

AFL Match Day Information Guide

Season 2023



Appendix 7: 2023 Cheersquad Guidelines

SCOPE

This document has been produced for AFL Clubs and the AFL Cheer Squad League to ensure consistent operations and accountability regarding Club Cheer Squads at an AFL Match. This document is applicable to AFLW and AFL Cheer Squads.

DISCLAIMER

All parts of this document are subject to any biosecurity measures being undertaken as part of a venue's or the AFL's COVID Safe Plans.

MATCH DAY ROLES

AFL Integrity and Security Officer	The person appointed by the AFL to manage security and emergency incidents in conjunction with the Stadium Commander and Police Commander at AFL Matches consisting of the Premiership Season, the Finals Series, AFL Women's Competition and Pre-Season Competition
AFL Match Manager	The person appointed by the AFL to manage Match Day requirements in accordance with AFL Rules and Regulations at AFL Matches consisting of the Premiership Season, the Finals Series, AFL Women's Competition and Pre-Season Competition
Club Cheer Squad Liaison	The Club staff member nominated by the Club to be the liaison between the Cheer Squad and AFL/venue/security at AFL Matches consisting of the Premiership Season, the Finals Series, AFL Women's Competition and Pre-Season Competition
Cheer Squad Representative	The person nominated by the Cheer Squad to liaise with the Club Cheer Squad Liaison at AFL Matches consisting of the Premiership Season, the Finals Series, AFL Women's Competition and Pre-Season Competition

1. MATCH DAY OPERATIONS AND LOGISTICS

1.1 VENUE ACCESS

Ten (10) Cheer Squad members of each competing Club will be allowed into the venue before gate opening times to assist with the carrying of equipment into the venue. The same number (10) will be permitted on-field to pack up equipment post-match if required.

This ten can be interchangeable but must enter as a group at the designated locations at the venues. All other Cheer Squad members are required to enter the venue via the public gates at the gate opening time. AFL Conditions of Entry are applicable and no prohibited items (including oversized flags or instruments) are to be brought in via the public gates.

1.2 SEATING ALLOCATIONS

Seating allocations are prescribed as per arrangements by Venue Management. At the MCG, Cheer Squads are not permitted to sit in Levels N, P or Q of the Southern Stand or the Upper Levels of the Ponsford Stand unless prior permission given by the AFL.

For a match where there is no specified home side (e.g Pre-Season and AFL endorsed Practice Matches) Cheer Squads must be separated by a minimum of two (2) bays or a position identified by Venue Management.

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1.3 ARENA ACCESS

The maximum number of personnel on the arena at any one time will be twenty-six (26) people (including photographer). All personnel must be wearing an AFL issued lanyard at all times.

Cheer Squad members are permitted to enter the arena at times specified on the AFL Match Day Information document distributed weekly, *subject to venue and AFL COVID Safe Plans*.

The minimum age of Cheer Squad members who have arena access is 13 years old.

1.4 WEATHER

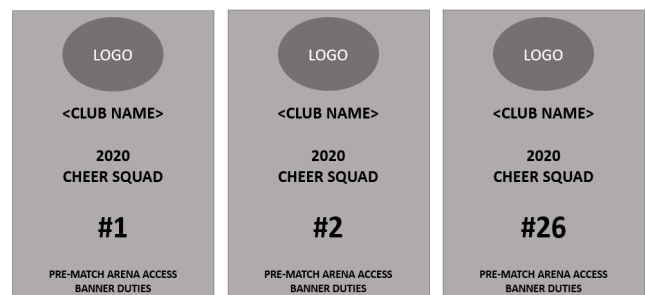
The Cheer Squad Liaison Representative will be advised by the AFL Match Manager and Venue Manager regarding the management and erection of the Cheer Squad banner in the event of inclement weather.

2. ACCREDITATION

Clubs will need to provide their own lanyards for Cheer Squad members to access the arena to perform pre-match banner duties and submit a sample to AFL prior to match day.

Clubs are also responsible for producing the swing tags to be attached to these lanyards. An example is included below. They must include the following:

- Wording including Competition (AFL or AFLW), Year, Club Name, Pre-Match Arena Access – Banner Duties
- Be numbered 1 – 26 to assist with management of lanyards on match day
- Be double sided (same content each side)
- Ensure they are waterproof (to an extent)
- Must be no smaller than a credit card.



3. EQUIPMENT

3.1 BANNER

Minimum of four (4) ropes are to be used to hold the banner in position. Additional ropes may be used in consultation with AFL Match Managers on windy days.

Messages on banners are not to be of an offensive nature to Clubs, the public or any other organisation or person.

The maximum size of banners is:

- Length 18 metres (60 feet)
- Height 8 metres (25 feet)

Other requirements are as follows;

- Advertising logos on run throughs/banners must be restricted to a maximum of three (3) sponsor logos, each being no bigger than 16 sq. metres (4m x 4m) in size.
- Any commercial branding on banners must be no more than 25% of total branding on banner.
- Banners to be displayed in a manner that will not intrude on the opposition team's warm up area;
- Banners are not to be stored in the players' race due to safety reasons;
- All Cheer Squad members to leave the arena immediately after their team has run through the banner; Any remnants of material from the banner should also be removed;

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- There is to be no cut up paper or streamers thrown onto the arena, during play nor is paper permitted to be taken on field at any time;
- Metal objects are NOT permitted on the arena at any time;
- No other sponsor identification other than the Club Protected Sponsor is to be worn or displayed; Participants are not permitted to wear any clothing that conflicts with the AFL's protected sponsors;
- No bags or belongings are to be brought onto the arena; and
- Cheer Squad members must wear appropriate footwear during the time they are on the arena. No thongs are allowed.

3.2 CHEER SQUAD EQUIPMENT

All Clubs must advise the AFL of any requests for musical instruments/other prohibited items no later than one week prior to the commencement of the season. These requests must include description, size and intended use. A list of all approved items will be shared with venues for their awareness and information. Music sticks, drums, bells, whistles and other musical instruments are not permitted at AFL Matches unless prior approval is received from the AFL. If approved, these items are only permitted to be used in the designated Cheer Squad area and only after a Club goal is scored up to the commencement of play. Any use of these items outside of these times will result in security intervening, the item being confiscated, and approval withdrawn for the rest of the season. Instruments are not to be used in a negative manner or to incite derogatory chanting or abuse.

All flag poles must be no longer than four (4) metres in length and 3.2cm in diameter (edge to edge, externally).

Floggers and flags shall be stored behind the fence when not being waved. Flags and floggers must not obscure fence signage. Please be conscious of Flogger and flag handles entering the field of play when not in use.

Offensive or derogatory flags/banners will be removed by security immediately.

4. BEHAVIOUR

While barracking and supporting is both strongly encouraged and a vital part of the game, offensive or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated. As always, the AFL has a zero-tolerance stance on vilification. Abusive, insulting and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated in the Cheer Squad area and offenders may be evicted from the venue, Club memberships cancelled and AFL Banning Notices issued.

As per the AFL Conditions of Entry, spectators (including Cheer Squad Members) must not;

- misuse, deface, damage, remove from the Venue or tamper with or attempt to misuse, deface, damage, remove from the Venue or tamper with any building, seat, chair, toilet, sink, table structure, vehicle, craft, truck, pipe, tap, tap fitting, conduit, electrical equipment, wiring, sign or other thing or excavate or cause to be excavated any part of the area used for any of the matches or other activities at the Venue;
- throw or attempt to throw any stone, bottle, projectile or other object;
- engage in any conduct, act towards or speak to any player, Umpire or other official or other patron in a manner, or engage in any conduct, which threatens, offends, insults, humiliates, intimidates, disparages or vilifies that other person on any basis including, but not limited to, that other person's race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, special ability/disability or sexual orientation, preference or identity;

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- disrupt, interrupt or behave in any manner that may disrupt or interrupt any of the matches or other activities at the Venue, distract, hinder or interfere with a player, interfere with the comfort of other patrons or their enjoyment of any of the matches or other activities at the Venue;
- use indecent or obscene language or threatening or insulting words, or otherwise behave in a threatening, abusive, riotous, indecent or insulting manner;
- interfere with, obstruct or hinder the Australian Football League or its employees, agents or contractors in the exercise of their powers, functions or duties;

In addition to the AFL Conditions of Entry that all patrons must observe, Cheer Squads must note the following;

- Cheer Squad members must return match footballs immediately to the AFL Ball Steward. Any Cheer Squad member observed throwing the ball aggressively at the goal Umpire, Ball Steward or Security will be dealt with by Security and may be evicted from the venue. Other potential sanctions may include Club notification of the incident, membership cancellation, the Club being fined over the incident and an AFL Banning Notice.
- Designated Cheer Squad areas are 'dry areas' at every AFL Match.
- Cheer Squad members are not to stand on the seats or use other objects for standing on.

5. COMPLIANCE

5.1 WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

It is the AFL's strong view that all Cheer Squad members over 18 years should have a current Working With Children Check if children are also involved in the Cheer Squad. It is the sole responsibility of each Club to ensure compliance in this area.

6. SANCTIONS

The below sanctions may be imposed by the AFL following reports from AFL Integrity and Security Officers, AFL Match Managers and/or Stadium Management.

All individual members of the Cheer Squads are subject to the AFL Conditions of Entry (key points are detailed in section 4 of this document), Venue Conditions of Entry or any applicable State legislation.

The below points from the AFL Regulations are specific to the Cheer Squads.

AFL Regulations

Section 8 of the [AFL Regulations](#) details the following;

8. Banners, Run Throughs and Cheer Squads

8.1 Banners or Run Throughs

A Club may erect a banner or run through for a Team entering the Arena at the commencement of a Match provided that:

- (a) any message displayed on any such banner or run through is not in the absolute opinion of the AFL offensive or prejudicial to the interests or reputation of the AFL or Australian football; and*
- (b) the size of the banner or run through does not exceed 144 square metres, representing a maximum width of 18 metres and a maximum height of 8 metres.*

Sanction: Up to 20 Units, payable by the Club

8.2 Cheer Squad on Arena

A maximum of twenty-six members of a Club's cheer squad, including the cheer squad's photographer may enter the Arena for the purpose of erecting and securing any banner or run through.

8.3 Obligations on Cheer Squad

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(a) A member of a cheer squad or other person authorised by a Club to erect or secure any banner or run through shall not:

(i) assault, threaten or intimidate another person;

(ii) use threatening or offensive language towards another person;

(101) engage in conduct which causes or may cause damage to another person's property;

(iv) participate in or incite another person to participate in any act of violence; and

(v) act in a manner or engage in conduct which, in the opinion of the General Manager – Football Operations, is prejudicial to the interests or reputation of a Club, the AFL or the game of football.

(b) Where a member of a Club's cheer squad or other person authorised by a Club to erect or secure a banner or run through contravenes Regulation 8.3(a), the Club shall be liable to a sanction.

Sanction: Up to 20 Units for each contravention by each such person⁹

7. CONTACTS

Each Club is required to provide a staff member to act as a Cheer Squad Liaison between the Cheer Squad and the AFL. Please nominate this person via email to aflintegrityandsecurity@afl.com.au and Joe Falzon (joe.falzon@afl.com.au) prior to the season.

7.1 MATCH DAY

The Club Cheer Squad Liaison contact details will be included in the AFL Match Day Information. This designated person will be the main match day contact for the AFL Match Manager, AFL Integrity and Security Officer and Venues.

7.2 NON-MATCH DAY

Any queries or concerns raised by a Cheer Squad member must be directed to the nominated Club Cheer Squad Liaison who will then liaise with the relevant AFL Department.

Any communication required from the AFL to the Cheer Squads will be done via the Clubs.

Cheer Squads are asked to not contact venues or the AFL directly. All correspondence is requested to go via Club Liaison.

8. AFL CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Please refer to the current AFL Conditions of Entry at:

<https://resources.afl.com.au/afl/document/2023/01/25/ad8ed12f-1991-4ec9-9f8a-0a2af12d31a5/AFL-Ticket-and-Entry-Conditions-2023.pdf>