

Northern
Suburbs Touch
Association

Competition
Handbook

2010

Authorised by NSTA Committee

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PURPOSE:

1. The aim of this handbook is to provide an easy reading guide to everything you need to know about the Norths Touch Competition.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT NORTHS AND ITS OFFICIALS:

HISTORY

2. Norths was established in 1979 as the first touch competition on Sydney's lower north shore. From a humble beginning of one grade with 8 teams, the competition has grown to its current state of 30 grades and 260 teams per year.

GENERAL:

3. Norths is non-profit sporting organization run by a Committee, which is supported by an Administrator and Ground Supervisors.
4. **Norths Committee** is responsible for the running of Norths. The Norths Committee is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), held in conjunction with the Spring Competition Registration Night (approx Jul/Aug). The committee comprises of an executive (President, Treasurer and Secretary) and a general committee (of up to 6 members). These are volunteer positions and fresh faces and ideas are most welcome. The committee meet approximately every two months. From the committee a number of sub committees are formed: These include:
 - a) **Grading Committee.** This is responsible for grading of team applications prior to the start of each season. The grading committee meets once prior to the start of each season. Further meetings maybe held on an as needs basis.
 - b) **Judiciary Panel.** This Panel meets to review send offs, citings, breaches of the code of ethics etc. The Judiciary Panel meets on as required basis.
5. **Norths Administrator** is responsible to the committee for the day to day running of the competition. This position is a part-time paid position.
6. **Norths Ground Supervisors** are responsible for the setup of the fields, sign-on, and running of games, etc each night at the grounds. They are your first point of contact on the night

NORTHS CONTACT INFORMATION:

- i) Website: <http://www.northstouch.asn.au/>
- ii) Email: norths@northstouch.asn.au (preferred communication method)
- iii) Phone: (02) 9411 3140
- iv) Post/ Mail: PO Box 922, Artarmon NSW 2064

COMPETITION INFORMATION:

SEASON/ COMPETITIONS/ GRADES:

7. Norths runs a number of competitions each year including
 - a) Autumn Season Competition running from February to May;
 - b) Spring Season Competition running from August to December; and
 - c) Junior Competition running from October to March
8. The Autumn and Spring Seasons consist of approximately 12 separate competitions (known as grades), catering for Mens, Womens and Mixed teams. These 12 grades are run on week nights (Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu) from 6:30 pm to 9:30pm. The details of the grades, timeslots, and nights can be found on the Application form issued prior to the season. Teams, through a grading process, are placed into a grade into a regular night and timeslot.
9. The standard competition season consists of 14 rounds followed by a finals series.

HOW TO ENTER A TEAM:

10. To enter a team into the Norths competition, you will need to obtain an Application Form from the Norths Website. Complete and return the Application form together with full payment of the registration fee by the closing date. The grades are normally over-subscribed, so it is best to get your application (and payment) in on-time.

GRADING OF TEAMS

11. Following the closure of applications, the Norths Grading Committee will meet to grade the team applications. All attempts will be made to find a place for all team applications, but this is not always possible. The following considerations are considered when grading teams:
 - a) Payment of fees.
 - b) Team preferences (as indicated on application form)
 - c) Team strength and compatibility (relative to grade strength)
 - d) Prior history with Norths (e.g. payment of fees, adherence to code of ethics + uniform policy + duty requirements)
12. The grades (nights/timeslot) as proposed in the Application Form may be amended as a result of grading process.
13. The gradings will be announced at the Registration Night.

REGISTRATION NIGHT

14. A registration night will be held to provide details of the Season and competitions/grade as well as announce the grading of teams. It is important that a team representative attends this night so that they obtain all the relevant information for the upcoming season. This is also the only opportunity to request a change to grade.
15. A **bonus** of 3 competition points will be awarded to teams whose representative attends the night, (A representative may only sign for one team on the night.)

SCHEDULE OF GAMES / COMPETITION DRAW

16. A Schedule of Games/ Competition Draw will be issued prior to the start of the season. This will detail each game to be played, dates, time, opponents, field number etc. (Normally teams within a grade will play at a same time and night each week.) A copy of the draw will be available on the Norths Website, and down at the grounds. The Competition Draw may require minor changes as the season progresses (eg team withdraws).

PLAYING RULES

17. The rules are as per the Touch Football Australia (TFA) rule book. This rule book can be found at www.austouch.com.au
18. There are some exceptions. Our low grades sides are allowed to play 7 aside. For low grade mixed, this means a maximum of 4 male players on the field.

GAME DURATION (STANDARD GAMES AND HALF GAMES)

19. Standard round games
- a) 45 minute game (2 x 20 minutes + 5 minute half time)
20. Half games (usually played following a rained out round)
- a) 20 minute game (no half time)
 - b) Teams to change direction following the scoring of each try/touchdown.

WET WEATHER NUMBER

21. If the weather looks threatening, please ring the Norths line 9411 3140 to check if the grounds are open.
22. Whilst the Willoughby Council has a wet weather line, this will not be as up-to-date as the Norths wet weather number. There have been occasions where Norths have cancelled games as a result of late storms. Or where Norths have received special exemptions to play. In these cases the Norths Wet Weather line has been updated but the Willoughby council line has not.
23. If your game (or timeslot) is rained out, two half games are played the following week.
24. If your game (or timeslot) is rained out for two weeks consecutive, then Norths will disregard the first washed out game and only play the last two games as half games. E.g. if round 1 & 2 are washed out, in round 3, only rounds 2 & 3 will be played and round 1 will be disregarded.

FORFEITS POLICY

25. If you are aware that your team wishes to forfeit you must contact Norths by 12pm by both phone (9411 140) and email (norths@northstouch.asn.au). This is to allow Norths to contact your opposition of the forfeit
26. If you do not advise of forfeit, your team will be earmarked for the following season. This will count against the in future applications. If the team forfeits 3 times in a season without notification, the teams will be removed from the competition.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY POLICY

27. Games are not usually played on public holidays or on the night prior to a public holiday. In these situations, two half games are played the following week. Below are days/ public holidays normally affected:
- a) Thursday before Easter
 - b) Easter Monday
 - c) Anzac Day
 - d) Labour Day
 - e) Melbourne Cup. (Whilst not a public holiday, past experience has shown that there are multiple games forfeited on this night due to people attending Cup functions. There also have been issues with alcohol affected players.)
28. There will be circumstances where Norths will play on Public Holidays or on the night prior. These are generally in the situations where there have been a number of rained out games early in the season. Where games are to be played on a Public Holiday, the Norths Committee will advise the teams as early as possible.

RESULTS/ POINT TABLES

29. The referees will use a score card to record touchdowns as they occur during the game. At the conclusion of the game, the captains will be requested to witness the result by signing the scorecard. If there is a disputed result, the referee/s will endeavour to resolve the dispute by consulting with the team captains. The referee may adjust the score card if both captains agree to a result. If the captains cannot agree, then the result on the scorecard will stand.
30. The result of the nights games, and updated points tables will be available on the Norths website. Should there be any issues with the results displayed on the website, please send an email (through the team representative) to the Administrator. Please note that the Games score card will be used as the final authority in cases of disputed results.

BEST AND FAIREST (INCLUDING THE DAVID HENNING TROPHY)

31. A best and fairest is awarded for each grade. This works the following way:
- a) The referee/s for the game will select a player that they consider Best & Fairest. This player will receive one point. Results will be tallied at the end of the season. The player that has the most points will be awarded the B&F for the Grade.
32. In addition to the above, the player achieving the highest Best & Fairest tally (across all grades) will be awarded the David Henning Trophy.
- a) David Henning was a past treasurer, player, organiser and wonderful volunteer at Norths. In his memory, Norths have dedicated the overall Best and Fairest Player in his honour.

SEMIS/FINALS SERIES

33. The Norths run two possible formats. The choice of finals series is detailed in the Season Application Form. The two Finals series are:

a) Semi-final + finals + Grand Final

i) Semis

(1) Game A - 1v2 - winner to GF, loser to Finals,

(2) Game B - 3v4 - winner to Finals, loser eliminated

ii) Final.

(1) Game C - Loser of Game A v Winner Game B. The winner Game A to the GF, the loser is eliminated.

(2) Grand-finals (Winner Game A v Winner Game C).

b) Semi-final + Grand Final

i) Semis

(1) Game A - 1v4 - winner to GF, loser is eliminated.

(2) Game B - 2v3 - winner to GF, loser is eliminated.

ii) Grand-finals (Winner Game A v Winner Game B).

HOW DO TEAMS QUALIFY FOR SEMI/FINALS?

34. The top four (4) teams in each grade progress to semi/finals series. The point table is sorted by competition points, then try differential (For and Against), then percentage method.

35. The percentage method is a calculation For /Against = percentage, with the higher percentage being ranked higher.

36. If two or more teams are on equal competition point, equal try differential, and equal percentage, then a coin toss will be used to determine which team/s progress through to the finals series. The coin toss will be taken by Norths Administrator in the presence of a Norths Committee Member.

HOW DO PLAYERS QUALIFY FOR SEMIS/FINALS?

37. Players must have signed on (no initials) and played a minimum of five (5) games during the season. If you play 5 (or more) games and forget to sign-on, you do not qualify for semis/finals.

38. Players are required to sign on themselves prior to taking the field. Signing on prior to the games cover the players for both legitimately and insurance cover.

39. Exemptions for the 5 game minimum may be considered in exceptional circumstances. (Work, family and social commitments are not considered exceptional circumstances.) To request an exemption, the team representative (Team Captain/Contact) must submit a request in writing prior to the completion of Round games (ie before round 14). Submission made by individual team members will not be considered.

COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS:

40. Please note the following important competition requirements

TEAM UNIFORMS

41. Teams must be dressed in a team uniform (i.e. same shirt & same pants)
42. Shirts can be any colour or combination of colours EXCEPT majority white/grey. The reason behind this is that the Referees and Duty Refs wear white shirts.)
43. Shirts to have a number on the back (min of 16cms) that is clearly visible. (Taped numbers are not acceptable.)
44. Numbers are to be unique (i.e. No two numbers are to be the same)
45. No uniform, no number, NO PLAY, no exceptions.

TOUCH BALLS

46. Each team must provide a ball.

DUTY REQUIREMENTS

47. Each team will be allocated approx 2 nights of "Duty". On these nights, the team is to provide Duty Referees for the timeslots in which the team does not play. (i.e. if the team plays at 6.30pm timeslot, then they are on Duty for 7:20pm & 8:10pm timeslots.)
48. The purpose of this requirement is to provide sufficient referees to run the competition.
49. Teams that do not provide Duty Refs will be suspended from playing until Duty requirements are completed AND will be penalised 3 competition points.

RULES/REFEREES COURSE

50. A rules/referees course is run at the start of each season. The purpose of this course is to provide training for Duty Referees. The course costs are incorporated in the registration fee.

CODE OF ETHICS

51. Norths has adopted the Touch Football Australia (TFA) Code of Ethics. It is a requirement that teams, players, officials and spectators abide by this code.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY TO ABUSE.

52. Norths has adopted a zero tolerance policy to abuse, which includes sledging. This policy includes:
 - a) Zero tolerance to abuse between players/teams on the field.
 - b) Zero tolerance to abuse from the sideline (from players, coaches, supporters/ spectators etc)
 - c) Zero tolerance to referee abuse. As part of this, there is a 20 minute cool down period immediately after the game. Players should not approach the referee within this 20 minute window to discuss game situations/ referee decisions etc.
53. Breaches of the above include suspension and removal from the competition.

INFRINGEMENTS DURING/AFTER THE GAME + JUDICIARY

54. Players and officials who infringe the playing rules of Touch or take part in any misconduct are liable to penalty or other appropriate action according to the seriousness of the infringement or misconduct, in accordance with the provisions of the TFA Playing Rules [Rule 17].
55. Minor offences: are usually handled by the referee/s who have the following options available to them. Minor offences are not compelled to be sent before a Judiciary hearing.
56. Caution issued to the offending player, or in the case of an offending official, to the captain of the offending official's team.
57. Penalty issued to the team of the offending player or offending official.
58. Sin-bin (known as period of time). Two periods of time result in a send-off.
59. Captain given option to sideline offending player or remove offending official from the playing area under the control of the referee.
60. More serious offences: usually result in either one or both of the following.
61. Send-off. This is a dismissal for the remainder of game. A send-off also results in an automatic two match suspension (non-appealable).
62. A Judiciary hearing. This is convened for the more serious offences including repeat offences. Depending on the severity of the offence, the Judiciary Panel may impose sanctions of one week suspensions to life time bans and/or permanent exclusions from the Norths Competitions.

FACILITIES AT THE GROUNDS

63. **Car parking.** There is small upper and a large lower car park. Should the car park be full, please park in the Artarmon Bowling Club grounds or on the street. Car-pooling is recommended.
64. **Toilets.** Both male and female toilets are located at the rear of the Pavilion. The Male toilet is closure to the upper car-park, and the female toilet is located closer to Field 3. .
65. **Change rooms.** These are located at the front (centre) of the Pavilion. Female change rooms are to the right, and Males to the left. Showers are also available for use. (There are NO toilets in the change rooms.)
66. **Canteen** – Norths operate a canteen in the Pavilion, selling drinks & snacks and merchandise.
67. **Water.** A drinking fountain is located at the front of the Pavilion. There is also a tap at the base of the Pavilion.
68. **Garbage/Rubbish bins.** A number of bins are located throughout the Reserve, including at the base of the Pavilion and the entry to the fields from the lower car park. Please use these bins and keep our Reserve clean.
69. When leaving the grounds, please be mindful of the noise to local residents. (No hooting of car horns, or revving of engines.)

LINE MARKING

70. Norths are responsible for marking the fields, and have a line marking machine. A small group of dedicated volunteers endeavour to mark the fields prior to the start of each week, subject to weather and ground bookings. This small band of volunteers is keen to expand their numbers. Please contact the Norths Administrator if you are keen to help out.

71. Norths use a white, water based, non-toxic paint to mark the lines. (Council do not permit a line marking that permanently burn or damage the grass surface.) Factors such as heavy rain, mowing of the grass, and heavy usage of the fields affect the visibility of the lines.

ALCOHOL POLICY

72. The Artarmon Reserve is located within the Willoughby Council, and as such Norths is subject to its alcohol policy.

73. Norths does not have a license to sell alcohol.

74. Players under the influence of alcohol will not be allowed to play in games.

75. Unruly spectators will be asked to leave.

INJURIES POLICY

76. In the event of a serious injury during playing, advise the referee who will stop the game. Alert the Ground Supervisor and call 000.

77. In the event of a minor injury while playing, advise the referee who will stop the game and allow for replacement. After the game advise the Ground Supervisor, and complete an injury form.

78. Insurance is included as part of the team fee. Registered players, who are injured during competition games, are eligible to submit a claim. Further details are contained on the Norths Website.

BLOOD BIN

79. Any player with a bleeding cut or abrasion must leave the field immediately and arrange to have the cut or abrasion covered. The Pavilion has basic first aid essentials if needed. The player cannot return to the field until the bleeding has stopped and all blood has been washed from skin and clothes.

BREACHES OF NORTHS LOCAL RULES:

80. Depending on the severity of the breach, the following penalties may apply to teams/players

- a) Formal warning
- b) Loss of competition points
- c) Ineligible to participate in semis/finals/grand finals
- d) Removal from competition.

COMPLIMENTS, CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

81. Norths welcome compliments and constructive feedback. Compliments and constructive criticism help shape a better competition for the enjoyment of all. Compliments and constructive criticisms can be made to:
- a) the Norths Committee (preferred) in writing (via email); or
 - b) the Ground Supervisor down at the grounds.
82. All complaints must be in writing, addressed through the team representative to the Norths Committee. It is inappropriate to “unload” on a Ground Supervisor or Referee - they simply aren’t paid enough!

INTERESTED IN REFEREEING?

83. Norths has strong referee contingent, who pride themselves on providing a good game for the teams and players. Norths Referees also have a great depth of experience, including National and International game.
84. Norths provides a high level of support to its referees. This includes coaching, training, mentoring and other assistance.
85. Norths are keen to boost referee numbers so as to cover all the games. .
86. If you are keen to give something back to the game and have a run at the same time, give refereeing a go. It helps keep the competition running, keeps you fit, and gives you a sense of achievement. Contact us by:
- Emailing norths@northstouch.asn.au; or
 - Speaking to the Ground Supervisor or Referee at the grounds.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

WHAT MUST I DO BEFORE I PLAY MY GAME?

- Sign your signature on the sign-on sheet for your team. A full signature is required, i.e. no initials. And another member of your team cannot sign-on for you.
- Have the gear including
 - correct team uniform
 - team shirt with number on the back
 - Team shorts (or similar coloured shorts)
 - Proper footwear (football shoes with moulded plastic/rubber studs)
 - Water bottle for hydration
- Warm-up to prevent injury

WHAT ARE SIGN-ON SHEETS, WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR, WHERE CAN THEY BE FOUND?

- The sign-on sheets are used to record who played for the team on the night. This information is used for two purposes:
 - insurance in event of injury
 - counting games played. This is for eligibility for semis/finals series. See player qualification for semis/finals.
- The sign-on sheets are located in the canteen counter of the club house.

HOW DO I KNOW WHICH FIELD MY TEAM IS PLAYING ON AND WHO WE ARE PLAYING?

- The notice board, located at the front of the Pavilion, has a copy of the Draw. This will tell you which field you are playing on and the name of the opposition. A map of the fields is also provided.

WHO SHOULD I TALK TO IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT THE GROUNDS?

- Ground Supervisors are the people to ask. They organise the games each night and can be found in the canteen/refs room. (Please note that Ground Supervisors are happy to accept constructive feedback, but not complaints. Complaints must be in writing to the Committee.)

WHAT FACILITIES ARE AT THE GROUNDS?

- **Toilets** – These are located at the rear of the Pavillion. Female toilets are located on east side (Chanel 9 Antenna side). Male toilets are located on the west side (closest to car park). Toilets are NOT located inside the change-room, NOR can they be accessed from the front of the Pavillion.
- **Change rooms** – These are located in the front centre of the Pavillion (Females to the right, and Males to the left.) Showers are available in the change-rooms. There are no toilets in change-rooms.

- **Car park** – There is an upper and lower car park. Car parking is limited and car-pooling is recommended.

WHEN MUST I HAVE MY TEAM UNIFORM BY?

- Round 2 is the last round you're allowed to play in a non-team uniform. From Round 3 onwards, if you're not in uniform, you cannot take the field to play. There are no exceptions. (The referee or opposing team cannot provide an exemption.)
- Your shirt must also be numbered and clearly on the back of the playing shirt. Numbers must be clearly visible and no less than 16 cm in height. Team shirts cannot be white or light grey (or majority white or light grey).
- No two (2) players of the same team may wear the same number.
- Shirt swapping is not allowed after Round 2.

WHY CAN'T MY TEAM WEAR A WHITE OR GREY SHIRT TO PLAY IN?

- The referees wear white shirts and the Duty Referees are required to wear white shirts. To prevent confusion between referees and players on the field, white or grey shirts are not allowed as a team uniform.

WHAT IS THE DUTY REQUIREMENT?

- Each team is allocated approximately 2 nights per season to do "duty". The team is required to provide two players to assist with refereeing a game on the night that they play in but not the timeslot (i.e., if the team plays in the 6.30pm timeslot, then they will be required to do "duty" at 7.20pm and 8.10pm)
- Duty refereeing is organized so that there are sufficient referees to assist with the running of the competition. If there are sufficient badged referees available to referee, then players may not be required. But players must still report to the ground supervisor of the night regardless.
- Players must report to the ground supervisor at the Pavilion for both timeslots and confirm attendance by signing the ground summary sheet.
- Players must also be prepared to referee.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T REFEREE?

- Norths run a basic refereeing course at the start of each season. If you haven't refereed before, then you should attend this. The course is generally held on a Sunday from 9am – 1pm at the Artarmon Bowling Club.

CAN I PLAY IN DIFFERENT TEAMS?

- You can only play in one team per grade, but can play in teams in other grades, provided you meet the criteria of the grade.
- If you do play in multiple teams, and these teams make the semis/finals series, then you may be faced with the risk of having to choose which team/s to play for. Whilst Norths will endeavour to organise games to prevent clashes, this is not always possible.

IF MY TEAM IS SHORT OF PLAYERS ON THE NIGHT, CAN I “RECRUIT” PLAYERS FROM OTHER TIMESLOTS?

- The answer is yes, but these players must be registered on your team. (See registering new players)
- And these players must sign-on the sign-on sheet prior to playing.

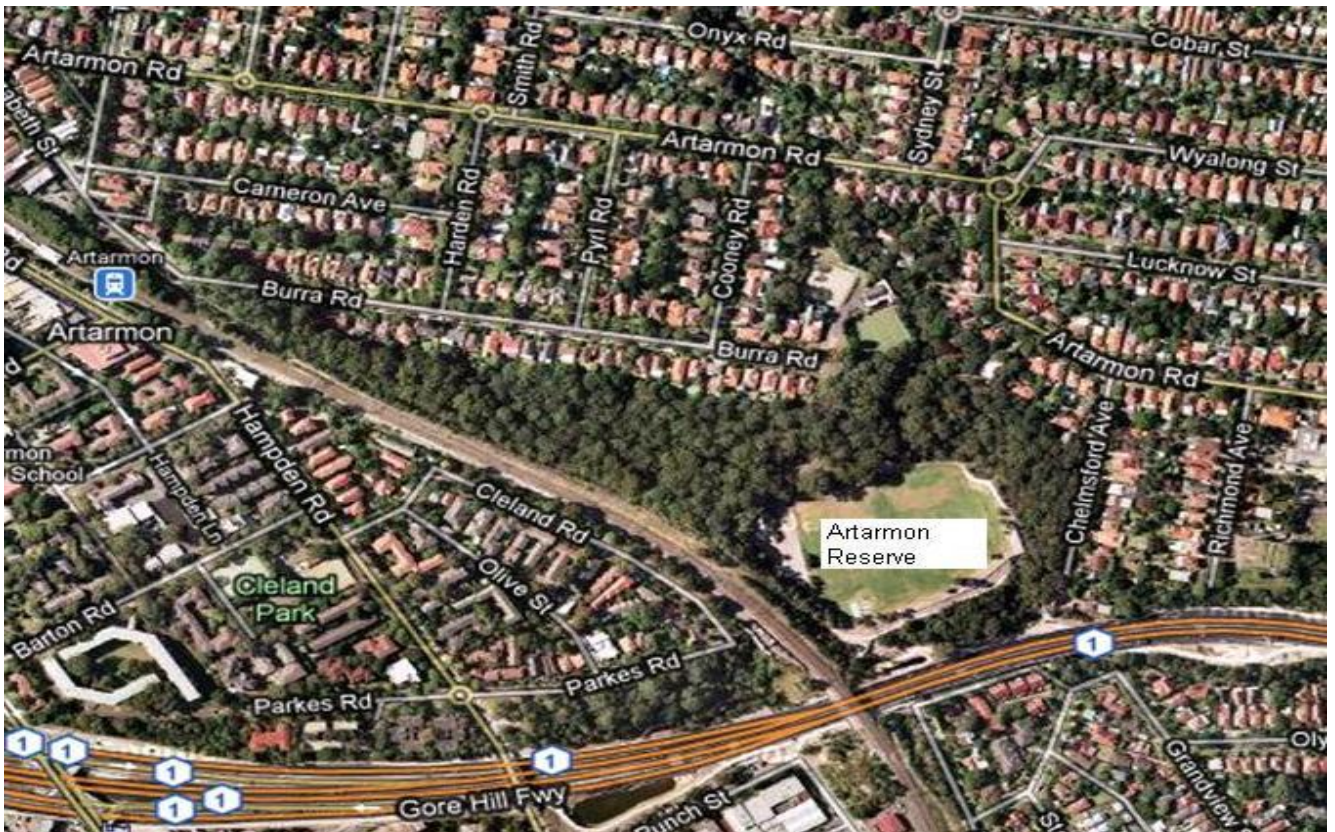
WHAT ARE HALF GAMES?

- These are considered catch up rounds if the previous week has been cancelled due to public holidays or wet weather
- Teams play 20 minute turnaround games

WHAT IS A FORCED SUB, PERIOD OF TIME (SIN BIN), AND A SEND-OFF?

- A Forced Sub is a forced substitution of a specific player for disciplinary issues. (The number of players on the field is not reduced.) This player must leave the field, and can be replaced.
- Period of Time (Sin Bin) – temporary disciplining of a player. (The number of players on the field is reduced temporarily.) The team plays one player short for the duration of the sin bin. The period of time is not a set time, and amount of time is at the referee’s discretion. Two periods of time in a game result in a send-off.
- Send off – a permanent removal of player from the field. (The number of players on the field is reduced for remainder of game.) A send-off results in an automatic two (2) match suspension (usually two weeks). This suspension is from all touch competitions played in-between, even if you play more than one grade or competition. A send-off, depending on severity of offence, may result in a Judiciary. The Judiciary has powers to impose longer suspensions.

ARTARMON RESERVE – MAP AND FIELD LAYOUT



Field Layout

