation obligations.

This includes the implementation of appropriate crowd control measures such as appropriate and safe segregation of opposing supporters where possible, management of technical areas, and maintaining safe distances between spectators, match officials, and participants.

Clubs must take all reasonable steps to ensure that individuals engaging in misconduct are identified and removed, or caused to be removed, from the venue. Failure to take reasonable steps to remove offending

individuals will be treated as a breach of these obligations.

The damage caused by spectator misconduct to participants, match officials, and the reputation of the game is not acceptable.

**Relevant Regulations:**

Disciplinary & Disputes Regulations

- Section 1 (Purpose 2.1 c, e).
- Section 4 (Misconduct 1.1, 3.1).
- Section 4 (Club Liability 6.1 – 6.5).

Club Affiliation Policy

- Clause 3.1(a), (e), (h), (n).

## BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

Clubs must ensure:

- Respectful behaviour towards match officials at all times – any abuse or dissent results in immediate sanctions, including suspensions and club charges.
- Respectful behaviour towards all participants and spectators – abusive, threatening, intimidating or aggressive behaviour towards any person results in disciplinary action against the club.
- Support for players and coaches is positive, including those of opposing teams – abusive or negative conduct results in disciplinary action against the club.
- No offensive, discriminatory, or inflammatory language or actions – breaches result in suspensions, fines, and tribunal proceedings.
- All signage, banners, and flags must be appropriate – any offensive, discriminatory, inflammatory, or otherwise inappropriate content must be removed immediately. Clubs will be sanctioned where such content is displayed and/or where prompt action is not taken to remove it.

Clubs must actively communicate these expectations to all players, officials, members, and spectators. This includes the use of visible signage at venues, digital communications, and as applicable pre-match, halftime, and post-match announcements.

All reported incidents will be assessed and investigated by Capital Football. Disciplinary action will be based on available evidence, including but not limited to match official reports, broadcast footage, and formal complaints. Complaints that are unsubstantiated, frivolous, or vexatious will not be progressed.

Capital Football will apply principles of procedural fairness in all disciplinary matters. Clubs and participants will be provided the opportunity to respond where required under the Regulations.

Clubs are required to fully cooperate with all Capital Football investigations and disciplinary processes. This includes providing information, reports, and statements when requested. Failure to cooperate will be treated as a breach of regulations and will result in additional sanctions against the club.

Where players, officials, or members are identified as breaching Capital Football regulations at fixtures in which their club is not participating, Capital Football may take disciplinary action, including imposing sanctions against the relevant club.

Clubs are on notice that where sufficient evidence exists, breaches will result in formal charges and the application of sanctions in accordance with the Disciplinary and Disputes Regulations.

These expectations require active management on matchday.

### Relevant Regulations:

#### Disciplinary & Disputes Regulations

- Section 2 (Sanctions for Match Related Offences).
- Section 4 (Misconduct 1.1, 3.1, 4.1; Club Liability 6.1- 6.5).
- Section 5 (Tribunal Proceedings).

#### Club Affiliation Policy

- Clause 3.1(a), (e), (h), (l), (n).

The expectations outlined above require active enforcement at all matches. Capital Football is implementing the following mandatory matchday control measures to address current behaviour concerns. Clubs are required to support and implement these measures without exception.

## CLUB VESTED OFFICIALS

Club Vested Officials (CVOs) are mandatory matchday control officials appointed by the club and are responsible for:

- Monitoring and managing spectator behaviour,
- Intervening in and responding to misconduct in accordance with the [Matchday Incident Escalation Process](#) (outlined below);
- Supporting and ensuring the safety and welfare of match officials,
- Enforcing matchday regulations and venue requirements,
- Working with opposition CVOs and escalating issues where required,
- Coordinating with security and/or police where necessary
- Cooperating with investigations and providing statements to Capital Football when required.

CVOs must be clearly identifiable, visible, and dedicated solely to this role while performing their duties. CVOs must not undertake any other matchday duties, including coaching, managing, refereeing, or club operations, while acting in this capacity.

Clubs must ensure that appropriately suitable individuals are appointed as CVOs and that they fully understand the role, responsibilities, and requirements associated with the position. CVOs must review the relevant guidance materials, including the detailed role outline and quick reference guides provided by Capital Football.

Capital Football acknowledges that the requirement for CVOs to operate without other duties may place pressure on clubs. However, this is not a new requirement, and the current standard of behaviour observed in some areas of the game is not acceptable. These measures are necessary to ensure a safe and controlled match environment.

Clubs must ensure:

- **CVOs are appointed, present, and meet the required minimum numbers** at every match (3 for Men's 1st Grade, 2 for NPLW and Youth) – failure will result in a \$1,000 fine per offence.
- **CVOs are listed on the official match sheet prior to kick-off** – failure to do so is a breach of competition regulations and will be sanctioned. Match sheets will be used by Capital Football to monitor compliance.
- **CVOs meet the referee team at the changerooms or entry point** (as relevant to the venue) prior to the start of the match and prior to the start of the second half. CVOs are to offer to escort the

referee team to and from the field of play at the start of the match, at half time, and at the conclusion of the match. Match official reports will be used by Capital Football to verify CVO attendance and engagement in these duties.

- **CVOs are clearly identifiable (vested) at all times** – any CVO not clearly identifiable will be deemed not present, resulting in non-compliance and sanctions against the club.
- **CVOs actively perform their role**, including assisting match officials where required in managing spectator behaviour – failure to act will result in the club being held liable for spectator misconduct and sanctioned accordingly.

CVO names recorded on the match sheet will be used by Capital Football to obtain formal statements during investigations.

Meeting these requirements does not remove a club's responsibility or liability for the behaviour of its participants or spectators. Clubs remain accountable for all misconduct. However, effective implementation of these measures is expected to reduce incidents and support a safe and controlled match environment.

#### **Relevant Regulations:**

Competition Regulations: NPL 2026

- Section 6 (10 Club Vested Officials).

Disciplinary & Disputes Regulations

- Section 4 (Club Liability 6.1–6.5).

## **MATCHDAY INCIDENT ESCALATION PROCESS**

Clubs must ensure that all mandatory officials, including CVOs, follow a clear and consistent escalation process in response to misconduct:

1. Initial intervention: verbal warning issued to the individual(s).
2. Formal direction: individual(s) instructed to cease behaviour or leave the venue.
3. Escalation: match officials notified where behaviour continues or safety is a risk.
4. Removal: offending individual(s) are requested to leave the venue.
5. Match impact: where behaviour continues or safety cannot be assured, the referee may delay or abandon the match.

Where individuals refuse to comply, or where behaviour involves threats, violence, or risk to safety, clubs must escalate the matter to venue security and/or police.

Failure to take reasonable steps in accordance with this escalation process will be considered a breach of club responsibilities.

## **MATCH IMPACT AND DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES**

Where misconduct occurs:

- Matches may be delayed or abandoned where safety is compromised – abandonment may result in match forfeiture and sanctions against the responsible club or clubs (where evidence determines that misconduct is attributable to both).
- Clubs will receive fines, competition point deductions, and further penalties for repeated or serious breaches.
- Clubs are required to show cause regarding ongoing participation in competitions in cases of serious or repeated misconduct.
- Individuals will also be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary & Disputes Regulations.

- Capital Football may impose additional matchday controls where required, including requiring matches to be played behind closed doors or directing clubs to provide appropriate security at their own cost where behaviour risks are identified or where previous measures have not been effective.

Clubs are required to immediately brief all players, officials, and supporters and ensure full compliance at all fixtures.

Capital Football is actively monitoring all competitions. Breaches will be identified, investigated, and sanctioned.

Capital Football will apply these measures in accordance with the Disciplinary and Disputes Regulations, with decisions based on available evidence and in line with procedural fairness requirements.

#### **Relevant Regulations:**

Disciplinary & Disputes Regulations

- Section 2 (Sanctions for Match Related Offences)
- Section 4 (Misconduct 1.1, 3.1, 4.1; Club Liability 6.1–6.5)
- Section 5 (Tribunal Proceedings)

Competition Regulations: NPL 2026

- General content relating to match abandonment, forfeits, and competition management.

## **IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT**

Capital Football will provide the following support to ensure compliance:

- CVO training – clubs are expected to engage where required,
- Practical CVO guidance to support matchday responsibilities - [CVO - Roles, Responsibility & Requirements](#) and [CVO - Match Day Guide](#)
- CVO vests – available at no cost; contact Capital Football to collect, and
- Recommendation of online education modules to support behaviour improvements and club responsibilities.

Clubs are encouraged to direct participants including players, coaches, officials, and administrators to the following online courses available through [Sport Integrity Australia](#) (access requires individual login/registration):

- Harassment & Discrimination
- Complaint Handling
- Member Protection
- Inclusion & Respect
- Safeguarding Children and Young People

Failure to utilise available support does not excuse non-compliance.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- [Club Affiliation Policy](#)
- [Disciplinary & Disputes Regulations](#)
- [Competition Regulations: 2026 NPL](#)
- [Sport Integrity Australia | e-learning overview](#)
- [CVO - Roles, Responsibility & Requirements](#)
- [CVO - Match Day Guide](#)