

Message to AFA Members regarding Rule Notification No. 52.

Members,

Last December I wrote to you about emerging concerns about clubs with multiple branches.

Since then, your Committee has debated the issue at its regular meetings in February and April, with the outcome that a significant majority felt that something needed to be done to protect the integrity of Rule 2.4, generally known as the 90-day rule.

A Rule on Trial was approved by the Committee at its April 2015 meeting and circulated to all members in Rule Notification 52. This involved introducing a definition of a Club in Section 2.7 of the Rules that, in the opinion of a majority of the Committee, would maintain the intent of the 90-day rule with respect to branch-structured clubs while having as little effect as possible on the development and structuring of clubs.

This Rule on Trial was approved by Committee with a deliberately delayed implementation (12 weeks, to reduce impact on competition in the short term) and early approval by members (this year's AGM rather than a minimum of 12 months as is customary) to allow members both the time to consider the implications of the proposal and the opportunity to make an early decision on it.

The role of the Committee in dealing with any Rule change is to ensure that members are given factual information as to the intent and application of the proposal so that they can make an informed decision whether to accept or reject the Rule change.

I do NOT see it as the Committee's role to lobby members as to how to vote.

What I have heard since Notification 52 went out indicates that the Rule on Trial is open to interpretation in ways that were not intended. We will, therefore, attempt to further clarify the intent of the Rule change proposal so that members are clearly and accurately informed.

I would encourage anyone who does not understand the issues or who has concerns about the application of the Rule to their specific situation to write to the Committee with their comments or questions. Correspondence may be sent c/o the Secretary of the AFA or via any Committee member, including me.

Where we believe a question and answer would help other members, we will consider publishing it in a Frequently Asked Questions style format on this website and/or the AFA Facebook page. We would propose to remove any information from the published version that would identify the writer, in the interests of their privacy.

We will, of course, not publish a question if the writer requests it.

I also note that public debate on this topic is developing on social media. While any debate that helps members to come to an informed decision on whether or not to approve this change is welcome, I would remind writers that their words are being read by a wide audience, and to consider the impact that they might have on the reputation of Australian Flyball. Debate that deals with the issues is welcome, but public attacks on individuals, clubs or the AFA are not, and may be dealt with through the AFA disciplinary process if they are considered to go too far.

Regards,

Richard Mellon,

President, AFA.

28th April 2015.