

CIRCULAR



Subject: 2026 Competition Integrity: Player Points | Club Audits

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Audience: Club Presidents and Committees

Summary: Strengthening Integrity and Fairness Across Our League.	Action: Information Only
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Dear Club Presidents and Committees,

With the season now concluded, clubs can finally draw breath and reflect on the year just past. That said, as we all know, an eye is never too far away from next season. To ensure everyone is on the same page, I am sharing this update now so that your club has clarity heading into planning and recruitment for 2026.

The Perth Football League is built on fairness, respect, and the spirit of amateur football. Integrity is the foundation of everything we do, and without it, the trust between clubs, players, and supporters is eroded. Our Board and Competition Integrity Committee have been clear: protecting the League’s integrity is non-negotiable.

Importantly, this package of reforms has been shaped through **heavy consultation with clubs and stakeholders**. Beginning with mid-year workshops in 2024, through data gathered across the past two seasons, survey feedback from every club, and most recently, workshops held in July this year, your voices and experiences have guided the direction. This collaborative process has ensured the reforms address the issues raised by clubs while preserving the fairness and balance of our competition. I would like to personally thank everyone who has attended the workshops this year and completed surveys. The information is invaluable!!

What We’ve Done So Far

In the past 12 months, we have taken significant steps to uphold the fairness of our competitions, including:

- **Appointment of a Competition Integrity Officer** – providing dedicated expertise and investigative capacity to monitor compliance, assess risks, and enforce the By-Laws.
- **Statutory Declarations for Incoming Players** – every player joining from a paid league must complete a statutory declaration confirming they are not being paid to play in the PFL.
- **High-Level Club Audits** – A Grade clubs have been reviewed for governance and transparency, identifying systemic risks that must be addressed.

- **Hudl Camera Rollout** – installed across venues to enhance visibility of on-field behaviour, support tribunal evidence, and monitor administration issues such as finals qualification compliance.
- **Clamping Down on Vilification** – introduced a formal vilification response matrix, ensuring consistency, accountability, and zero tolerance for discriminatory behaviour.

The Road Ahead

The measures we are implementing for 2026—finalised in the By-Laws to be released in February—are designed to address these dual challenges:

- Delivering a fair and equitable competition that meets the needs of our community, ensuring all clubs and participants can thrive.
- Strengthening integrity by tackling rumour and innuendo of player payments and ensuring compliance through robust systems.

Our League will continue to be guided by fairness, respect, and community values. By addressing both the rumours of player payments and reinforcing equity across the competition, we protect not just the integrity of the competition, but also its long-term accessibility and sustainability.

Men's Player Points System (PPS) – Key Changes

Following this consultation and analysis, endorsed by the Competition Integrity Committee and Board, the following reforms will apply from the 2026 season:

- **Reduced Men's Points Cap** – lowered from 40 to 38 across all grades (A–C5).
- **Tiered WAFL Allocations** – replacing the flat five-point allocation with a fairer model:
 - WAFL Reserves: 3 points
 - 1–20 WAFL League games: 4 points
 - 20+ WAFL League games: 5 points
- **Seasons of Service Reform** – introducing a minimum games requirement before a player qualifies for a service deduction, closing loopholes where players were registered but not contributing on-field.
- **Club of Origin Pathway (from 2027)** – a staged transition to allow clubs to nominate junior affiliates, ensuring players returning from those pathways register as one-point players. This strengthens grassroots links and avoids immediate imbalance.

It is important to note that the PPS is based on games played by a player over the previous three seasons. While many clubs are across this principle, some who have not previously dealt with PPS may not yet be familiar with it. To avoid any confusion, this detail will be clearly incorporated into the 2026 By-Laws (to be published in February).

These refinements ensure the PPS remains our most effective lever against player payments and preserves competitive balance across men's grades.

Women's Player Points System – Aligning Integrity Across Competitions

For the first time, the women's PPS will apply in a tiered and structured way across all grades to ensure even and fair competition, prevent clustering of elite players, and minimise mass player migration. Key reforms include:

- **Tiered Allocation Model** – recognising differences across levels:

- A Grade: 5 points
- B–C1: 4 points (reduced to 3 if <20 games played)
- A Reserves, C2–C4: 3 points
- **WAFLW Allocations** – 5 points for WAFLW League players, 4 points for Rogers Cup
- **Reduced Team List Size** – moving from 23 to 22 players
- **Reduced Cap** – from 40 to 38 points.

These changes ensure women's competitions remain sustainable, fair, and balanced while still fostering pathways from junior football to WAFLW and beyond.

Combating Player Payments

Alongside the PPS reforms, the Board has also endorsed further integrity measures to protect the League's amateur status:

- **Full Forensic Audits** – all A Grade clubs will undergo independent forensic audits of financial records to test governance, sponsorship practices, and transparency. The League have procured the services of Colin Shawcross who has unrivalled experience in this space having conducted countless forensic audits on WAFL clubs over the years.
- **Regulated Player Sponsorship Framework** – from 2026, all player sponsorships must be declared, managed by clubs, and transparently reported in audited financial statements.
- A Grade clubs can expect to be contacted from the League's Competition Integrity Officer over the next week to commence this process where further information will be provided.

These reforms will be implemented for the **2026 season**, with final By-Laws to be confirmed by **February 2026** to support clubs in their planning.

They reflect the overwhelming view of our clubs: that competitive balance, fairness, and the amateur ethos must be preserved. They are not about punishment; they are about protecting the future of the Perth Football League.

Thank you for your cooperation and leadership as we take these next steps together.

Kind regards,

Andrew Dawe

Chief Executive Officer

Perth Football League