



Oceania Cup 2026 - Tournament Rules

1. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

- All games will be played at Crawford Park and/or Geoff Watt Oval, Alstonville in 2026.
- There will be no junior competition in 2026.
- New format structure for 2026 with Open A, Open B and Open C competitions, details below.

Open A - 11 v 11 Competition

- Players: Maximum 18 players per team, 11 on the field, 16 maximum in the technical area at any one time
- Format: Round robin (each team plays 5 matches)
- Finals: Final between the Top 2 teams
- Match Duration: 55 mins (2 × 25 min halves + 5 min halftime)

Open B - 11 v 11 Competition

- Players: Maximum 18 players per team, 11 on the field, 16 maximum in the technical area at any one time
- Format: Round robin
- Finals: Final between the Top 2 teams
- Match Duration: 55 mins (2 × 25 min halves + 5 min halftime)

OPEN C - 6 v 6 Competition

- Players: Maximum 10 per team, 6 on the field
- Age limit: Must be over 35 years of age, no exceptions
- Match Duration: 55 mins (2 × 25 min halves + 5 min halftime)
- Format: Round robin and finals over Saturday ONLY.
- Finals: Top 2 from each pool advance to Quarterfinals, then Semifinals, then Final.

2. TOURNAMENT ELIGIBILITY

- All players must be female and the minimum age is turning 15 years old in the year of competition (15 in 2026).
- Open A - players from Premier League, Champions League/League 2.
- Open B - players from Leagues 3, 4 or 5.
- Open C - players must be over 35 years of age, no exceptions.
- Maximum registered players:
 - 18 per team for Open A, Open B full side (11 on the field)
 - 10 per team for Open C, 6-a-side (6 on the field)



- Teams must register under one club. They may be made of players from several clubs, if needed. A variation to this rule may be considered by the Tournament Committee on a case by case basis.
- To maintain tournament integrity, 'playing down' is strictly prohibited. Any team fielding Premier League, NPL, or Championship-level players will automatically be classified by their highest-ranked player and must compete in the Open A division.
- Fill-ins may be approved by the Tournament Committee in case of injury or other legitimate reason (not for finals, max 2 players).
- All players must be registered before the competition begins to be eligible to play.
- Minors must be under the supervision of a responsible adult at all times while at the sports fields during the tournament.

3. TEAM NOMINATION & PLAYER REGISTRATION

- Team nomination and fee payment must be received by the due date.
- Clubs are permitted to enter a maximum of two teams into the Open B competition. Additional teams may be considered at the discretion of the Tournament Committee.
- The player list (with shirt numbers) must be submitted before the tournament and remain unchanged. Separate match sheets will not be used for each game so it is important that player's numbers do not change from that given on the player list.
- All players must register individually via the PlayFootball system. [Please read / download our step by step guide here.](#)
- Players already registered with Northern NSW Football are free to register; unregistered or out-of-region players must pay the NNSWF fee. Note that this is separate to the team nomination fee and is paid to NNSWF and not to Alstonville FC.
 - Special note for QLD teams, you must get clearance from Football Queensland in order to play in NSW, otherwise an insurance fee will be payable. Please email oceaniacup@alstonvillefc.com.au if you need more information.
- Please also read our FAQs on the [Oceania Cup](#) page on our website for more details.

4. UNIFORMS / PLAYING STRIP

- Teams are required to supply their own playing strip that must be numbered.
- Alstonville FC will provide match balls.
- Numbered bibs are available if kits clash and no alternate strip is available.
- Shin pads are mandatory.
- No jewellery is allowed as per FA rules.

5. GAME REGULATIONS

General for both OPEN A, OPEN B and OPEN C

- Pointscore system will be followed: Win = 3, Draw = 1, Loss = 0
- Forfeits result in 3 points and a 3-0 score to the opposing team.
- Tie-breakers:



- a. Goal difference →
- b. Goals for →
- c. Goals against →
- d. Most wins →
- e. Most draws →
- f. Least losses →
- g. Coin toss.
- Drawn finals: 5 min extra time each way, then penalties if still drawn.
- Blood Rule: Players with visible blood must leave the field until cleared to return.

Open A & OPEN B - 11 v 11 Competition

- All OPEN A matches follow FA rules except match duration.
- Unlimited interchanges in the designated area, following FA substitution rules.
- Forfeits – Any OPEN A team not having seven or more players changed and ready to take the field 5 minutes before kick off time will be required to forfeit the match. Score 3-0.

OPEN C - 6 v 6 Competition

- All OPEN C matches follow the below rules.
- **Abandoned matches:** If a match that commenced is abandoned, the score at halftime or at the time of the match in the second half will be recorded as the final score. Matches abandoned in the first half or that aren't played will be rescheduled or recorded as scoreless draws. If a match is abandoned no team will be offered compensation in any form.
- **Duration:** The match duration is 50 minutes consisting of 25-minute halves. Five minutes is allowed for halftime. There is no time off for injury or other stoppages. Matches will start and stop by the referee's whistle or venue siren.
- **Free kicks:** All free kicks (apart from penalties) will be indirect. The minimum distance an opposing player may be from the ball in a free-kick situation is five metres.
- **Goal-kicks:** Goal kicks are optional. If the ball goes out across the goal line then play can also be restarted by the goalkeeper throwing the ball back into play. There are restrictions on goalkicks/throws:
 - a. The goalkeeper cannot kick the ball past the halfway line on the full from a goal kick, otherwise, it will result in an indirect free kick to the opposition nearest where the ball crossed the halfway line.
 - b. The goalkeeper cannot throw the ball over the halfway line on the full, otherwise, it will result in an indirect free kick to the opposition nearest where the ball crossed the halfway line.
 - c. After gaining control of the ball by using his/her hands, the goalkeeper cannot kick the ball over the halfway line on the full until the ball has been touched by another player. Catching, picking the ball up, or patting it down, is considered as having control over the ball. (Punching the ball away for a save is not considered having control.)

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- d. The only time a goalkeeper can kick the ball over the halfway line on the full is from general play where the goalkeeper has not used his/her hands to gain control over the ball. (or from a back-pass). Otherwise, it will result in an indirect free kick to the opposition on the halfway line nearest where the ball crossed
- **Goalkeeping – handling the ball:** The goalkeeper cannot pick up the ball directly from a kick by their own team (same as a back-pass). A breach of the rule will result in an indirect free kick to be taken on the edge of the square adjacent to where the offence occurred.
 - **Goalkeeping – release of the ball:** The goalkeeper must release the ball within six seconds of gaining control of the ball in their hands. Failure to do so will result in an indirect free kick to be taken on the edge of the square adjacent to where the offence occurred.
 - **Interchange:** There is unlimited interchange which can only be done when the ball is out of play. Interchanges are to take place at the halfway mark and the player leaving the field must do so before the replacement player enters the field.
 - **Off-side:** There is no off-side.
 - **Penalties:** Penalties are to be taken from the edge of the square in line with the middle of the goal. Goal keepers cannot be changed immediately after a penalty or free kick has been awarded (unless injured).
 - **Slide tackles:** Slide tackles are not permitted and any attempt, successful or otherwise, will result in a free kick/ penalty to the opposing team.
 - **Throw-ins:** There are no throw-ins. If a ball goes over the sideline play is resumed by a kick-in at the point the ball crossed the sideline. When kicked the ball must be stationary and behind the sideline. The minimum distance an opposing player may be from a kick-in is five metres.
 - **Forfeits:** Any team not having four or more players, changed and ready to take the field 5 minutes before kick off time will be required to forfeit the match. Score 3-0.

6. DISCIPLINE

- Yellow cards
 - 2 yellow cards in a match = suspended for first half of next game.
 - 2 yellow cards across event = suspended for first half of next game.
 - Yellow cards cannot be appealed.
- Red cards
 - Any player receiving a red card in a match will cause the judiciary or Tournament Committee to meet and determine a penalty. The Coach or Manager will be informed of the result. Further penalty may be imposed by the Tournament Committee if they believe the offence is serious enough to warrant further action.
- Team officials and substitute players must stay within the designated technical areas during matches. A maximum of 2 team officials and 5 substitute players are allowed in each technical area at a time.



- Players, Team Officials and Spectators must abide by the FA code of conduct.

7. REFEREES

- Referees provided for all games; assistant referees may be appointed for finals.
- All participants and spectators must follow the FA Code of Conduct. See section 8 for more details.
- Referee abuse is strictly prohibited; concerns must be lodged in writing after the match.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS REGULATIONS

We ask all players, team officials and supporters attending the Oceania Cup to show mutual respect toward each other and follow the FA Code of Conduct. Below is an excerpt from the official FA Code of Conduct:

- 2. Bringing the Game into Disrepute
 - 2.1 A Member must not bring FA or the game of football into Disrepute.
 - 2.2 A Member will be taken as having brought football into Disrepute if any of the following occurs:
 - (a) Discriminatory behaviour, including disparagement or vilification based on an Attribute
 - (b) Harassment, including sexual harassment or unwelcome conduct causing offence, humiliation or intimidation
 - (c) Offensive behaviour, including obscene, provocative or insulting gestures, language or chanting
 - (d) Provocation or incitement of hatred or violence
 - (e) Spectator or crowd violence
 - (f) Intimidation of Match Officials
 - (g) Forgery or falsification of documents or information
 - (h) Corruption, including offering benefits to influence outcomes
 - (i) Abuse of position for personal benefit
 - (j) Criminal offences
 - (k) Any other conduct that injures the reputation of FA or football generally
- Referee Abuse
 - Coaches, Managers, Players or Parents must not engage in loud vocal criticism of referees.
 - Younger referees are learning and must be encouraged.
 - Decisions are required every time a player touches the ball; not all will satisfy everyone.
 - Concerns about refereeing should be addressed in writing after the match, not by challenging decisions during play.
 - Australia has a shortage of referees; respect and appreciation must be shown to ensure a sustainable referee base.



9. RESULTS

- Results will be posted on a notice board and on the website throughout the tournament.
- Any disputes regarding the results may be considered by the Tournament Committee.

10. TOURNAMENT AWARDS

- Medallions will be awarded for the winners and runners up of the top ranked final for Open A, Open B and Open C.
- A perpetual Oceania Cup trophy will also be presented to the winner of each competition but will be retained at Alstonville & District Football club premises.

11. ISSUES & DISPUTES

- Any disputes or complaints concerning the tournament may be considered by the Tournament Committee. Any decision of this committee will be final.
- The Tournament Committee reserves the right to change or modify these rules at any time and at its own discretion.

12. FACILITIES & FIRST AID

- Toilets available at Geoff Watt Oval (no changerooms).
- Toilets and changerooms available at Crawford Park.
- Canteen and food trucks will operate during the tournament.
- First Aid kits and Defibrillators at the canteens; stretchers available in change rooms.
- Call 000 for serious injuries and notify a ground official immediately.

Thank you for reading these tournament rules.

We wish all players the best of luck for the weekend!