



RESCHEDULING AND FORFEITING POLICY

ANU Women's Football Club Rescheduling and Forfeiting Policy

Endorsed September 2026

Purpose

This policy establishes ANUWFC's process for managing requests to reschedule or forfeit competition matches. The policy aims to ensure decisions are:

- consistent with current Capital Football competition requirements
- coordinated at Club level
- fair and transparent
- mindful of player safety and wellbeing
- financially responsible
- respectful of other clubs, officials and facility providers
- consistent with ANUWFC's broader strategic and Club Changer commitments.

ANUWFC aims to play scheduled fixtures wherever reasonably possible. Where a team does not have sufficient players available, the preferred approach is generally to explore eligible player borrowing before seeking a reschedule or forfeiting.

However, playing a match should never be prioritised over player safety or wellbeing.

Scope

This policy applies where an ANUWFC team wishes to:

- request that a scheduled match be rescheduled
- forfeit a scheduled match.

Where another club asks ANUWFC to agree to a reschedule, the relevant ANUWFC Committee contact will consider the request having regard to:

- current Capital Football requirements
- ANUWFC player and coach availability
- field availability
- player welfare
- cost and administrative implications
- the interests of the affected ANUWFC team.

Guiding principles

When managing match availability, ANUWFC will apply the following principles.

Play scheduled fixtures where reasonably possible

Teams should make reasonable efforts to play fixtures as scheduled. This may include borrowing eligible players from other ANUWFC teams.

Player safety comes first

Players must not be pressured to:

- play while injured or medically unfit
- return prematurely from injury
- play excessive minutes where doing so creates an unreasonable safety risk

- participate despite illness or another legitimate health concern
 - play in circumstances that are otherwise unsafe
- solely to avoid a reschedule or forfeit.

Participation circumstances will be treated respectfully

ANUWFC recognises that players may be unavailable because of matters including:

- work
- university
- examinations
- injury or illness
- disability or health
- caring responsibilities
- family commitments
- travel
- religious or cultural commitments
- other personal circumstances.

Players are encouraged to communicate known absences early, but legitimate unavailability should not be characterised as poor commitment or used to shame or pressure players.

Club-wide cooperation

ANUWFC operates as one Club rather than a collection of independent teams. Where permitted under competition rules and appropriate for the player, teams are expected to reasonably support one another through player borrowing.

Borrowing should also be managed consistently with:

- player development
- workload
- safety
- player consent
- team needs
- current eligibility requirements.

Centralised coordination

Coaches must not independently agree to:

- reschedule a fixture
- change a fixture date or venue
- forfeit a fixture

without appropriate ANUWFC Committee approval.

This protects the Club from avoidable financial, administrative and regulatory risks and helps maintain constructive relationships with Capital Football, ANU Sport, facility providers and other clubs.

Current competition requirements

All match rescheduling, player borrowing and forfeiting must comply with the current Capital Football Competition Regulations and any applicable competition procedures.

Because competition rules and notice periods may change between seasons, this policy does not permanently reproduce specific Capital Football rules.

Before taking action, the Registrar / Capital Football Liaison will confirm the current requirements.

Managing player availability

Coaches should maintain a reasonable system for understanding player availability throughout the season. This may include:

- Dribl
- a team availability form
- polls
- a shared calendar
- team messages
- another practical system.

Players are encouraged to advise coaches of known absences as early as reasonably practicable. For planned extended absences, earlier notice is particularly helpful because it allows coaches to:

- plan team numbers
- arrange eligible borrowed players
- coordinate with other coaches
- seek Club advice where a reschedule may eventually be required.

Borrowing players

Where a team expects to be short of players, the coach should first consider whether suitable eligible players can reasonably be borrowed from another ANUWFC team. Coaches should:

- identify likely shortages as early as possible
- communicate with other coaches through the appropriate Club channel
- use the ANUWFC Player Borrowing Tracker
- confirm current Capital Football player-movement and eligibility rules
- consider the player's normal team commitments and workload
- seek the player's agreement before arranging a borrowed appearance
- avoid repeatedly relying on the same players where this creates an unreasonable burden.

Borrowing should support rather than undermine:

- player safety
- player development
- team cooperation
- competition integrity
- a positive Club culture.

Players are encouraged to assist other ANUWFC teams where they are eligible, available and willing. No player is required to volunteer for additional matches merely because another team is short.

When a reschedule may be considered

A reschedule may be considered where a team reasonably expects that it cannot field a safe and viable squad for the scheduled fixture despite reasonable efforts to borrow eligible players.

There is deliberately no absolute ANUWFC rule that a team must have fewer than 11 players before seeking assistance.

Factors may include:

- number of available players
- available substitutes
- injuries or illness
- positional requirements, including goalkeeper availability
- expected playing conditions
- player workload, including players already playing another fixture
- availability of eligible borrowed players
- safety considerations
- competition requirements
- any relevant exceptional circumstances.

ANUWFC does not require a team to play with an unreasonably depleted squad simply because the Laws of the Game technically allow a match to commence.

Requesting a reschedule

A coach who believes a reschedule may be required must contact ANUWFC through the nominated Club channel as early as reasonably possible and within any notice period required by current Capital Football regulations. The request should include:

- the relevant match
- current expected player availability
- steps taken to identify eligible borrowed players
- any relevant safety or wellbeing considerations
- any known exceptional circumstances
- other information reasonably required by the Club.

A coach should not approach the opposition club to seek agreement before ANUWFC has approved the request.

Club consideration of a reschedule

The relevant Committee member or Executive delegate will consider the request having regard to:

- current competition requirements
- reasonable efforts to borrow players
- player safety and wellbeing
- squad viability
- field availability
- referee availability
- financial cost
- administrative burden
- the impact on the opposition
- previous reschedules involving the team where relevant

- the Club's relationship with Capital Football, ANU Sport, facility providers and other clubs.

Requests will be considered fairly and proportionately.

Approval by ANUWFC does not guarantee that Capital Football or the opposition club will approve the proposed reschedule.

Arranging an approved reschedule

Where ANUWFC approves a request:

- the nominated Committee representative will coordinate contact with Capital Football and/or the opposition as required
- suitable alternative dates and venues will be identified
- necessary field bookings will be sought through the appropriate facility provider
- referee arrangements will be confirmed through the appropriate process
- the coach will communicate confirmed arrangements to their team.

A fixture must not be treated as formally rescheduled until the required approvals have been received.

Limits on rescheduling

ANUWFC places a limit of 1 team initiated reschedule per team per season because reschedules can create:

- additional administrative work
- field-booking costs
- referee difficulties
- scheduling conflicts
- inconvenience for opponents
- increased workload for volunteers.

Forfeiting a match

ANUWFC seeks to avoid forfeits where reasonably possible because forfeits may:

- affect competition integrity
- inconvenience opponents and officials
- reduce playing opportunities.

Forfeiting also costs the club a fine per forfeit, which increases with each forfeit request made by the club.

However, forfeiting can sometimes be the appropriate outcome, particularly where:

- there are insufficient eligible players
- a safe and viable squad cannot be fielded
- borrowing is not reasonably possible
- rescheduling is unavailable or has been refused
- safety or exceptional circumstances make participation inappropriate.

A forfeit should therefore not be treated as a failure by players or coaches where reasonable alternatives have been exhausted.

Forfeit process

Where a coach believes a forfeit may be necessary, they should notify ANUWFC as early as reasonably practicable. Where time permits, the coach should:

- confirm likely player numbers
- explore reasonable borrowing options
- notify ANUWFC of the issue
- keep their team informed that the fixture may be affected
- await Club confirmation before advising that a match has officially been forfeited.

The Club will manage formal notification to Capital Football and the opposition club in accordance with current competition requirements.

Where unexpected circumstances arise immediately before a fixture, the coach should contact the relevant Club representative as soon as possible.

Player responsibilities

Players are expected to:

- communicate their availability through the team's agreed system
- provide reasonable notice of planned absences where possible
- update their coach where availability changes
- arrive for matches at the time reasonably requested by their coach
- communicate if injury, health or another circumstance affects their ability to participate safely
- support teammates and other ANUWFC teams where reasonably able
- comply with relevant ANUWFC values and behaviours.

Players are encouraged, but not required, to volunteer as borrowed players for another team.

Players should not:

- be pressured to disclose unnecessary personal details explaining an absence
- be required to justify legitimate work, study, health, family or other commitments
- be pressured to play while injured or unwell
- be disadvantaged merely because they cannot regularly play additional matches for other teams.

Coach responsibilities

Coaches are expected to:

- maintain a practical system for player availability
- encourage players to communicate planned absences early
- monitor squad numbers throughout the season
- identify recurring squad shortages and notify the Coaches Coordinator early
- work collegiately with other ANUWFC coaches
- seek eligible borrowed players where appropriate
- use the Player Borrowing Tracker
- check or confirm current player eligibility rather than relying on outdated rules
- consider workload, injury and wellbeing when borrowing players
- seek Club approval before initiating a reschedule or forfeit
- provide sufficient information for the Club to assess requests
- communicate respectfully with their team about fixture changes.

Coaches must not shame, penalise or pressure players because of legitimate unavailability.

Club responsibilities

ANUWFC will:

- consider reschedule and forfeit requests fairly and proportionately
- support coaches in identifying borrowing options where practical
- provide access to current competition requirements or help coaches interpret them
- manage formal communication with Capital Football and opposition clubs
- coordinate field and referee arrangements where required
- consider player safety and wellbeing alongside competitive and financial considerations
- keep reasonable records of reschedules and forfeits
- identify repeated squad-number problems and consider whether broader intervention is required
- advocate appropriately for its teams where a reschedule request is reasonable.

The Club cannot guarantee that a reschedule request will be accepted by Capital Football or another club.

Recurring squad shortages

Where a team repeatedly struggles to field a viable squad, the issue should be raised with the Coaches Coordinator rather than managed fixture-by-fixture indefinitely. Possible responses may include:

- reviewing squad numbers
- establishing more consistent borrowing arrangements
- considering player movement where appropriate
- recruiting an additional player where Club capacity permits
- considering injury or availability patterns
- reviewing whether players are carrying unreasonable match workloads
- identifying another practical solution.

Any response should be consistent with the [Selection Guidelines, Player Wellbeing Plan](#) and current Capital Football requirements.

Wellbeing, inclusion and accessibility

This policy should be implemented consistently with ANUWFC's commitment to accessible participation. The Club recognises that members have differing levels of:

- time
- health
- work and study commitments
- caring responsibilities
- financial capacity
- personal circumstances.

The objective of availability management is to help teams plan, not to police players' personal lives.

Where a recurring availability issue creates a genuine operational problem, coaches should raise it respectfully with the player and/or Coaches Coordinator rather than making assumptions about commitment.

Communications

Communications under this policy should follow the [ANUWFC Inclusive Communications Guide and Values and Club Behaviours Framework](#).

In particular:

- communicate changes promptly
- avoid blaming individual players for a reschedule or forfeit
- protect confidential health or personal information
- avoid publishing unnecessary reasons for player unavailability
- communicate respectfully with opposition clubs and officials
- use appropriate Club channels for formal correspondence.

Records and continuous improvement

ANUWFC will maintain a simple record of:

- reschedule requests
- approved and declined requests
- forfeits
- any associated costs
- recurring reasons or patterns where useful
- significant issues arising from the process.

The purpose is not to monitor individual players' attendance. Instead, it can help identify broader issues such as:

- squads being too small
- recurring clashes with the university calendar
- particular periods of predictable player shortage
- borrowing-system difficulties
- field-access limitations
- opportunities to improve planning.

Related documents

This policy should be read alongside the below, which are available [on our website](#):

- ANUWFC Strategic Plan 2027-2030
- Selection and Trials Guidelines
- Player Wellbeing Plan
- Values and Club Behaviours Framework
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding and Reporting Guide
- Respect and Anti-Racism Framework
- Inclusive Communications Guide
- Player Handbook
- Environmental Sustainability Action Plan
- Player Borrowing Tracker / Procedure
- ANUWFC Constitution and
- current applicable ANU Sport, Capital Football and Football Australia requirements.

These documents will be applied together. For example:

- the Selection Guidelines determine sustainable squad composition
- the Player Wellbeing Plan informs safety, workload and reasonable flexibility
- the Values and Behaviours Framework governs how players and coaches communicate and cooperate
- the Inclusive Communications Guide informs communication about availability and affected matches
- current Capital Football regulations determine competition eligibility and formal reschedule/forfeit requirements.

Annual review

This policy will be reviewed before each winter competition season. The review will confirm:

- current Capital Football rescheduling requirements
- current forfeit requirements and penalties
- current player-borrowing rules
- notice periods
- available fields for rescheduled matches
- relevant facility-booking processes
- lessons from the previous season
- any required updates to the Coaches and Player Handbooks.

Material changes will be communicated to coaches before the season commences.

Version control

Version 1.0 drafted August 2026.