# **General Rules:**

1. **Timing Rules:**
   1. Length of Game = 4 x 18 minutes + time on (which makes up for time occupied in stoppages, such as when the ball goes out of bounds, injuries, goals/overs/behinds being kicked, or when the umpire is setting the angle of a free kick on goal).
   2. Breaks after the first and third quarters are six minutes, with a 20-minute break at halftime
   3. Start of Game = Bounce and Ruck contest (one player from each side only).
2. **The Ball:**
   1. A round leather football made of 18 stitched leather panels, similar in appearance to a traditional volleyball (but larger).
   2. Ball Dimensions = 686-737mm in circumference; 370–425 grams.
3. **The Playing Field:**
   1. Field Dimensions = 130–145m x 80–90m.
   2. Goal Dimensions = 6.4m x 2.5m.
   3. Over Dimensions = 6.4m x unlimited height.
   4. Behind Dimensions = 19.2m x unlimited height.
4. **Scoring Rules:**
   1. The game uses two large posts and two small posts, as in Australian rules, and a crossbar and goal net as in Gaelic football.
   2. In the goal net (a goal): 6 points, umpire waves green flag and raises both index fingers.
   3. Over the crossbar and between the two large posts (an over): 3 points, umpire waves red flag and raises one arm above his head.
   4. Between a large post and a small post (a behind): 1 point, umpire waves white flag and raises one index finger.
   5. Behinds are also scored when either 1) the ball hits a goal post, 2) any player sends the ball between the goal posts by touching it with any part of the body other than a foot or shin, or 3) the ball touches any part of an opposition player, including his foot, before passing between the goal posts.
   6. *Scores are written so as to clarify how many of each type of score were made as well as, like Australian football, giving the total points score for each team:*
      1. For example, if a team scores one goal, four overs and 10 behinds, the score is written as 1-4-10 (28), meaning one goal (six points) plus 4 overs (4 × 3 = 12 points) plus 10 behinds (10 × 1 = 10 points), for a total score of 28 points.
5. **Advancing the Ball:**
   1. A player must bounce, solo or touch the ball on the ground once every 10 meters or 6 steps.
   2. A maximum of 2 bounces per possession are allowed, while players can solo the ball as often as they wish on a possession.
   3. *All players must dispose of the ball correctly, by hand or by foot and the ball must not be thrown):*
      1. Methods of disposal = kick, handball (fist), and handpass (open hand).
      2. A handball, is performed by punching the ball from one hand with the other fist.
      3. The ball cannot be thrown up (like a volleyball serve) and hit, nor handed to a teammate like an American/Canadian football handoff, nor tossed to a teammate like a lateral in rugby or gridiron football.
      4. When tackled, the player must dispose of the ball cleanly or risk being penalized for [holding the ball](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holding_the_ball).
   4. *The maximum number of consecutive passes teams are allowed is 6 (ball must then be kicked):*
      1. This includes marks, handpasses, and handballs only (kicks shorter than 15m are unrestricted).
   5. Ball goes out of bounds = throw-in; if out on full or ruled deliberate, free kick to opposite team.
   6. *Unlike in Gaelic football, the ball may be lifted directly off the ground without putting a foot underneath it first:*
      1. However, players cannot scoop the ball off the ground to a team-mate, nor pick up the ball if they are on their knees or on the ground.
   7. If a foul is committed, a free kick will be awarded, referees (called umpires in Australian Rules) can give the fouled player advantage to play on at their discretion.
   8. *A free kick (mark) is paid if ball travels 15 meters or more if off a kick:*
      1. Play on if off a handpass or ball is touched by hand from a kick irrespective of distance.
      2. Marks will not be paid for backwards kicks caught by a teammate.
   9. The goalkeeper can no longer kick the ball to himself from the kick-out.
   10. Goalkeepers required to kick the ball out beyond the 45m line after all wides, behinds and overs; Failure of a goalkeeper to kick over the 45m line will result in a free kick to the opposition from the 45m line.
   11. There is no offside rule.
6. **Contact Rules:**
   1. The Keeper cannot be tackled or touched when the keeper is charging.
   2. An independent referee can cite players for reportable offences from the stands.
   3. A dangerous "slinging" tackle will be an automatic red card.
   4. Bumping (hip or shoulder charging) is allowed against any player within 5 meters of the player in possession.
   5. A [front-on bump](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepherding_(Australian_rules_football)#Bumping) (known as a shirtfront in Australian football) endangering the head will result in a red card
   6. Physical intimidation can result in a yellow card.
   7. *Full body tackling is allowed in the area above the knees and below the shoulders:*
      1. A free kick is given to the tackler if the player in possession does not dispose if ruled to have had prior opportunity (ball-up if ruled not to have had prior opportunity).
   8. If a foul is committed, a free kick will be awarded; however, referees can give the fouled player advantage to play on at their discretion.
   9. The Blood Rule = if any player, for any reason, should begin to bleed, no matter how minor or severe, they must remove themselves from the ground to receive treatment. They may return when the flow of blood has stopped and has been treated by the team medic.
7. **Penalties (in increasing order of severity):**
   1. Free kicks (loss of possession).
   2. Distance penalties (often in multiples of 13 meters).
   3. Penalty kicks.
   4. Yellow Card (cautioning a player, similar to soccer).
   5. Black Card (player ejected from the game with a replacement allowed).
   6. Red Card (player ejected from the game without replacement for the rest of the quarter, similar to soccer).
8. **Other Rules:**

# **Season Structure:**

1. **The IRFL preseason** (**currently known by the name “JLT Community Series”) is a 2-week period where each team plays 2 games (1h/1a):**
   1. Preseason games last 4 x 17:30 quarters instead of the normal 4 x 18.
   2. Eight players on the interchange bench, only 20 interchanges permitted each quarter.
2. **The IRFL regular-season is a 23-week season that starts on the third week of March and ends on the final week of August (i.e. early autumn to late winter in Australia & early spring to late summer in Ireland) in which each team plays 22 (11h/11a) games with one bye week:**
   1. Each team plays 2 games (1h/1a) against the other 5 teams in their division (10 games).
   2. Each team plays 1 game (6h/6a) against the other 12 teams in their conference (12 games); One division will be played at home & the other will be played away.
   3. All games are played on Thursday evenings, Friday evenings, Saturday afternoons/evenings, & Sunday afternoons/evenings.
3. **The postseason starts in September and will end with the International Grand Final (or the IRFL Grand Final) in October:**
   1. The postseason is 8-team single-elimination tournament where the top 4 teams with the most points from each conference (the 3 divisional champions plus a wildcard) will compete.
   2. The format for the 1st round (conference semifinals) will be 1v4 & 2v3; the format for the 2nd round (conference finals) will be (1/4) vs (2/3).
   3. The IRFL Grand Final must be held in either 1) Melbourne Cricket Ground *(100,024)* or 2) Croke Park *(82,300)* in an alternating cycle.
4. **The IRFL All-Star Series is a 2-game series takes place in the second & third weeks of November after the Grand Final and will alternate between Australia and Ireland:**
   1. The team that scores the highest amount over the two test matches will be the winner.
   2. The series must have two different stadiums in two different cities (ex: Docklands Stadium in Melbourne & the Gabba in Brisbane).
   3. The country that doesn’t host the Grand Final will host the IRFL All-Star Series.
5. ​**Bonus Points System:**
   1. 4 points for winning a game.
   2. 2 points for drawing a game.
   3. 0 points for losing a game.
   4. 1 bonus point for losing by 14 points (or fewer) or in overtime.
   5. 1 bonus point for scoring 10 goals (or more).
   6. 1 bonus point for winning while scoring at least 5 more goals than the opponent.
   7. *At the end of the regular season, the team with the best regular season record (i.e. highest point total) is awarded the Davin-Wills Trophy:*
      1. For those who don't know, it echoes the practice of the top European soccer leagues in which the team with the best record is the champion, similar to the Supporter’s Shield in MLS.
      2. The Davin-Wills Trophy winner is guaranteed home-field advantage in the first two rounds of the playoffs (excluding the IRFL Grand Final).
   8. *Tie-breaker - If only two teams are level on league points:*
      1. The team that won the head-to-head match (if applicable) is ranked first.
      2. If this game was a draw, score difference (total scored minus total conceded in all games) is used to rank the teams.
      3. If score difference is identical, total scored is used to rank the teams.
      4. If still identical, a play-off is required.
      5. If three or more teams are level on league points, score difference is used to rank the teams.

# **Salary, Positions & Substitution Rules:**

1. The salary cap, known officially as *Total Player Payments (TPP)*, is A$10,070,000 or €6,888,900.35 per season.
2. Teams consist of 15 players (a goalkeeper, two corner backs, a full back, two wing backs, a center back, two mid fielders, two wing forwards, a center forward, two corner forwards and a full forward), with an additional 7 substitutes that may be swapped for those on the field at any time during the game.
3. **Maximum number of interchanges per quarter is 16:**
   1. There is an unlimited number of interchanges allowed at quarter and half time breaks.
4. **Goalkeeper (1-5):**
   1. The role of a goalkeeper is to prevent the ball from entering the goal, so their shot-stopping ability is of great importance. The goalkeeper also has the role of kicking or pucking the ball out to the outfield players.
   2. A good goalkeeper most often has good agility and bravery as well as strength and height. There is no limit to where on the field the goalkeeper can travel, although once they are outside of the penalty area, they are subject to the same rules as all other players.
   3. It is not permitted to physically challenge a goalkeeper while inside his own small parallelogram, but players may harass him into playing a bad pass, or block an attempted pass.
5. **Right & Left Corner Back (6-15):**
   1. The role of the right and left corner backs is to defend against opposing attackers – in particular the left and right corner forwards.
   2. They will play most around the 20-meter line.
   3. The positions require the players having decent speed over short bursts and good hand eye co-ordination. Endurance and strength are unnecessary, although agility is required.
6. **Full Back (16-20):**
   1. The role of full back is one of the most important in Gaelic football or hurling. As well as defending against attackers, the Full Back is responsible for organizing the defense and is the key defender in front of goals, and is usually one of the tallest and strongest players on the team. The full back plays most often around the 20-meter line.
   2. The position of the full back requires that the player have decent speed over short bursts, strength, and good hand eye co-ordination. In playing either cornerback or full back positions a well-developed aerobic system is required although, unlike the corner backs, the full back is needed to make short burst sprints both away from and into the goal area.
7. **Left & Right Half Back (21-30):**
   1. Most often in between the 45-meter line and the midfield. The half backs are expected to defend against the opposition's half forward line but also has a responsibility to make runs from the 45-meter line to advance the play to the half forward and full forward lines. Sometimes referred to as wing backs.
8. **Center Half Back (31-35):**
   1. The role of the center half back is less defensive than that of the full back. The center backs operates from the 45-meter line and forward to the midfield. The center back will help win the breaking ball in the midfield and can be used as a 3rd midfielder. The center half back generally marks the center half forward. Sometimes referred to as center back.
9. **Midfield (36-45):**
   1. The role of the midfielders is to catch kick outs / puck outs (fielding) from either team's goalkeeper, and to act as the main link between the defending and attacking sections of the team. Midfield is often described as the most important role on the pitch. If the opposing goalkeeper is kicking the ball to the middle of the field, the midfielder has the responsibility to retrieve the ball and therefore prevent the opposing team from taking advantage and bringing the ball forward. This then gives a new responsibility to the midfielder to get the ball moving forward to the half forward and full forward lines.
   2. The position requires the player to have strength, speed, good catching ability, a good kicking game and, most importantly, endurance. It is important for the midfield to have a good understanding of their goalkeeper. They must anticipate where their goalkeeper will place the ball and therefore take advantage and bring the ball forward. Note that there is rarely a "left midfielder" and "right midfielder" – both play 'off' each other as a combined unit. If one midfielder is attacking, the other usually drops back to defend. Both midfielders rarely attack or defend at the same time.
10. **Right & Left Half Forwards (46-55):**
    1. The role of the right and left half forwards is to build up attacks and to feed the ball to the full forward line and also taking shots on goal or above the bar when opportunities present themselves. The half forwards will cover a lot of ground and utilizing speedy half forwards to run at defenses is a common tactic. They operate from the midfield to the opposition's 45 meter line. The right half forward's main opposing player is the left half back and vice-versa. Sometimes referred to as wing forwards.
11. **Center Half Forward (56-60):**
    1. The role of the center half forward who wears the number 56-60 jersey, is to build up attacks and feed the ball to the full forward line. The center half forward is responsible for taking shots on goal and points when opportunities present themselves. The center forward will cover a lot of ground and utilizing speedy half forwards to run at defenses is a common tactic.
    2. The center forward also helps win breaking ball in the midfield, helping to win the possession to bring the ball forward. The center forward operates from the midfield to the opposition's 45-meter line. Sometimes referred to as center forward.
12. **Left & Right Corner Forward (61-70):**
    1. The role of the right corner forward is to score overs, behinds, and goals. The full forward line operates around the opposition's 20-meter line. The right corner forward is generally marked by the left corner back.
    2. The role of the left corner forward is to watch the full forward's breaks and to score as many points and goals as possible. The full forward line operates around the opposition's 20-meter line. The left corner forward is generally marked by the right corner back, and usually prefers to kick with the right foot.
13. **Full Forward (71-75):**
    1. The role of the full forward who wears the number 71-75 jersey is to score goals in particular although points are usually the outcome of their attempts on goal. The full forward line operates around the opposition's 20-meter line.
    2. The full forward is generally marked by the full back. Or known as the 'Bear on the Square or Fox in the Box'. It is common for teams to employ a tall full forward to pluck high balls from the sky and to challenge the size and strength of the full back.

**TV Contracts:**

1. Australia = Seven Network, 7mate, Nine Network, Network Ten, Fox Footy.
2. Ireland & UK = TG4, RTÉ, RTÉ 2, Eir Sport, ESPN UK, BT Sport, Sky Digital, Sky Sports, BBC Northern Ireland, UPC Ireland.
3. Hong Kong = Australia Network.
4. New Zealand = Sky Sports.
5. US = Fox Sports 2, Fox Soccer Plus, MHz Worldview.
6. Canada = TSN2.
7. Europe = Eurosport 2.
8. Africa = ESPN Africa.
9. Spain = Canal+
10. Asia, Indian Subcontinent, Middle East = Australia Plus, ShowSports 2, CCTV5+, International Channel Shanghai, Fiji TV, EM TV.
11. México & Central America = SKY Sports.
12. Caribbean & South America = DirecTV Sports
13. Israel = Fox Sports Israel



