



NATIONAL PICKLEBALL LEAGUE | australia

2026 NPL Mid-Season Festival

Event Rules

Teams Cup · Individual/Open · State of Origin

Friday 22 – Sunday 24 May 2026

Standalone Event Rules Document — to be read alongside the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book

www.nplpickleball.com.au | ABN: 30 677 000 789

1. Purpose and Application

This document sets out the operational and competition rules for the 2026 NPL Mid-Season Festival, held from Friday 22 May to Sunday 24 May 2026. It is a standalone event rules document and should be read alongside the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book.

The Mid-Season Festival is Round 4 of the 2026 NPL season and consists of three concurrent competition products run across the three-day weekend:

- Event 1: NPL Mid-Season Teams Cup
- Event 2: Individual / Open Tournament
- Event 3: State of Origin Showcase

Where these Event Rules are silent on any matter, the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book applies. In the event of any inconsistency between this document and the Season Rule Book on a matter specific to the Mid-Season Festival, this document prevails.

The League may issue event bulletins, scheduling notices and operational updates before and during the festival. Those notices form part of these Event Rules once published.

2. Event Overview and Weekend Structure

2.1 Three Events, One Festival

The three events run concurrently across the same venue and share court resources. Each event has its own format, draw, scoring system and prize structure, but they are connected through the State of Origin qualification pathway.

Event	Format	Key Days
NPL Mid-Season Teams Cup	12 NPL teams, Swiss format, Top 4 finals	Fri–Sun
Individual / Open Tournament	Open entry, singles and doubles draws	Fri–Sun
State of Origin Showcase	4 representative squads (VIC, NSW, QLD, ALLIES)	Sunday

2.2 Daily Structure at a Glance

Day	Teams Cup	Individual / Open	State of Origin
Friday	Swiss Round 1 and Round 2	Early rounds	—
Saturday	Swiss Round 3 and Round 4 Top 4 confirmed Saturday night	Quarter finals and semi finals Squad selection leaderboard published	Squads locked Saturday night
Sunday	Semi finals and Grand Final	Finals (title and prize money only)	Showcase matches

2.3 Key Saturday Night Milestones

Saturday night is the critical organisational checkpoint for the festival. The following must be completed before midnight Saturday:

- Teams Cup: Swiss Round 4 completed; Top 4 teams confirmed; Sunday bracket published.
- Individual / Open: Semi finalists confirmed across singles and doubles draws.
- State of Origin: Origin Qualification Leaderboard published; all squad nominations locked.

3. Relationship to the 2026 NPL Season

- The Mid-Season Festival replaces the regular round format for Round 4 of the 2026 NPL season.
- No regular season ladder points are awarded as a result of the Teams Cup or any other festival event. Festival performance does not affect a team's conference standing.
- Teams Cup seeding is based on NPL performance through Rounds 1–3 of the 2026 season.
- The Mid-Season Draft follows on Monday 1 June 2026. For Mid-Season Draft rules, refer to Rule 8.5 of the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book.
- All standard NPL conduct, integrity, media and anti-doping obligations apply throughout the festival weekend.

Event 1 — NPL Mid-Season Teams Cup

12 teams | 4 Swiss rounds (Friday–Saturday) | Top 4 knockout finals (Sunday) | Prize pool: \$20,000

4. Teams Cup — Format and Structure

4.1 Objectives

- Guarantee every team a minimum of four meaningful competitive matches across the festival weekend.
- Avoid same-state matchups in the Swiss rounds where possible.
- Deliver a clean Sunday broadcast with four teams competing in two semi finals and a grand final.
- Award a standalone Teams Cup trophy and separate prize pool, independent of the main NPL season.

4.2 Teams and Seeding

The Teams Cup includes all 12 NPL professional teams. Seeding is based on NPL season results through Rounds 1–3. Seeds are defined within each state conference:

Conference	Seeds
New South Wales	NSW1, NSW2, NSW3, NSW4
Queensland	QLD1, QLD2, QLD3, QLD4
Victoria	VIC1, VIC2, VIC3, VIC4

Seed numbers within each state correspond to final ladder position: Seed 1 = 1st-placed team in that conference after Round 3, and so on.

4.3 Round 1 Draw Structure

Round 1 pairings are fixed by a seeded cross-state lottery conducted by the League after the conclusion of Round 3 of the NPL season (once seedings are confirmed). The lottery determines which specific interstate opponent each team faces in Round 1, within the following seeding structure:

Seed Bracket	Pairing Principle	Possible Round 1 Opponents
1-seeds (NSW1, QLD1, VIC1)	Each 1-seed plays a 4-seed from one of the other two states	NSW1 plays QLD4 or VIC4 QLD1 plays NSW4 or VIC4 VIC1 plays NSW4 or QLD4
2-seeds (NSW2, QLD2, VIC2)	Each 2-seed plays a 3-seed from one of the other two states	NSW2 plays QLD3 or VIC3 QLD2 plays NSW3 or VIC3 VIC2 plays NSW3 or QLD3
3-seeds (NSW3, QLD3, VIC3)	Paired against a 2-seed from one of the other two states (determined by the 2-seed lottery)	—

Seed Bracket	Pairing Principle	Possible Round 1 Opponents
4-seeds (NSW4, QLD4, VIC4)	Paired against a 1-seed from one of the other two states (determined by the 1-seed lottery)	—

The lottery is drawn publicly after Round 3. No same-state games are played in Round 1. From Round 2 onwards, all pairings follow the Swiss pairing rules in Rule 4.5.

4.4 Swiss Format Overview

- 4 Swiss rounds in total: Rounds 1 and 2 on Friday; Rounds 3 and 4 on Saturday.
- Each round, teams are paired based on their current record using Swiss principles (teams on similar win-loss records play each other).
- Every team plays exactly four matches over the course of the Swiss rounds, regardless of results.
- The top 4 teams at the conclusion of Swiss Round 4 advance to the Sunday knockout finals.
- Cross-state matchups are actively sought in all rounds. Same-state games are avoided wherever the draw permits.

4.5 Swiss Pairing Rules

The following constraints apply to Swiss pairings, applied in priority order:

1. Avoid repeat opponents wherever possible. Teams that have already played each other should not be rematched.
2. Avoid same-state matchups wherever possible. Interstate pairings are preferred in all rounds.
3. Apply Swiss principles: teams on similar win-loss records play each other within each round.
4. Round 1 pairings are seeded based on each team's NPL league ladder position from Rounds 1–3 of the regular season. Higher-seeded teams are protected from being drawn against other top seeds in Round 1. This seeding-based protection applies to Round 1 only; from Round 2 onwards pairings are determined solely by Swiss record.
5. Where two constraints cannot both be satisfied, the Tournament Director may 'float' a team — pairing it against a team from a neighbouring record bracket rather than an exact-record-bracket opponent — in order to preserve interstate matchup integrity. Within a record bracket, seeding determines which team floats.

Where all constraints cannot be simultaneously satisfied, the Tournament Director will apply them in the priority order above and document any exceptions.

4.6 Teams Cup Ladder — Swiss Rounds

Teams are ranked on the Teams Cup ladder following each Swiss round. The ranking criteria are applied in the following order:

1. Wins (tie wins in the Swiss rounds).
2. Sets won (total sets won across all Swiss matches).
3. Points differential (total points scored minus total points conceded across all sets played).
4. Initial seed (lower seed number = higher ladder position if all above criteria are equal).

4.7 Sunday Finals — Top 4 Knockout

The top 4 teams on the Teams Cup ladder following Swiss Round 4 advance to the Sunday knockout finals:

Match	Matchup	Day
Semi Final 1	Ladder Position 1 v Ladder Position 4	Sunday
Semi Final 2	Ladder Position 2 v Ladder Position 3	Sunday
Grand Final	SF1 Winner v SF2 Winner	Sunday
3rd Place Match	SF1 Loser v SF2 Loser	Sunday

Note: The 3rd place match is a scheduled match on Sunday. Prize money for 3rd and 4th is awarded to the winners and losers of the 3rd place match respectively.

4.8 Teams Cup Prize Pool

Total Teams Cup prize pool: \$20,000. Prize money is allocated per team and split equally among the four players on each team:

Placing	Team Prize Pool	Per Player (4-player team)
1st Place (Grand Final Winner)	\$10,000	\$2,500
2nd Place (Grand Final Runner-Up)	\$5,200	\$1,300
3rd Place (Semi Final Loser)	\$3,200	\$800
4th Place (Semi Final Loser)	\$1,600	\$400
Total	\$20,000	—

Teams that do not reach the Sunday finals (positions 5–12) do not receive Teams Cup prize money. The Teams Cup prize pool is separate from and in addition to the main 2026 NPL season prize pool.

Event 2 — Individual / Open Tournament

Open entry | Singles draw: Round of 32 | Doubles draw: Round of 24 | Origin qualification pathway

5. Individual / Open Tournament — Format and Structure

5.1 Overview and Entry

The Individual / Open Tournament is open to all NPL professional players and members of the public. NPLLeague contracted players are guaranteed a place in both the singles and doubles draws, but must still register to confirm their participation.

Registration opens Friday 27 March 2026. NPLLeague contracted players must register by Friday 1 May 2026. General public registration closes Monday 11 May 2026. Registrations received after the applicable deadline will not be accepted.

The tournament runs across all three days, with early rounds on Friday, quarter finals and semi finals on Saturday, and finals on Sunday. Results from Sunday finals determine titles and prize money only; Sunday results do not affect State of Origin squad selection.

5.2 Draw Structure

Stream	Draw Size	Saturday Completion
Singles	Round of 32	Semi finalists confirmed Saturday night
Doubles	Round of 24	Semi finalists confirmed Saturday night

- The draw structure (seeding, placement of NPL pros versus public players, byes) will be published by the League prior to the festival.
- Both streams run concurrently on shared courts with the Teams Cup, using the remaining courts after Teams Cup and warm-up allocation.
- Points are awarded to players based on how far they progress in each draw, for the purposes of Origin Qualification Score (see Section 9).

5.3 Sunday Finals

Individual / Open finals are played on Sunday. Finals results determine tournament titles and prize money. Sunday results do not affect State of Origin squad selection, which is locked on Saturday night.

The Individual / Open Tournament total prize pool is \$17,000. Prizes are awarded per finishing position across the singles and doubles draws:

Finishing Position	Prize
Winner (1st)	\$2,000
Runner-Up (2nd)	\$500

Finishing Position	Prize
3rd Place	\$200
4th Place	\$100
Quarter Finalists	\$50 each

5.4 GPA Ranking Points

GPA (Global Pickleball Alliance) ranking points will be awarded to participants in the Individual / Open Tournament based on their finishing position. The 2026 NPL Mid-Season Festival is classified as a GPA Tier 2 event. Points are awarded across both the singles and doubles draws in accordance with the GPA Tier 2 points schedule (see www.gpapickleball.org for the current schedule). The specific points allocation applicable to this event will be confirmed in the event bulletin prior to the festival.

5.5 Scheduling Interaction with Teams Cup

The Individual / Open draw is scheduled to ensure players can participate across all formats. Where a scheduling conflict arises between a Teams Cup match and an Individual / Open match, the Individual / Open match will be shifted to a different time slot to allow the player to participate in both.

- No player will be required to withdraw from an Individual / Open match due to a scheduling conflict with the Teams Cup. The Tournament Director will reschedule the conflicting Individual / Open match.
- Players are responsible for notifying the Tournament Director of any known scheduling conflicts prior to commencement of their first match.
- The Tournament Director is responsible for communicating any schedule changes to affected players promptly.

Event 3 — State of Origin Showcase

4 squads: VIC | NSW | QLD | ALLIES | 6-player squads | Squad lock: Saturday night | Sunday showcase

6. State of Origin — Format and Squad Selection

6.1 Overview

The State of Origin Showcase is a representative team event played on Sunday of the festival weekend. Four squads compete, each representing a state or regional grouping: Victoria (VIC), New South Wales (NSW), Queensland (QLD), and ALLIES (players not affiliated to any of the three state groups, or who have nominated ALLIES at registration).

Origin uses the same NPL league tie format and scoring as the Teams Cup, ensuring consistency across athletes, officials and broadcast.

6.2 Teams and Squads

Squad	Basis of Selection
VIC	Players who nominated Victoria at registration; selected by OQS ranking within that group.
NSW	Players who nominated New South Wales at registration; selected by OQS ranking.
QLD	Players who nominated Queensland at registration; selected by OQS ranking.
ALLIES	Players who nominated ALLIES at registration; fills remaining spots from the highest OQS players across groups.

- Each squad consists of exactly 6 players: 3 male and 3 female. This applies to all squads including ALLIES.
- Any player may play a maximum of 2 formats in a single Origin tie.

6.3 Player Nomination

- Each player must nominate one of VIC, NSW, QLD or ALLIES at the time of registration for the Mid-Season Festival. Registration closes Monday 11 May 2026.
- A player may nominate VIC, NSW or QLD only if they: (a) are currently living in that state; (b) were originally from that state; or (c) have a demonstrable connection to that state declared and justified at the time of nomination. The League reserves the right to verify all state nominations.
- Players who do not meet any of the above criteria for a state nomination must nominate ALLIES.
- Nominations are locked at the close of registration and cannot be changed during the weekend.
- A player who fails to nominate a state or group by the registration deadline will be assigned to ALLIES.

6.4 Origin Squad Locking — Saturday Night

Origin squads are locked on Saturday night after both of the following milestones have been confirmed:

1. Completion of Teams Cup Swiss Round 4 and confirmation of the Swiss round-by-round OQS points.
2. Confirmation of the Individual / Open semi finalists (both singles and doubles).

Following squad lock, the League will publish the final Origin squads and Sunday match schedule. Squad selections are final. Sunday results from the Individual / Open finals do not alter Origin squads.

6.5 Origin Match Structure on Sunday

The four Origin squads are drawn randomly into two semi-finals and a Final on Sunday:

Match	Draw	Day
Semi Final 1	Randomly drawn — Team 1 v Team 2	Sunday
Semi Final 2	Remaining teams — Team 3 v Team 4	Sunday
Origin Final	SF1 Winner v SF2 Winner	Sunday

The draw is conducted by the Tournament Director at the Saturday night squad lock, in front of team representatives. The draw result is published alongside the confirmed squad lists.

6.6 State of Origin Prize Money

State of Origin prize money is awarded per player based on finishing position:

Finishing Position	Prize Per Player
Origin Champions (Final Winner)	\$600
Runner-Up (Final Loser)	\$200

7. Origin Qualification Score (OQS)

7.1 Overview

Origin squad selection is based on the Origin Qualification Score (OQS). The OQS is a composite score that rewards performance in both the Individual / Open Tournament and the Teams Cup across the Saturday milestones.

OQS = Individual / Open Score + Teams Cup Individual Score (capped at 16 points)

7.2 Individual / Open Score — Singles (Round of 32)

Result	OQS Points
Semi finalist / Top 4	20

Result	OQS Points
Quarter finalist / Top 8	12
Round of 16	6
Round of 32 win	3
Round of 32 loss	0

7.3 Individual / Open Score — Doubles (Round of 24)

Result	OQS Points
Semi finalist / Top 4	20
Quarter finalist / Top 8	12
Round of 12	6
Round of 24 win	3
Round of 24 loss	0

- Doubles points apply to each player in the pair individually. Both players receive the same score.
- Sunday finals results do not add OQS points. The squad is locked before Sunday play commences.
- A player who enters both singles and doubles earns OQS points from each draw independently.

7.4 Teams Cup Individual Score (Capped)

A player earns OQS points from the Teams Cup through credited set wins in Swiss Rounds 1–4 only. Finals matches on Sunday do not count toward OQS.

- Each credited set win is worth 2 OQS points.
- A player's Teams Cup Individual Score is capped at 16 points (equivalent to 8 credited set wins).
- Team match results (win or loss) do not contribute to Teams Cup Individual Score. Only credited set wins matter.

7.5 Credited Set Win — Definitions by Format

A Teams Cup tie consists of five sets in the following fixed order: Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, Men's Singles, Women's Singles, Mixed Doubles. The following rules determine whether a player earns a credited set win in each set:

Men's Doubles and Women's Doubles

Men's Doubles and Women's Doubles are played using rally scoring to 22 (win by 2). If a player participated in the set and their team won the set, that player earns 1 credited set win (2 OQS points). If their team lost, no credited set win is awarded.

Men's Singles and Women's Singles

Singles is one continuous set to 15, played by a starter and a finisher. If the team wins the set, both the starter and the finisher each earn 1 credited set win (2 OQS points each). If the team loses, neither player earns a credited set win.

Mixed Doubles

Mixed Doubles is played as one continuous set to 22 (rally scoring, win by 2, with a swap at 11 — see Rule 10.2). The set involves a male starter, a male finisher, a female starter and a female finisher. If the team wins the Mixed set, all four mixed participants from the winning team each earn 1 credited set win (2 OQS points each). If the team loses, no mixed participant earns a credited set win.

7.6 OQS Worked Example

Component	Example Result	OQS Points
Singles (Round of 32)	Quarter finalist (Top 8)	12
Doubles (Round of 24)	Round of 24 win (first round exit)	3
Teams Cup: 3 credited set wins (across 4 Swiss matches)	6 pts (3 x 2)	6
Total OQS		21 (uncapped)

7.7 Origin Squad Selection Method

At the Saturday night squad lock, the following process is applied for each squad:

1. Rank all players within each nomination group (VIC, NSW, QLD, ALLIES) by OQS, highest to lowest.
2. Select the top 6 eligible players from each group as that state's Origin squad.
3. If a nomination group has fewer than 6 eligible players, the remaining spots are filled by the next highest OQS players from the ALLIES pool (excluding players already selected for another squad).
4. Apply tiebreaker rules (see Rule 8.8) where two or more players have identical OQS scores and a squad position depends on separating them.

An eligible player for Origin selection must: (a) have participated in at least one Teams Cup Swiss match, or at least one Individual / Open match; and (b) have completed their state or group nomination by the registration deadline.

7.8 OQS Tiebreakers

Where two or more players have equal OQS within a nomination group and a squad position must be filled, the following tiebreakers are applied in order:

1. Higher Individual / Open Singles points.
2. Higher Individual / Open Doubles points.
3. Higher Teams Cup credited set wins using the uncapped total (i.e., not subject to the 16-point cap).
4. Random draw conducted by the Tournament Director.

8. Match Format

8.1 Teams Cup Match Format

Except where expressly varied in these Rules, all Teams Cup ties are conducted in accordance with the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book. The Teams Cup uses the standard NPL league tie format, including:

- Men's Doubles: rally to 22, win by 2, no swap
- Women's Doubles: rally to 22, win by 2, no swap
- Men's Singles: traditional to 15, win by 2, swap when the first side reaches 8
- Women's Singles: traditional to 15, win by 2, swap when the first side reaches 8
- Mixed Doubles: rally to 22, win by 2, no swap

Each tie consists of five sets played in fixed order. The team that wins three or more sets wins the tie. All five sets are played in full.

Set	Format	Scoring	Swap Trigger	Notes
1	Men's Doubles	Rally to 22, win by 2	—	No Freeze
2	Women's Doubles	Rally to 22, win by 2	—	No Freeze
3	Men's Singles	Traditional to 15, win by 2	First side reaches 8	Starter and finisher; No Freeze
4	Women's Singles	Traditional to 15, win by 2	First side reaches 8	Starter and finisher; No Freeze
5	Mixed Doubles	Rally to 22, win by 2	—	No swap; starter and finisher each gender; No Freeze

8.2 State of Origin Match Format

State of Origin ties are conducted in accordance with the 2026 NPL Season Rule Book, except for the following variation:

- Mixed Doubles is played to rally 22, win by 2, with a swap when the first side reaches 11, using a nominated male starter, male finisher, female starter and female finisher.

All other formats remain unchanged from the standard NPL league tie format.

8.3 Festival-Specific Notes

- The Freeze rule does not apply in any format at the Mid-Season Festival.
- There is a two-minute break between sets.
- Each team is entitled to one (1) timeout per set across all formats.
- Paddle inspection occurs at the beginning of each match.

9. Fatigue Management

Players competing across multiple events on Sunday must be given adequate rest between matches. The following rule applies:

- A minimum rest gap of 15 minutes must be maintained between a player's matches on Sunday. The Tournament Director must schedule Sunday matches to comply with this requirement.
- Players may notify the Tournament Director of fatigue concerns at any time. The Tournament Director's scheduling decisions in response to such concerns are final.

Appendix A — OQS Quick Reference

Source	Result	OQS Points
Singles	Semi finalist / Top 4	20
Singles	Quarter finalist / Top 8	12
Singles	Round of 16	6
Singles	Round of 32 win	3
Singles	Round of 32 loss	0
Doubles	Semi finalist / Top 4	20
Doubles	Quarter finalist / Top 8	12
Doubles	Round of 12	6
Doubles	Round of 24 win	3
Doubles	Round of 24 loss	0
Teams Cup	Each credited set win (Swiss R1–4 only)	2 pts each; capped at 16 total

Note: Doubles OQS points are awarded to each player in the pair individually. Sunday finals results (Individual / Open and Teams Cup) do not contribute to OQS. Squad is locked Saturday night.

Appendix B — Weekend Overview Schedule

Session	Event	Key Milestones
Friday AM/PM	Teams Cup Swiss R1 Individual / Open early rounds	Swiss R1 pairings released
Friday PM	Teams Cup Swiss R2 Individual / Open continued	Swiss R2 pairings released after R1
Saturday AM	Teams Cup Swiss R3 Individual / Open QF	R3 pairings based on R1–R2 records
Saturday PM	Teams Cup Swiss R4 Individual / Open SF	R4 pairings; last Swiss round
Saturday Night	Administration	OQS leaderboard published Origin squads locked Teams Cup Top 4 confirmed Sunday bracket published
Sunday AM	Teams Cup SF Individual / Open Finals State of Origin	Finals lineups confirmed

Session	Event	Key Milestones
Sunday PM	Teams Cup Grand Final State of Origin Finals	Prize presentations

END OF 2026 NPL MID-SEASON CUP AND STATE OF ORIGIN EVENT RULES

National Pickleball League (NPL Trading Pty Ltd) | ABN 30 677 000 789 | www.nplpickleball.com.au