

NORTH EAST FOOTBALL

SUMMER SEVENS

Full Rules of Competition

Play. Learn. Grow.

Season 2026 | Willow Park, Wodonga | northeastfootball.com.au

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1. Welcome to Summer Sevens

What is Summer Sevens?

Summer Sevens is a football (soccer) competition run by North East Football on Thursday nights at Willow Park in Wodonga. It is played during the warmer months.

Each team has **seven players** on the field at a time, instead of the eleven you see in a full-size game. Because there are fewer players, the game is played on a smaller field (roughly a quarter of the size of a full field) and the games are shorter.

That smaller format means every player gets more time on the ball, more chances to be involved, and more fun. It suits players of all ages and abilities, whether you have played for years or are trying football for the first time. There are divisions for juniors and for Open (adult) players, and your division is confirmed when you register.

How to use this guide

Our one-page Competition Rules sheet is the short version. This guide is the full version. It explains every rule on that sheet in detail, plus the general football rules that apply in every game, written so that someone who has never watched football can understand them.

You do not need to memorise all of this to play. This guide is here so that anyone who wants to understand a decision, or know the rules properly, can look it up.

What are "FIFA rules"?

FIFA (the Fédération Internationale de Football Association) is the organisation that runs football around the world. The official rules of football are called the **Laws of the Game**. They are written by a group called the **IFAB** (International Football Association Board) and are used in almost every country, including Australia, from professional matches down to local parks.

The Laws of the Game are written for eleven-a-side football on a full-size field. Smaller competitions like Summer Sevens keep most of those Laws but change some of them to suit a smaller field, fewer players and a social, community environment.

2. Football words explained

These words come up throughout the guide. If you are new to football, it is worth reading this section first.

Word	What it means
Pitch or field	The playing area. Both words mean the same thing.
Touchline (sideline)	The two long lines down each side of the field.
Goal line	The two short lines at each end of the field. The goals sit in the middle of these lines.
Halfway line	The line across the middle of the field that splits it into two halves.
Centre mark	The spot in the middle of the halfway line where kick-offs are taken.
Penalty area	The marked area in front of each goal. The goalkeeper can only use their hands inside their own penalty area. Fouls by defenders inside it can lead to a penalty kick.
Outfield player	Any player who is not the goalkeeper. Each team has six outfield players and one goalkeeper.
Attacking / defending team	The attacking team is the one trying to score in a particular goal. The defending team is the one protecting that goal.
In play / out of play	The ball is out of play when the whole ball has gone over a touchline or goal line, or when the referee stops the game. At all other times it is in play.
Restart	Any way of starting the game again after it stops: kick-off, throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, free kick, penalty kick or drop ball.
Kick-off	How each half starts, and how play restarts after a goal.
Throw-in	How play restarts when the ball goes over the touchline. In Summer Sevens the ball is thrown back in with both hands (see Section 6.3).
Goal kick	A restart for the defending team when the attacking team sends the ball over the goal line (not into the goal).
Corner kick	A restart for the attacking team when the defending team sends the ball over its own goal line (not into the goal).
Foul	Breaking the rules against an opponent, such as tripping or pushing.
Free kick	A restart given to a team after the other team commits a foul or breaks a rule. It can be direct (you can score straight from it) or indirect (another player must touch the ball first). See Section 10.
Direct free kick	Given for: kicking, tripping, pushing, charging, jumping at or striking an opponent; a tackle that makes contact with the player instead of the ball; holding an opponent or grabbing their shirt; blocking an opponent's path while

Word	What it means
	making contact with them; biting, spitting or throwing something at someone; a slide tackle; handball (deliberately touching the ball with the hand or arm).
Indirect free kick	Given for: dangerous play, like a high kick near someone's head, even if no one is touched; blocking an opponent's path without making contact; arguing with the referee (dissent); stopping the goalkeeper from releasing the ball; obvious offside (goal hanging); the goalkeeper kicking the ball from their hands or drop-kicking it; the goalkeeper picking up a ball deliberately kicked or thrown in to them by a teammate (back-pass); the goalkeeper picking the ball up again after releasing it, before another player has touched it; touching the ball twice in a row when taking a restart, such as a kick-off, free kick or corner; a substitute coming on before the player coming off has left the field.
Penalty kick	A free shot at goal with only the goalkeeper to beat, given when a defender commits a serious foul or handball in their own penalty area.
Rolling substitution	Swapping players on and off the field at any time, as many times as you like. Explained fully in Section 4.
Yellow card	A formal warning (called a caution) from the referee.
Red card	The player is sent off and must leave the field for the rest of the game.
Forfeit	When a team cannot play or is too late, the match is recorded as a 3-0 loss for that team.
Ladder	The table showing every team's points and position in the competition.

3. The field, the ball and what to wear

3.1 The field

Summer Sevens is played on a smaller field, about a quarter of the size of a full-size football field. The ideal size is about **45 metres long and 35 metres wide**. Depending on the space available, fields can range from about 30 to 50 metres in length.

Each field is marked with touchlines, goal lines, a halfway line with a centre mark, and a penalty area in front of each goal. Some lines may be marked with cones or markers rather than paint.

The goals are smaller than full-size goals, usually either **5 metres wide and 2 metres high** or **3 metres wide and 2 metres high**. All goals must be safely anchored to the ground and meet Australian safety standards. Nobody should ever climb on, swing from or hang off a goal.

3.2 The ball

Footballs come in different sizes. Younger players use a smaller, lighter ball that is easier to control and kick.

- **Size 4 ball:** used by Under 13 and all younger age groups. A size 4 ball is about 63.5 to 66 cm around.
- **Size 5 ball:** used by Under 14 and older age groups, and by Open (adult) teams. This is the standard full-size ball used in adult football, about 68 to 70 cm around.

3.3 What every player must wear

Every player must wear:

- A shirt with sleeves, in team colours
- Shorts
- Socks
- **Shin guards (compulsory).** Shin guards are hard protective pads worn on the front of the lower leg, between the knee and ankle. They must be fully covered by the socks. No player can take the field without them.
- Football boots or runners (see 3.4)

The goalkeeper must wear colours that are clearly different from both teams and the referee, so everyone can tell who can use their hands. A different coloured shirt or a bib over the top is fine.

Religious garments, such as head coverings, are welcome, provided they are safe for the wearer and others.

3.4 Footwear

Players can wear **football boots** (shoes with studs on the bottom for grip on grass) or **runners** (normal sports shoes) on grass and synthetic fields.

3.5 No jewellery

No jewellery of any kind can be worn while playing. This includes necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings and studs, watches and fitness trackers, leather bands, rubber bands and hair accessories with hard parts.

3.6 Dangerous equipment

A player must not wear or use anything the referee considers dangerous to themselves or others. The referee can ask a player to remove an item or leave the field until it is fixed.

4. Teams, players and rolling substitutions

4.1 How many players

- Each team has **seven players on the field** at any one time: **six outfield players and one goalkeeper**.
- A team needs **at least five players** to start a game. If a team only has five or six players at kick-off, the game starts and the extra players can join in when they arrive.
- A team can have up to **14 players** listed for a match. Anyone not on the field is a substitute who can come on at any time (see 4.2).
- If a team drops below five players during a game (for example because of injury or a red card), the referee will end the match.

4.2 Rolling substitutions explained

A **substitution** (or "sub") is when one player leaves the field and another player from the same team comes on to replace them.

Summer Sevens uses **rolling substitutions**, which are much more relaxed:

- **Any time:** you can swap players at any time, including while the ball is in play. You do not have to wait for the ball to go out or ask the referee.
- **Unlimited:** there is no limit on how many substitutions a team makes in a game.
- **Players can come back on:** a player who has been subbed off can come back on later, as many times as the team likes.

How to make a rolling substitution properly

1. The player coming off must leave the field completely first.
2. Only then can the substitute step onto the field. The two players can high-five or tag at the line, but the player coming off must be off before the new player is on.
3. Make the change from your own team's side of the field, close to the halfway line, so it is quick and the referee can see it.
4. There must never be more than seven players from one team on the field at the same time.

What happens if a substitution is done wrong

If a substitute comes on before the player coming off has left, and the team ends up with eight players on the field, the referee will stop the game. The extra player must leave, the other team gets an indirect free kick (see Section 10), and the player who came on too early may receive a yellow card.

Changing the goalkeeper

Any player can swap into goal. Because the goalkeeper has special rules and must wear a different colour, a **goalkeeper change must happen when the ball is out of play, and the referee must be told** before the new goalkeeper starts.

5. Match day, game length and late teams

5.1 Be ready 15 minutes before kick-off

Teams must be **ready to play 15 minutes before their scheduled kick-off time**. "Ready" means:

- Players have arrived at the right field
- Everyone is dressed to play, with shin guards on and jewellery removed
- The team has its players sorted and knows who is starting in goal

Games run one after another on Thursday nights, so every game needs to start and finish on time.

5.2 How long is a game?

- A game is made up of **two halves of 20 minutes each**.
- There is a **2-minute break** between the halves, called **half-time**.
- At half-time the teams **swap ends**, so each team attacks the other goal in the second half.
- Games finish at their scheduled time. Time is **not** added on at the end to make up for a late start.

5.3 Deciding the first kick-off

Before the game, the referee uses a quick and fair method to decide which team gets the choice. This can be a coin toss or another simple method, such as:

- Rock, paper, scissors
- Choosing which hand the referee is holding the whistle in
- Choosing between two hands or objects
- Any other quick and impartial method

The team that wins the decision chooses either:

- which direction they want to attack in the first half, **or**
- whether they want to take the first kick-off.

The other team receives the remaining choice. At half-time the teams change ends, and the team that did not take the first kick-off takes the kick-off to start the second half.

5.4 Late teams

If a game cannot start on time because a team is not ready:

- The late team **loses one goal for every 5 minutes** the start is delayed. That means the game starts with the other team already in front.
- The game still finishes at the scheduled time, so a late start means a shorter game.
- If the late team is still not ready **15 minutes** after the scheduled kick-off, the match is a **forfeit**. The team that was ready wins **3-0**.

How late	What happens
Up to 5 minutes	Game starts with the late team 0-1 down

How late	What happens
5 to 10 minutes	Game starts with the late team 0-2 down
10 to 15 minutes	Game starts with the late team 0-3 down
15 minutes or more	Forfeit: 3-0 win to the team that was ready

Example

Kick-off is at 6:30pm. The Hawks are ready at 6:15pm, but the Wolves do not have five players until 6:38pm. The Wolves are 8 minutes late, so the game starts with the Hawks leading 2-0. The game still ends at the normal finishing time.

5.5 If you cannot field a team

If your team knows it will not have at least five players, please contact North East Football as early as possible. The match will be recorded as a forfeit, but early notice lets the other team, the referee and the organisers plan their night.

5.6 Safety first

The referee or North East Football can delay, stop or cancel a game at any time for safety reasons, such as lightning, storms, extreme heat or an injury. Any updates for the night will come through North East Football's usual channels.

6. Starting and restarting play

6.1 When is the ball out of play?

The ball is only out of play when the **whole of the ball** has gone over the **whole of the line**, either along the ground or in the air. If any part of the ball is still on or above the line, it is still in play. The ball is also out of play whenever the referee blows the whistle to stop the game.

If the ball bounces off the referee, it usually stays in play. The exception is when it changes which team has the ball, starts a promising attack, or goes straight into a goal. In those cases the referee can stop play and restart with a drop ball (see 6.6).

6.2 Kick-off

A kick-off starts each half and restarts the game after every goal. The team that has just conceded (let in) the goal takes the kick-off.

- The ball is placed on the **centre mark** in the middle of the halfway line.
- **Every player must be in their own half** of the field.
- Players from the other team must be **at least 5 metres** from the ball until it is kicked.
- The ball is in play as soon as it is kicked and moves. It can be kicked in any direction, including backwards.
- The player who kicks off cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.
- **A goal can be scored directly from a kick-off**, meaning the kicker can shoot straight at the other team's goal and it counts.

6.3 Throw-in (ball over the touchline)

When the whole ball goes over a touchline, the game restarts with a **throw-in**.

- The throw-in goes to the team that **did not** touch the ball last before it went out.
- It is taken from the spot where the ball went out.

How to take a throw-in correctly:

- Face the field of play.
- Keep part of **both feet** on the touchline or on the ground outside the field. Neither foot can be fully on the field when the ball is released.
- Use **both hands**.
- Throw the ball from **behind and over the head**, in one movement.

If the throw is not taken correctly (for example one hand, a foot fully on the field, or the ball not brought over the head), it is a **foul throw** and the throw-in is given to the other team instead.

Other throw-in rules:

- Players from the other team must stand **at least 2 metres** from where the throw-in is taken.
- The ball is in play once it enters the field.
- The thrower cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.
- **A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in**. If the ball is thrown straight into the other team's goal without anyone else touching it, there is no goal and the other team restarts with a goal kick. If it is thrown straight into the thrower's own goal, the other team gets a corner kick.

- A goalkeeper cannot catch or pick up a throw-in from their own teammate with their hands (see Section 7.4).

6.4 Goal kick (attacking team sends ball over the goal line)

If the attacking team is the last to touch the ball before the whole ball goes over the goal line (not into the goal), the defending team gets a **goal kick**.

- The ball is placed **on the ground** anywhere inside the defending team's penalty area and must be still.
- Any player on the defending team can take it, though it is usually the goalkeeper.
- The goalkeeper **cannot** pick the ball up and throw or kick it from their hands. The ball must be played from the ground.
- Players from the other team must be **at least 5 metres** away until the ball is kicked.
- **A goal cannot be scored directly from a goal kick** into the other team's goal.

6.5 Corner kick (defending team sends ball over its own goal line)

If the defending team is the last to touch the ball before the whole ball goes over its own goal line (not into the goal), the attacking team gets a **corner kick**.

- The ball is placed in the **corner of the field** on the side where the ball went out (inside the small corner arc if one is marked).
- Players from the other team must be **at least 5 metres** from the ball until it is kicked.
- The ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves.
- The kicker cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.
- **A goal can be scored directly from a corner kick.**

6.6 Drop ball

Sometimes the referee stops the game when nobody has broken a rule, for example to look after an injured player. To restart, the referee **drops the ball** for one player from the team that last touched it. All other players must be at least 4 metres away. If play was stopped inside a penalty area, the ball is dropped for the defending goalkeeper.

7. The goalkeeper

The goalkeeper (or "keeper") is the one player on each team allowed to use their hands. Summer Sevens has some special goalkeeper rules to suit a smaller field.

7.1 Using hands: penalty area only

The goalkeeper can catch, pick up and hold the ball with their hands **only inside their own penalty area**. Outside it, the goalkeeper is treated like any other player and touching the ball with their hands is a handball (see Section 9).

7.2 How the goalkeeper puts the ball back into play

Once the goalkeeper has the ball in their hands, they **cannot kick it out of their hands** and they **cannot drop-kick it** (drop it and kick it as it bounces). Instead, they must do one of the following:

- **Throw** the ball to a teammate
- **Roll** the ball to a teammate
- **Put the ball down on the ground** and play it with their feet. The ball must be still or rolling, not bouncing, when they kick it.

If the goalkeeper kicks the ball from their hands or drop-kicks it, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the other team.

Why we have this rule

On a small field, a long kick from the goalkeeper's hands can fly over every player and land near the other goal. Keeping the ball on the ground makes the game safer, keeps all players involved, and encourages passing.

7.3 The 6-second rule

Once the goalkeeper has control of the ball in their hands, they have **6 seconds** to release it. The referee may count down the last few seconds with their hand or outload. If the goalkeeper holds the ball for longer than 6 seconds, the other team is awarded a **corner kick** on the side of the field closest to where the goalkeeper was standing.

While the goalkeeper is holding the ball, no opponent can challenge them, kick at the ball or stand in the way to stop them releasing it. Doing so gives the goalkeeper's team an indirect free kick.

7.4 The back-pass rule

The goalkeeper **cannot pick up the ball with their hands if a teammate has deliberately kicked it to them**. This includes a throw-in from a teammate, even though it is thrown rather than kicked.

- If a teammate passes the ball back with their foot, the goalkeeper must play it with their feet like any other player.
- The goalkeeper **can** pick up the ball if a teammate passes it with their head, chest or knee, or if the ball comes off a teammate by accident (a deflection or a miss-kick).

- If the goalkeeper does pick up a deliberate back-pass, the other team gets an **indirect free kick** from the spot where the goalkeeper handled the ball.

7.5 Other goalkeeper points

- The goalkeeper cannot score by throwing the ball directly into the other team's goal. If that happens, the other team restarts with a goal kick.
- After releasing the ball, the goalkeeper cannot pick it up again with their hands until another player has touched it.
- The goalkeeper may dive to catch or stop the ball with their hands, but must not slide feet-first into another player (see 9.5).

8. Offside

8.1 What is offside in normal football?

Offside is one of the best-known rules in full-size football, and also one of the hardest to understand. In simple terms, it stops attacking players from simply standing next to the other team's goal, waiting for the ball.

In full-size football, an attacking player is in an **offside position** if, at the moment a teammate passes the ball to them, they are:

- in the other team's half of the field, **and**
- closer to the other team's goal line than **both** the ball and the second-last defender (the goalkeeper usually counts as one of the last two).

Being in that position is not an offence by itself. It only becomes an offence if that player then gets involved in play, for example by receiving the pass. The penalty is an indirect free kick to the defending team.

8.2 How offside works in Summer Sevens

Summer Sevens does not use the normal offside rule. Players are free to position themselves anywhere on the field, and close or tight offside calls are not made.

However, the referee can still call **obvious offside**, at the referee's discretion. This is aimed at "waiting behind the defence": an attacking player standing clearly behind all of the defenders, near the other team's goal, and waiting there for a long ball rather than taking part in the game.

- If the referee decides a player is obviously offside in this way and they get involved in play, the referee stops the game and gives the defending team an **indirect free kick** from where the offside player was.
- If it is close, or the referee is unsure, play continues.
- You can never be offside from a goal kick, a corner kick or a throw-in, or when you are in your own half.

8.3 How offside is judged across age groups

Offside in Summer Sevens is always at the referee's discretion, and it is judged differently depending on the age group.

- **Younger age groups:** players are still learning where to stand and how the game flows. Referees will be more relaxed and will only step in when a player is clearly goal hanging and it is affecting the game. They may also give a quick word of guidance, such as reminding a player to come back and join in, before calling it.
- **Older junior age groups:** referees will apply the rule more consistently, as players are expected to understand positioning and play fairly.
- **Open (adult) age groups:** referees will call obvious offside whenever a player is clearly goal hanging and gains an advantage from it.

Because this rule depends on the referee's judgement and the age of the players, the same situation may be called in one game and not in another. This is normal, and the referee's decision is final.

9. Fouls, handball and tackling

This section explains the rules about fouls and behaviour, as they apply in Summer Sevens.

9.1 What is a foul?

A foul is when a player breaks the rules against an opponent while the ball is in play. When a foul happens, the referee stops play and gives a free kick (or a penalty kick) to the other team. For some fouls the player may also receive a yellow or red card.

Referees judge physical challenges by how they are made:

- **Careless:** the player did not take enough care. This is a foul, with no card.
- **Reckless:** the player ignored the danger to their opponent. This is a foul and can result in a yellow or red card.
- **Excessive force:** the player used far more force than needed and could have seriously hurt someone. This is a foul and can result in a yellow or red card.

9.2 Fouls that give a direct free kick

A **direct free kick** (a free kick you can score straight from) is given if a player does any of the following against an opponent in a careless, reckless or excessively forceful way:

- charges into them (runs or barges into them)
- jumps at them
- kicks or tries to kick them
- pushes them
- strikes or tries to strike them (including with the head)
- tackles them or challenges for the ball and makes contact with the player, not the ball
- trips or tries to trip them

A direct free kick is also given if a player:

- holds an opponent (for example by grabbing their shirt or arm)
- blocks an opponent's path while making contact with them
- bites or spits at someone
- throws something at the ball, an opponent or the referee
- commits a handball (see 9.3)

If a defender does any of these inside their own penalty area, the attacking team gets a **penalty kick** instead (see Section 11).

9.3 Handball

For handball, "the arm" starts at the bottom of the armpit and runs to the fingertips. The shoulder is not part of the arm. It is a handball if a player:

- deliberately touches the ball with their hand or arm, for example by moving their hand towards the ball
- touches the ball with a hand or arm that is making their body unnaturally bigger, such as arms raised high or spread wide

- scores a goal straight off their own hand or arm, even by accident

It is usually **not** a handball if the ball hits a player's arm when it is close to their body, by their side, or being used to break a fall.

9.4 Offences that give an indirect free kick

An **indirect free kick** (one where another player must touch the ball before a goal can be scored) is given if a player:

- plays in a dangerous way, such as a high kick near someone's head, even if nobody is touched
- blocks an opponent's path without making contact
- argues with the referee using words or actions (dissent)
- stops the goalkeeper from releasing the ball
- is obviously offside (Section 8)
- as the goalkeeper: kicks the ball from their hands, picks up a deliberate back-pass, or picks the ball up again after releasing it before another player has touched it (Section 7)
- touches the ball twice in a row when taking a restart, before anyone else has touched it
- comes on as a substitute before the player coming off has left the field (Section 4)

9.5 Advantage

Sometimes, stopping the game for a foul would actually hurt the team that was fouled, for example if they still have the ball and are about to score. In this case, the referee can let play carry on. This is called **playing advantage**, and the referee usually signals it by stretching both arms forward. The referee can still give a card for the foul at the next stoppage.

10. Free kicks

Free kicks follow a 5-metre distance in Summer Sevens. Here is how they work.

10.1 Direct and indirect free kicks

- **Direct free kick:** a goal can be scored straight from the kick into the other team's goal.
- **Indirect free kick:** a goal can only be scored if another player (from either team) touches the ball after it is kicked. The referee shows an indirect free kick by **raising one arm straight up** and keeping it up until another player touches the ball or it goes out of play. If an indirect free kick goes straight into the other team's goal without anyone else touching it, there is no goal and the other team gets a goal kick.

10.2 How a free kick is taken

- The ball is placed where the foul or offence happened, and must be **still** before it is kicked.
- Players from the other team must be **at least 5 metres** from the ball until it is in play. Defenders often stand side by side to form a "wall" between the ball and the goal; the wall must also be at least 5 metres away.
- The ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves.
- The kicker cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.
- A team can take a free kick quickly, before the other team has moved 5 metres away, if it chooses to. The opposing players just cannot deliberately stand in the way to block it.
- A player who deliberately stands too close or delays the kick may receive a yellow card.

10.3 Free kicks near the goal

- **Free kick to the defending team inside its own penalty area:** The ball is placed where the foul or offence happened. Opponents must stay outside the penalty area and at least 5 metres away until the ball is kicked.
- **Indirect free kick to the attacking team inside the other team's penalty area:** this can happen, for example, after a back-pass offence by the goalkeeper. If the kick is less than 5 metres from the goal, defenders may stand on their own goal line between the goalposts.

11. Penalty kicks

11.1 When is a penalty kick given?

A penalty kick is given when a defending player commits a **direct free kick offence inside their own penalty area** (Section 9.2), including handball.

11.2 How a penalty kick is taken in Summer Sevens

- The ball is placed at the middle of the **edge of the penalty box**, directly in front of the goal.
- The kicker must be clearly identified to the referee.
- The ball must be kicked forwards.
- The **goalkeeper** must stay on their goal line, between the goalposts, facing the kicker, until the ball is kicked. They can move side to side along the line, but at least part of one foot must be touching or in line with the goal line when the ball is kicked.
- **All other players** must stay on the field, outside the penalty area, behind the ball, and at least 5 metres from the ball until it is kicked.
- The kicker cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it. If the ball bounces back off the goalpost or crossbar, the kicker cannot play it again straight away. If it bounces back off the goalkeeper, anyone can play it.

11.3 If someone breaks the rules at a penalty

- If the goalkeeper moves off their line too early and the penalty is missed or saved, the kick is taken again.
- If an attacking player breaks the rules and a goal is scored, the kick is taken again. If it is missed, the other team gets an indirect free kick.

12. Yellow cards, red cards and behaviour

12.1 The referee

- **All decisions by the referee are final.**
- Only a team's **captain or team manager** can speak to the referee immediately before, during and after the game, and always respectfully.
- Nobody (players on the sideline, parents, spectators) can come onto the field unless the referee invites them, for example to help an injured player.

Many of our referees are young people learning the role. Please treat every referee the way you would want your own child treated. Without referees, there is no game.

12.2 Yellow card (caution)

A yellow card is a formal warning. The player stays on the field. A player can be shown a yellow card for:

- unsporting behaviour, such as a reckless challenge, diving or pretending to be fouled
- arguing with the referee by words or actions (dissent)
- repeatedly breaking the rules
- deliberately delaying a restart
- not moving the required 5 metres away at a restart
- coming on or leaving the field without following the substitution rules
- a deliberate foul to stop a promising attack

12.3 Red card (sent off)

A red card means the player is **sent off**. They must leave the field and the area around it for the rest of the game, and **cannot be replaced**, so their team plays the rest of the game with one fewer player. A player can be sent off for:

- serious foul play: a challenge using excessive force or endangering an opponent's safety
- violent conduct, such as hitting someone
- biting or spitting at someone
- stopping an obvious goal-scoring chance with a deliberate handball or a foul
- offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures
- receiving a second yellow card in the same game

12.4 Suspensions

- **Two yellow cards in one game:** this becomes a red card. The player is sent off and is suspended for at least the next game.
- **A straight red card:** the player is sent off and is suspended for at least the next game.
- **Serious incidents:** these lead to an immediate suspension until North East Football has reviewed the matter. North East Football decides what counts as a serious incident and any further action.

12.5 Our expectations

Summer Sevens is about community, fun and game time. Everyone at Willow Park, including players, parents, carers, spectators and team managers, is expected to:

- respect the referee, the other team and each other
- cheer for good play from both teams
- never use abusive, racist, discriminatory or threatening language
- leave the field and surrounding area as they found it

North East Football may take action against any player, team or spectator whose behaviour falls short of this.

13. Results, the ladder and finals

13.1 Points

Result	Points
Win	3 points
Draw	1 point each
Loss	0 points
Forfeit	Recorded as a 3-0 win to the team that was ready, and a 3-0 loss to the team that forfeited

13.2 The ladder

The ladder ranks teams by total points. If two or more teams have the same number of points, they are separated by:

1. **Goal difference:** goals scored minus goals let in across the season
2. **Goals scored:** the total number of goals the team has scored
3. **Head-to-head:** the result of the game(s) between those teams

13.3 Drawn games

During the regular season, a drawn game stays a draw.

13.4 Finals

Where finals are played, a final cannot end in a draw. If the scores are level at full-time:

1. The teams play **extra time**: two halves of 5 minutes each.
2. If the scores are still level after extra time, the winner is decided by a **penalty shoot-out**. Each team takes turns taking penalty kicks, and the team that scores more wins.

Disclaimer – some age groups we do not display results or ladders.

14. Quick reference

Topic	Summer Sevens rule
Players	7 a side (6 outfield + 1 goalkeeper). Minimum 5 to start. Up to 14 on the team list.
Substitutions	Rolling: any time, unlimited, players can return. Player off first, then player on.
Game length	2 x 20-minute halves, 2-minute half-time. Finishes on time.
Be ready	15 minutes before kick-off
Late teams	1 goal penalty per 5 minutes late. 15 minutes late = 3-0 forfeit.
Ball size	Size 4 for U13 and younger. Size 5 for U14 and older, and Open.
Must wear	Shirt, shorts, socks, shin guards (compulsory), boots or runners. No jewellery.
Offside	No normal offside. Obvious goal waiting behind the defence, at referee's discretion.
Ball over sideline	Throw-in with both hands, from behind and over the head. Opponents 2 m away. No direct goal.
Kick-off	From the centre mark. Opponents 5 m away. Goal can be scored directly.
Corners and free kicks	Opponents at least 5 m away
Goalkeeper	Hands in own penalty area only. No kicking from hands: throw, roll or play from the ground. 6-second limit. No picking up a deliberate back-pass or throw-in from a teammate.
Goal kick	From the ground inside the penalty area. No direct goal.
Penalty kick	From the edge of the penalty box.
Cards	2 yellows in a game = red + suspension. 3 yellows in a season = 1-game suspension.
Referee	All decisions are final. Only captains or managers speak to the referee.

Questions? Contact North East Football at admin@northeastfootball.com.au or visit northeastfootball.com.au.

North East Football may update these rules during the season. The latest version will always be available from North East Football.