



NATIONAL PICKLEBALL LEAGUE | australia

APPENDIX A

2026 NPL Division 2

Rule Supplement to the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book

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This Appendix sets out the rules, variations and conditions that apply specifically to the 2026 NPL Division 2 competition. Where this Appendix is silent, the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book applies in full. In the event of any inconsistency between this Appendix and the Season Rule Book, this Appendix prevails for Division 2.

1. Purpose & Background

NPL Division 2 is the second tier of professional pickleball in Australia, sitting directly below the NPL Pro League. It represents the highest level of the sport available outside the Pro League, with participation extending beyond the Australian mainland to include a dedicated New Zealand conference.

The purpose of Division 2 is to broaden the professional pathway, create more opportunities for competitive players across Australia and New Zealand, and develop the depth of talent available to the NPL Pro League. Division 2 players who demonstrate outstanding performance are eligible for selection as replacement players in Pro League, providing a direct competitive pathway to the premier division.

Division 2 retains the same professional standards, facilities, match format and competition integrity requirements as the Pro League. A prize pool of \$10,000 AUD is available, inclusive of a travel allowance for Finals participants.

2. League Structure

 **VARIANCE:** Pro League: 12 teams across 3 Australian conferences. Division 2: 24 teams across 4 conferences, including New Zealand.

Division 2 consists of 24 teams organised across four state/regional conferences:

Conference	Teams
New South Wales (NSW)	6 teams
Queensland (QLD)	6 teams
Victoria (VIC)	6 teams
New Zealand (NZ)	6 teams

Each team has four contracted players — two male and two female — consistent with the Pro League team structure. All other team composition requirements in the Season Rule Book apply.

3. Player Selection

3.1 NPL Selection (No Public Draft)

 **VARIANCE:** Pro League uses a public Online Draft. Division 2 players are selected directly by NPL.

Division 2 players are selected by NPL through a managed selection process. There is no public draft. NPL retains full discretion over initial squad selection, taking into account player skill, conference balance and competitive parity.

3.2 Shuffle Draft

Following Round 3, NPL may conduct a Shuffle Draft to rebalance teams where conference standings indicate a material imbalance in team strength. The Shuffle Draft is conducted entirely at NPL's discretion. Players subject to a Shuffle Draft remain under contract and are not released.

The following principles apply if a Shuffle Draft is conducted:

- NPL will notify affected players and team captains before the Shuffle Draft takes place.

- Prize money is paid solely to players who compete in the Finals Series. No prize money is retained or accrued from regular season rounds — a player moved via the Shuffle Draft has no carryover prize money entitlement from their original team.
- A player moved via the Shuffle Draft is not guaranteed a contract for the second half of the season. NPL may elect not to place a shuffled player with a new team, in which case that player's contract concludes at the end of Round 3.

3.3 Pro League Replacement Obligation

 **VARIANCE:** Division 2 players have an additional obligation not present in the standard Season Rule Book.

A Division 2 contracted player who is approached by NPL to serve as a replacement player in a Pro League round must accept the request, unless there is a legitimate reason for absence as defined in Rule 4.3 of the Season Rule Book. Participation in Pro League as a replacement player takes precedence over any Division 2 round scheduled on the same date.

Where a Pro League player sustains an injury during a round in progress, NPL may call upon a Division 2 player to step in as a mid-round emergency replacement. In such circumstances, the Division 2 player is required to accept and participate immediately. Mid-round emergency replacements are treated as Pro League replacements for all purposes under this Appendix.

Note: A Division 2 player serving in a Pro League round (including as a mid-round emergency replacement) does so under Pro League Rules and is entitled to Pro League prize money for that round in accordance with Pro League Rules and their Pro League engagement terms. Their Division 2 prize money entitlements are unaffected.

4. Season Structure

 **VARIANCE:** Pro League: 7 regular season rounds including the Mid-Season Festival + Finals.
Division 2: 6 regular season rounds + Finals. The Mid-Season Festival does not form part of Division 2.

The Division 2 season consists of six (6) regular season rounds followed by a Finals Series. Round dates and venues will be confirmed by NPL prior to the season commencement.

Phase	Rounds	Notes
Regular Season	Rounds 1 – 3	Conference ladder competition
Shuffle Draft window	(after Round 3)	NPL discretion — may or may not occur
Regular Season	Rounds 4 – 6	Conference ladder competition (post-shuffle)
Finals Series	Finals	Top 2 from each conference — 8 teams

The Mid-Season Festival (Round 4 of the Pro League season) is not part of the Division 2 competition. Division 2 players who are also registered participants in the Individual / Open Tournament at the Mid-Season Festival participate in that event in a personal capacity only, not as Division 2 competitors.

5. Match Format Variations

Except as set out in this section, all Division 2 matches are conducted in accordance with the match format prescribed in the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book (five sets, fixed order, standard scoring).

5.1 Mixed Doubles — Swap Variation

VARIANCE: Pro League: Mixed Doubles is played to rally 22, win by 2, with no swap. Division 2: Mixed Doubles includes a swap at 11.

In Division 2, Mixed Doubles is played to rally 22, win by 2, with a swap when the first side reaches 11. Teams must nominate:

- A male starter and a male finisher
- A female starter and a female finisher

All four nominated players participate in the Mixed Doubles set. This format is consistent with the State of Origin Mixed Doubles format described in the 2026 NPL Mid-Season Event Rules.

Set	Format	Scoring	Swap / Change of Ends
1	Men's Doubles	Rally to 22, win by 2	No swap
2	Women's Doubles	Rally to 22, win by 2	No swap
3	Men's Singles	Traditional to 15, win by 2	Swap when first side reaches 8
4	Women's Singles	Traditional to 15, win by 2	Swap when first side reaches 8
5	Mixed Doubles	Rally to 22, win by 2	Swap when first side reaches 11

All other match format provisions — including Freeze rule exemption, timeout rules, break times and DUPR submission requirements — are unchanged from the Season Rule Book.

6. Finals Series

6.1 Qualification

VARIANCE: Pro League: 9 teams qualify (top 2 per conference + 3 × 3rd-place teams enter a Friday playoff). Division 2: 8 teams qualify directly — top 2 from each of the 4 conferences. No Friday playoff round.

The top two (2) teams from each conference qualify directly for the Division 2 Finals. There are no playoff matches — all 8 qualified teams enter the Finals bracket at the Qualifying / Elimination Finals stage.

Conference	Direct Qualifiers
New South Wales (NSW)	1st and 2nd place
Queensland (QLD)	1st and 2nd place
Victoria (VIC)	1st and 2nd place
New Zealand (NZ)	1st and 2nd place

6.2 Finals Bracket

The Finals bracket follows the same format as the Pro League Finals. Seeds 1–4 enter via the Qualifying Finals; Seeds 5–8 enter via the Elimination Finals. Cross-conference seeding is determined by conference ladder points — in the event of a tie on points, Net Sets then Net Points apply.

Match	Matchup	Day
Qualifying Finals	QF1: Seed 1 v 4 QF2: Seed 2 v 3	Saturday
Elimination Finals	EF1: Seed 5 v 8 EF2: Seed 6 v 7	Saturday
Semi Finals	SF1: QF1 Loser v EF1 Winner SF2: QF2 Loser v EF2 Winner	Saturday
Preliminary Finals	PF1: QF1 Winner v SF2 Winner PF2: QF2 Winner v SF1 Winner	Sunday
3rd/4th Place Match	PF1 Loser v PF2 Loser	Sunday
Grand Final	PF1 Winner v PF2 Winner	Sunday

6.3 Finals Venue

Division 2 Finals are held at the same venue as the 2026 NPL Pro League Finals Series (Melbourne, Victoria). Dates are aligned with the Pro League Finals weekend.

7. Prize Pool & Travel Allowance

The total Division 2 prize pool is \$10,000 AUD, comprising a prize money component of \$4,000 and a travel allowance component of \$6,000.

7.1 Prize Money

 **VARIANCE:** Division 2 prize money is Finals-only. Regular season rounds do not carry prize money.

Finals Placing	Team Prize Money	Per Player (4-player team)
1st Place (Grand Final Winner)	\$1,600	\$400
2nd Place (Grand Final Runner-Up)	\$1,200	\$300
3rd Place	\$800	\$200
4th Place	\$400	\$100
5th–8th Place	Nil	—
Total prize money	\$4,000	—

Prize money is paid only to players who participate in the Finals Series. Players who are part of a qualifying team but do not take the court during Finals do not receive prize money for Finals.

Note: There is no prize money for fill-in players. A Division 2 player serving as a Pro League replacement receives no Pro League prize money — their Division 2 Finals eligibility is unaffected provided they meet the minimum participation requirement.

7.2 Travel Allowance

 **VARIANCE:** Pro League does not include a structured travel allowance. Division 2 provides a \$250 per-player travel allowance for non-VIC Finals participants.

A travel allowance is provided to players of Finals-qualified teams whose home conference is not Victoria, to assist with travel costs to the Melbourne Finals venue.

Conference	Travel Allowance (per player)	Rationale
Victoria (VIC)	Nil	Finals hosted in Melbourne — no interstate travel required
New South Wales (NSW)	\$250 per player	Interstate travel to Melbourne
Queensland (QLD)	\$250 per player	Interstate travel to Melbourne
New Zealand (NZ)	\$250 per player	International travel to Melbourne

Travel allowance is paid to the four (4) contracted players of each qualifying non-VIC team. Travel allowance is not paid to fill-in players.

Total travel allowance budget: 6 non-VIC qualifying teams × 4 players × \$250 = \$6,000.

8. Player Obligations

All player obligations in the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book apply to Division 2 players. The following additional or varied obligations apply.

8.1 Pro League Replacement Availability

As set out in Rule 3.3, Division 2 contracted players must make themselves available as Pro League replacement players when requested by NPL. Failure to comply without a legitimate reason constitutes a breach of contract.

A Division 2 player who serves as a Pro League replacement (including a mid-round emergency replacement) is entitled to Pro League prize money for that round in accordance with the applicable Pro League Rules and their Pro League engagement terms. Any Division 2 prize money entitlements for a round missed as a direct result of fulfilling a Pro League replacement obligation are unaffected.

8.2 Fill-In Players

 **VARIANCE:** Pro League fill-in provisions provide for prize money adjustments. Division 2 fill-in players receive no prize money.

Where a Division 2 team requires a fill-in player for a round (due to approved absence, injury or other approved circumstance), the fill-in player participates at no cost to the League and receives no prize money or allowances. All other obligations — including conduct, attire and competition rules — apply to fill-in players during their participation.

Note: This section applies to Division 2 fill-in players only. Where a Division 2 player participates in a Pro League round as a replacement player, they are entitled to Pro League prize money for that round as stipulated in the applicable Pro League Rules. See Section 8.1.

8.3 Facilities & Support

Division 2 players have access to the same playing facilities, venue amenities (including physiotherapy and medical support where available at the venue) and scheduling provisions as Pro League players competing at the same venue on the same day.

This Appendix is to be read in conjunction with the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book. In the event of any inconsistency, this Appendix prevails for Division 2. Further amendments may be made by NPL at its discretion prior to season commencement.

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