



RDFNL UMPIRING IN 2026 FAQs

How old do I need to be in order to umpire?

Anyone who turns 13 years old by September 30 of the year before, may umpire in the following season. RDFNL welcomes umpires of all ages, and encourages more mature aged recruits, as there are umpires in the group aged from 13-60+.

I'm a parent of a prospective umpire – what should I know?

As students in Year 7/8 and above, young umpires are encouraged to have their own email address and to take an active role in checking it regularly, as email is our primary method of communication. If the child is a minor then a parent will always be included in any communication.

Our newest umpires are encouraged to let the Umpiring Department know when they are unavailable for games or training, using OfficialsHQ and email. For many, this will be their first part-time role, and it provides a valuable opportunity to begin developing professional communication skills in a supportive environment.

We encourage young umpires to take pride in their role and gradually build independence by communicating in a respectful, clear, and appropriate manner, similar to how they would communicate with a teacher or in a workplace. Including their name and contact details in messages helps our staff and umpire coaches respond efficiently and provide the best possible support.

One of the key goals of this approach is to help our young umpires grow into confident and capable young adults. Umpiring offers a wonderful opportunity to develop self-confidence, responsibility, and leadership skills at an early age.

Do I need a minimum fitness level?

Depending on the discipline in which you choose there may be general levels of fitness required to be an umpire. Umpiring is for all ages ability and fitness levels and each of the disciplines have their unique skill sets. A goal umpire needs to be able to concentrate for long periods of time while a field umpire would need better physical condition to be able to move freely around the ground and be able to make position to see the contest.

Everyone welcome.

The RDFNL is an inclusive environment for people of all ages, gender and backgrounds.



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How much do I need to know about Australian Rules football and its laws?

You will be fully trained on the laws of Australian Rules football, along with the By-Laws specific to competition within the RDFNL. But, if you want to get an early start, hit this link here for the [AFL Laws of the Game!](#)

Training venues and times?

Pre-Season (Feb-March)

NEW UMPIRES & RETURNING UMPIRES FOR 2026

Training will commence on Wednesday 4th February 2026 – Wednesday 25th March 2026

Wednesday: 6.00pm – 7.30pm @ Diggers Rest Recreation Reserve, Diggers Rest

In season April to September 2026

All Umpires - (Wednesdays Only)

As per pre-season training all umpires (Junior and Senior) will be training on Wednesdays at Diggers Rest Recreation Reserve, Plumpton Rd, Diggers Rest from 6.00pm-7.10pm.

Coaching Sessions (Theory) are held after fitness and skills training from 7.10pm-7.30pm. These sessions are conducted in our clubrooms at Diggers Rest Recreation Reserve, Plumpton Rd, Diggers Rest.

What do I WEAR to training?

During all RDFNL Umpiring training it is recommended you wear clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for the weather as we move through the seasons. Training is all outdoors outside of the theory sessions outlined above. No clothing others may deem offensive or inappropriate.

What do I have to BRING with me?

WHISTLE! Always bring your whistle to training! If you are not sure what whistle to buy, the recommended model is:

Acme Thunderer

At the beginning of the season, umpires will be provided with online links to the Laws of Australian Rules Football, the By-Laws of the RDFNL, as well as an Umpires Handbook. Umpires should be familiar with all these resources. If required, we will inform umpires to bring any paperwork or a smartphone/tablet to training. Generally, just bring a whistle, drink bottle and wear appropriate clothing and footwear.



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How often do I need to ATTEND training?

Training is held weekly, and we encourage umpires to attend one session per week to get the most out of the program both physically and socially.

What can I EXPECT from a training session?

Training sessions mainly include knowledge and skills components.

Fitness is secondary to developing the umpire's knowledge of the laws, where to position themselves, developing confidence to enforce the rules, and their ability to apply them on game day.

Who will be COACHING me?

The RDFNL and RU Umpire Coaches all have significant umpiring experience and have been provided with the coaching skills to enable them to develop the umpires in their charge. Each discipline has a head coach and assistant coaches who are all willing to help.

How much will training COST?

Umpire coaching/training sessions are free of charge to all umpires registered to officiate in the RDFNL. Umpires are paid to officiate games which makes umpiring possibly the best value sport there is! An RDFNL Umpires Uniform will be required to officiate games. Please note first year umpires will have this provided free of charge.

What happens if it is RAINING?

Training will still be on! If it is too wet to be outdoors, training will be held undercover / in the club rooms. If the weather is extreme (heat/cold/rain), keep an eye on the website, the Stack Team App and your emails, and we will advise if training has been cancelled.

How do I register my interest for next season?

If you are:

- 1) Interested in umpiring for the first time
- 2) Already an umpire in another league and wish to be appointed to games in the RDFNL/RU, or
- 3) Wanting to return to the RDFNL/RU for another year of umpiring,



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Please register via OfficialsHQ. Registrations will open on the 1st November 2025 for the 2026 Season.

Those interested in becoming an umpire can register at [OfficialsHQ registration](#).

I've registered. What happens now?

Once you have registered via OfficialsHQ, you will then be asked to create or link your OfficialsHQ to AFL iD. Once you have linked your OfficialsHQ to AFL iD you will then receive more information about the season ahead and any education modules that you need to complete.

What are my Umpiring Options?

Field

A challenging and rewarding activity, field umpires take control of up to 36 players and is in total control of the game. The field umpiring career path involves multiple stages, with the pinnacle being umpiring at AFL/AFLW level. The RDFNL appoints field umpires each week in all games from Under 11s through to Under 17 as well as Junior and Youth Girls on Sundays, and U19.5s through to Seniors in our men's competition including Club 18s (Thirds) and Women's Senior football. Field Umpires require fitness and sharp, confident, decision making.

Boundary

For those who enjoy running or want to learn about the game from a distance, boundary umpiring is ideal. Boundary umpires are responsible for making decisions as to whether the ball is in play (or out!), as well performing the boundary throw-in. In the RDFNL, boundary umpires officiate in the RDFNL Saturday Senior competitions (U19.5s-Seniors) as well as all Junior & Senior Finals. Boundary requires a level of fitness as well as the skill of throwing the ball in. You won't have as many decisions to make on the boundary as you would as a field umpire.

Goal

In the RDFNL, goal umpires are appointed only during our Saturday Senior competitions (U19.5s-Seniors) as well as both junior and senior final series. Goal umpires will be standing mostly in the same position but will require strong decision making and concentration skills as well as being able to wave the flags.

How do I get the UNIFORM and how much can I expect it to cost?

NEW FIRST YEAR UMPIRES REGISTERED FOR 2026 RECEIVE 1 FREE UNIFORM

To order your uniform please fill out the attached Umpire Apparel Order form with your sizing included.



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If you are a first year umpire you will need to check the 1st year umpire box in the top right of the Umpire Apparel Order form. This will ensure that you won't be charged for your **FREE uniform.**

Once your order is received you will receive a confirmation email advising you of when you can collect your uniform at training or for pick up from our head office. Our head office address is 20 Long Tree Drive, Arnolds Creek, and the office is open Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

Where & when will I be umpiring?

All umpiring within the RDFNL is on Friday nights, Saturdays (Senior competition) & Sundays (Junior Competition).

WHERE and WHEN you will be umpiring depends on a number of factors.

WHEN depends on the availability you set yourself. Officials HQ is the fixturing program used to appoint umpires, and all umpires need to ensure they update the times that they are available on a weekly basis.

Requests: Umpires have the opportunity to request appointments at particular venues/times. We will do our best to meet requests but sometimes these requests will not be able to be accommodated. The RDFNL and coaches will take into consideration playing or coaching commitments for all umpires but will not be able to meet requests based on personalities.

What paperwork is involved?

The first field umpire listed on the appointments are expected to complete the match day paperwork on their smartphone at the end of their match. This form includes the entry of match report information, Best and Fairest votes, behaviour ratings for that game with timekeeper cards, score cards and team sheets being photographed and uploaded into the online form. If there is a report, send off or any kind of notable incident it is good practice for umpires to take their own notes in case they are required at the tribunal.

What is Stack TeamApp and do I need it?

YES, please download Stack TeamApp from the App Store or Google Play Store now. Search for Riddell Umpires and request access for you and/or your child. As an umpire and/or a parent, Stack TeamApp will be important for your umpiring journey in 2026.

Stack TeamApp will be used in conjunction with emails and the RU's weekly umpiring newsletter, the 'Weekly Whistle' to communicate with Umpires and Parents. Training attendance, training details, important documents, news, events, available games, and much, much more is all posted on Stack TeamApp.



Who will mentor me?

The RDFNL/RU will have a team of mentors and experienced umpires who have a varying level of experience in the RDFNL to help you through your initial matches.

Game allocation HOW do I find out when and where I will be umpiring?

Umpires receive email notification of each appointment/s from an online system called Officials HQ/ref assist. Appointments are released on the Tuesday night prior to each weekend’s round of games. Each umpire must accept their appointment by Wednesday evening at the latest.

Umpires are expected to accept any game allocated to them but the RDFNL are understanding if something arises out of the umpires’ control.

Further details will be provided to umpires at pre-season training and induction.

It is requested that umpires declare themselves as “available” or “unavailable” each week in Officials HQ as per their football, family, transport or other commitments. Failure to do so will result in not being allocated a game (or strong likelihood of being allocated a game when you are unavailable on a given day).

Payment – How much do I EARN as an umpire?

Pay rates depend on the age of the competition you are officiating, and the discipline of umpiring you are undertaking (field or boundary or goal). As you would expect, more experienced umpires who are officiating older age games are paid more than those umpiring younger age groups – which, in itself, provides umpires with the incentive to develop and increase their skill set.

Pay rates for field umpires in juniors start at \$60 per game for an Under 11s and gradually rising to \$82 for Under 17s. For Junior and Youth Girls the pay rates are \$56 and \$76 respectively.

Senior football rates are dependent on grade and division:

Field Umpires range from \$93 in U19.5s to \$97 in Senior Women’s and Club 18s, and \$152 in Senior Men’s football.

Boundary Umpires range from \$62 in U19.5s to \$66 in Senior Women’s and \$96 in Senior Men’s football.

Goal Umpires range from \$61 in U19.5s to \$64 in Senior Women’s and \$81 in Senior Men’s football.



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When and how am I paid?

Umpire payments are made directly into an umpire's nominated bank account weekly. The pay run will most likely occur on the Monday following the weekend's round of matches.

Do I need a Tax File Number (TFN)?

No. There is no tax deducted from your pay. As umpiring is classed as a "sport/hobby" by the ATO there is no need to declare income from umpiring on a tax return.

Do I need a Working with Children Check (WWCC)?

In AFL (Australian Football League) in Victoria, a WWCC (Working with Children Check) is a mandatory screening for adults (18+) in roles such as umpiring which involves regular contact with children, ensuring child safety; it's a free, 5-year check required by law.

If you have any further questions, please reach out via the details below.

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