



Commissioner Training Guide

Condensed reference for Commissioner Trainers and Game Commissioners

Based on the VMFL Commissioner's Training Clinic

Prepared and presented by Derek Slavin – WRSS Titans Commissioner Trainer

Purpose: Provide a clear, practical game-day reference while preserving the requirements and rule reminders contained in the training clinic.



1. Commissioner Roles

1.1 League Commissioner

The VMFL has 9-Man and 12-Man League Commissioners. Their responsibilities include:

- Train Commissioner Trainers.
- Collect and review submitted game sheets.
- Track penalties and apply player sanctions when required.
- Liaise with the VMFL Coaches Coordinator regarding coaching sanctions.
- Clarify VMFL Handbook requirements for clubs, coaches and players.
- Communicate VMFL expectations to clubs, coaches and players.

1.2 Game Commissioner

The Game Commissioner acts as an extension of the League Commissioner and is a key part of game administration.

- Coordinate with game-day officials and teams.
- Know the rules that apply to the division and consult the VMFL Handbook.
- Remain neutral and apply rules fairly.
- Document facts accurately and without bias.
- Report incidents of concern to the League Commissioner.
- Represent the VMFL and its values throughout game day.

2. Pre-Season Preparation

Commissioner Trainers must ensure the following before the season begins:

- A mandatory Game Commissioner vest is available.
- The Commissioner's kit/box contains the current VMFL Handbook, VMFL Penalty Code 2 laminated sheet, CARBTF Handbook/Rule Book, blank game sheets and working pens.
- All club Game Commissioners are trained by an authorized Commissioner Trainer, witnessed by a club President.
- Game Commissioners understand the VMFL Handbook sections covering Conduct of the Game, Field Set Up and Equipment, Player Participation, Duties of the Game Commissioner, Scoring, and Ejections.
- A Game Commissioner or other club member is identified and trained to properly submit game forms to the VMFL Commissioner and Scorekeeper.
- Any questions are clarified with the VMFL Commissioner before the season starts.

3. Game Day Procedures

3.1 Before the Game

- Ensure both teams are ready to play 30 minutes before game time.
- At least 15 minutes before game time, confirm player benches, sideline yard markers, goal-post protection, yardsticks and down boxes are properly in place.
- Ensure the sideline officials/stick crew are ready for the start of the game.

- Receive verified official team rosters and PA rosters, if applicable.
- Have the VMFL Handbook, Penalty Code 2 reference (optional if printed on the Commissioner's sheet) and CARBTF Rule Book available at the Commissioner table/tent.
- Introduce yourself to the Head Official and confirm game timing, game-ball size, field setup, and the recording of Unnecessary Roughness (UR) and Objectionable Conduct (OC) penalties.
- Introduce yourself to both Head Coaches and team Managers.
- Be prepared to remain on the sideline and perform Commissioner duties for the entire game.
- Wear the Commissioner vest so officials and teams can easily identify you.

3.2 During the Game

- Observe the conduct of team officials and players on the benches and issue instructions when required.
- Ensure only team officials and players are on team benches; fans are not permitted behind player benches.
- For injuries, only trainers or designated personnel may enter the field.
- If an ambulance is required, follow the club's emergency protocol and record the team and player number on the game sheet.
- Coaches must ask the Commissioner to check in with their team's 10-play counter.
- Collect 10-play count sheets at halftime and, if necessary, return them to the counters at the start of the second half.
- Carry out disqualifications and suspensions in accordance with VMFL Handbook Section 13 - Ejections and Disqualifications.

3.3 After the Game

1. Complete the Commissioner report with the final score, relevant information, penalty codes and required signatures. Confer with the Head Official to ensure all reportable penalties are documented.
2. Have the Head Official initial the section confirming the number of officials who worked the game.
3. Have both Head Coaches review and sign the Commissioner's report.
4. Sign the form as Game Commissioner.
5. If an Official, Coach or Game Commissioner has an issue the League Commissioner should know about, check **"EMAIL TO FOLLOW WITHIN 24 HOURS"** and send the follow-up email to the appropriate League Commissioner.
6. Once complete and signed, provide the Home and Away copies of the game sheet to the Head Coach or team Manager.
7. Ensure the report and that day's rosters are scanned and emailed to the VMFL Commissioner by midnight on game day. If someone else submits paperwork for the association, make sure they receive it promptly.

Submission consequence: If game sheets are not submitted by the required cut-off, the club will be fined and the team will forfeit the game.

4. Key Rule Reminders

4.1 Player Participation - VMFL Handbook 2.11

- Regular season Atom, Peewee and Junior Bantam players must participate in at least 10 plays. Kickoffs, kick returns and non-participatory plays such as kneel-downs do not count.
- Each team supplies two monitors: one monitors its own team and one monitors the opposing team.
- Both monitors sign the completed play-count sheet and submit it to the Game Commissioner.

Exceptions

- Injury or illness that makes the player physically unfit to continue.
- Ejection or disqualification.

In either case, the Game Commissioner crosses out the player's remaining 10-play boxes, initials the line, and notes the reason at the bottom of the game sheet. If a team starts with the minimum dressed and drops below the minimum because of injury, the game may continue depending on safety.

4.2 Minimum Players Dressed - VMFL Handbook 9.3

- If one or both teams do not meet the minimum dressed-player requirement in VMFL Handbook 7.1(b), it must be noted in the game report.
- If one team is below the minimum and both Head Coaches agree, the game may be played. Otherwise it is a forfeit. In either case, the recorded score is 10-0 for the team that has the required number of dressed players.
- If both teams are below the minimum and both Head Coaches agree to play, the recorded score is a 10-10 tie.

4.3 Ejections and Disqualifications - VMFL Handbook 13

Ejections can be high-tension situations. The Game Commissioner is responsible for helping bring the situation under control and documenting it carefully.

- Ask the Head Official to send teams to their benches for a cool-off period when required.
- Discuss the incident with the Head Official to understand the reason for the ejection. A full email report is required for every ejection.
- An ejection may result from one incident or an accumulation of penalties: 3 Unnecessary Roughness penalties, or 2 Objectionable Conduct penalties. A combination of 2 UR and 1 OC does not trigger this accumulation rule.
- Record the exact quarter and game time of the ejection on the game sheet.
- The Head Official informs the Game Commissioner of the ejection/disqualification. Together they approach the team and have the player, coach or staff member escorted from the playing field by a responsible team staff member.
- Before an ejected player leaves the field, the player must remove shoulder pads, game jersey and helmet. Handle the situation reasonably; youth players may be highly emotional.
- A team staff member or responsible person, such as a parent, must remain with the ejected player or staff member until the game is over.
- The Head Coach is ultimately responsible for staff conduct. If a coaching staff member is penalized, the Head Official may eject the Head Coach; support the ruling.
- The game does not resume until the ejected person has been removed from the playing area.

4.4 Courtesy Treatment - VMFL Handbook 12.2

Game officials, Game Commissioners and VMFL Executive members must be treated with courtesy throughout the season by players, coaches, managers and Association Presidents. Violations are reported to the Executive Director and may result in investigation and sanctions.

4.5 Commissioner Area - VMFL Handbook 2.6

- Only officials, the Game Commissioner, VMFL Executive, Association Presidents whose teams are participating, and required game personnel are permitted in the Commissioner area.

- Film crews and photographers require Game Commissioner approval.
- Everyone in the Commissioner area must behave in a sportsmanlike and respectful manner.

5. Game Sheet Submission

VMFL Handbook Appendix N sets the following submission requirements:

- Scan the Commissioner report, rosters and play-count forms by game into PDF format.
- Each game must be saved as its own separate file.
- File naming format: Month-Day-Year + Association (first six characters, or first three of each name) + Game Time (military) + Division (first two characters + 9 or 12).
- Examples: 09-05-2011 Coquit 1600 B12; 09-05-2011 Nordel 1430 JB9.
- Game reports **must** be emailed by midnight on game day to Commish.vmfl@gmail.com.
- Scores can be included in the body of the game report email and scores.vmfl@gmail.com must be CC'd but, the combined email **must be sent within 2 hours of the last game at your park**.
- If you are sending scores separately, they must be sent **within two hours** of the last game at your park to scores.vmfl@gmail.com

Required Documents by Division

Division	Documents
Flag / Atom / Peewee / Junior Bantam	1 VMFL Commissioner Report 2 Verified Team Rosters 2 Signed 10-Play Monitor Forms
Bantam / Midget	1 VMFL Commissioner Report 2 Verified Team Rosters

6. Commissioner Quick Reference

BE PREPARED - Know the rules, have the required materials, and know who to ask when clarification is needed.

BE FAIR & UNBIASED - You represent the VMFL. Apply requirements consistently and neutrally.

DOCUMENT & RECORD - Accurate game sheets, penalty details, incident reports and submissions are essential to league administration.

7. Final Reminder

The VMFL and its member clubs rely on volunteers. Commissioner preparation, fairness and accurate reporting help ensure players can continue to participate in football in a safe, organized and consistent environment.