COMPETITION HANDBOOK

2026 AEL Virtual Grand Prix

Version 1.0 - Updated: 19th May 2025

Welcome to the Grid

Delivered by the Australian Esports League

1. Overview & Objectives

The AEL Virtual Grand Prix is a premier, school-based motorsport esports competition designed to mirror the real-world racing journey. Whether you are a casual driver racing for school pride or a hardcore sim-racer chasing the ultimate prize, this competition provides a structured, fair, and highly competitive environment.

The competition model aims to balance performance, fairness, retention, and inclusivity

Our ultimate goal is to find the top 16 student drivers in Australia to compete live at the Innovation Hub during the Australian Grand Prix 2027 in Melbourne. Each qualified finalist receives a free ticket for themselves and one parent/guardian to attend the Australian Grand Prix 2027.

2. Eligibility & Requirements

To get on the starting grid, participants must meet the following criteria:

- **Enrolment:** Participants must be currently enrolled in an Australian secondary school, spanning Years 7 to 12.
- **Authorisation:** Registration must be completed or authorised by a parent, guardian, or teacher.
- **Entry Fee:** The cost is $30.00 AUD (+GST) per student, per term of competition.
- **Hardware & Software:** Students require a stable internet connection and access to F1® 25 on PC, PlayStation, or Xbox. Crossplay is fully enabled.
- **Game Access:** The game may be owned outright on digital or disc formats, or accessed via an active EA Play Pro or Xbox Game Pass Ultimate subscription.
- **Responsibility:** Participants are strictly responsible for meeting all scheduling and technical requirements prior to racing.

3. Tournament Structure

The tournament operates across three distinct stages to filter grassroots competitors down to an elite final grid.

Stage 1: The Proving Grounds (Terms 2, 3, & 4)

- Each school term functions as a standalone 5-week competition.
- Students compete in weekly races to earn Champion Points and climb the leaderboard.
- Students can choose to participate in one, two, or all three terms.
- Term-based rewards include medallions, certificates, and a champions trophy.
- The top 12 drivers from each term secure immediate qualification for the next stage.

Stage 2: The Draft (Semi-Finals)

- The Draft is the official semi-final event, gathering the highest-performing drivers from the school year.

- Drivers secure their place either through a "Golden Ticket" (placing in the top 12 of a term) or via consistency on the Overall Season Leaderboard.
- The total participant size for The Draft is determined by AEL administrators.

Stage 3: The Grid (The Melbourne Grand Prix)

- The top 16 drivers to emerge from The Draft will receive an exclusive invitation to the live Grand Final.
- This final competition takes place at the Innovation Hub during the Australian Grand Prix 2027.

4. Season Formatting & Progression

- **Race Pools:** To ensure fair racing, participants are divided into weekly Race Pools of up to 16 drivers based on self-reported skill and registration volume.
- **Divisions:** Elite sim-racers are grouped in Division 1 to compete for Golden Tickets, while casual drivers race against peers of similar pace.
- **Promotion & Relegation:** Based on weekly race results, top-performing drivers are promoted to higher pools, while lower-performing drivers may be relegated.
- **The 5-Week Sprint:**
    - **Weeks 1 to 4 (The Heats):** Drivers compete weekly in their assigned pools.
    - **Week 5 (Term Finals):** Top drivers advance to a Champions Lobby to determine the term's Golden Ticket winners.
- **The School Innovator's Cup:** Every lap completed and every point scored by a driver contributes to their school's overall score. This rewards school-wide participation and depth beyond elite performance.

5. Race Weekend Format

- Races are scheduled every Saturday.
- **Check-In:** A 30-minute check-in window occurs prior to the session.
- **Qualifying:** A Short Qualifying session (~10–15 minutes) dictates the starting grid based on the fastest lap. Leaving early may result in a last-place start.
- **Race:** Drivers compete in a 25% race-distance Grand Prix.
- **Pre-Race Setup:** Lobbies are hosted by designated Student Captains or AEL Staff, who are responsible for enforcing official settings and starting on time.

6. Scoring & Driver Rankings

Drivers are evaluated holistically based on race placements, fastest lap times, and participation consistency.

- **Points System:** While the documentation references traditional Grand Prix scoring (25 points for 1st), the official points structure is distributed as follows:
    - 1st: 27 points
    - 2nd: 20 points

- 3rd: 17 points
- 4th: 14 Points
- 5th: 12 Points
- 6th: 10 Points
- 7th: 8 Points
- 8th: 6 Points
- 9th: 4 Points
- 10th: 3 Points
- 11-15th: 2 Points
- 16-20th: 1 Point

- **Tie-Breakers:** Ties are resolved in the following order: 1. Highest number of wins, 2. Highest number of podiums, 3. Best recorded lap time, 4. Most recent head-to-head result.
- **Season Leaderboard:** Only a driver's two best terms count toward their overall season ranking.

7. Match Administration & Reporting

- **Discord Mandate:** All students or coordinating teachers must join the official Competition Discord Server (https://discord.gg/tFTceAhVcH). All lobby coordination, communication, and reporting happen here.
- **Parental Contact:** Parents acting as the primary contact should email vgp@ael.org.au or quote their child's name when AEL staff reach out on Discord.
- **Mandatory Reporting:** Immediately following a race, the top three finishers must take a clear photograph or screenshot of the final in-game race classification.
- **Evidence Requirements:** The screenshot must clearly display finishing positions, driver names, full grid, best lap, and time penalties.
- **Submission Process:** Results are uploaded via a bot in the *#race-results* Discord channel using the following format: Race Pool, Driver Name, Finishing Position, Best Lap Time, and Proof.
- **Penalties:** Failure to submit results yields zero points. Falsifying reports will lead to warnings, deductions, and potential disqualification.
- **Disputes:** We recommend all students record the final results for any point or placement dispute resolutions.

8. Code of Conduct & Competition Integrity

- **Behaviour:** The Virtual Grand Prix is a school-sanctioned event requiring respect, sportsmanship, and clean racing.
- **Prohibited Actions:** Reckless driving, deliberate crashing, brake-testing, exploiting game mechanics, account sharing, and toxic behaviour on Discord are strictly forbidden.
- **Stewarding:** Live stewarding is not universally available, but drivers can submit video evidence for post-race review by AEL Administration, whose decisions are final.

- **Late Arrivals & Absences:** Late drivers may start at the back of the grid or face exclusion at admin discretion. Non-participation results in zero points and may negatively impact pool placement.
- **Disconnects:** AEL is not responsible for personal internet issues. Disconnected drivers receive last-place points, and races will not be restarted unless a major issue impacts a significant portion of the lobby.
- **Safeguarding:** All AEL staff adhere to strict behavioural training and hold current Working With Children Checks.

9. Official Lobby Settings

To guarantee fair, scalable, non-contact racing, the following mandatory settings apply:

Lobby Options

- Maximum Players: **20**
- Session Privacy: **Friends Only**
- Lobby Tag: **All Welcome**
- Car Category: **F1 World Car (Customisable by player)**
- Car Setup: **Full**
- Minimum Licence Level: **Off**

Assist Restrictions

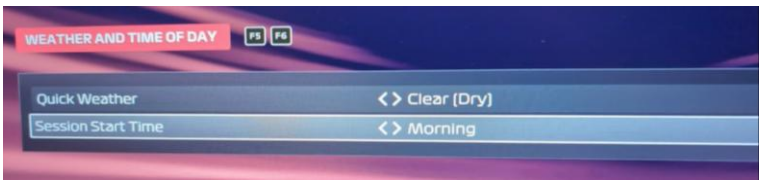
- Steering Assist: **Off**
- Braking Assist: **Low**
- Anti-Lock Brakes: **On**
- Traction Control: **Medium**
- Dynamic Racing Line: **Corners Only**
- Gearbox: **Automatic**
- Pit Assist: **On**
- Pit Release Assist: **On**
- ERS Assist: **Off**
- DRS Assist: **Off**
- Force Cockpit Camera: **Off**

Weekend Structure

- Weekend Structure: **Standard**
- Practice Format: **Off**
- Qualifying Format: **Short**
- Session Length: **Short**
- Starting Grid: **Qualifying**

Weather and Time of Day

- Quick Weather: **Clear (Dry)**
- Session Start Time: **Morning**



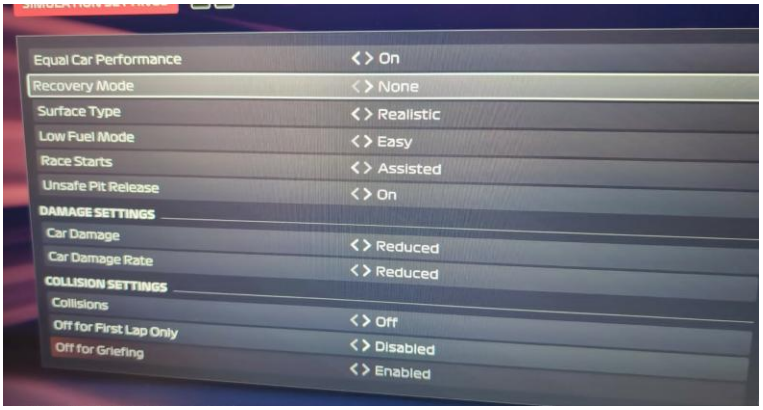
Rules and Flags

- Rules and Flags: **On**
- Corner Cutting Stringency: **Strict**
- Parc Ferme Rules: **On**
- Pit Stop Experience: **Immersive**

- Safety Car: **Off**
- Safety Car Experience: **Immersive**
- Formation Lap: **Off**
- Formation Lap Experience: **Immersive**
- Red Flags: **Standard**
- Affects Licence Level: **Off**

Simulation Settings

- Equal Car Performance: **On**
- Recovery Mode: **None**
- Surface Type: **Realistic**
- Low Fuel Mode: **Easy**
- Race Starts: **Assisted**
- Unsafe Pit Release: **On**
- Car Damage: **Reduced**
- Car Damage Rate: **Reduced**
- Collisions: **Off**
- Off for First Lap Only: **Disabled**
- Off for Griefing: **Enabled**



10. F1® 25 PC System Requirements

PC players must meet the following hardware specifications. All PC configurations require Windows 10 64-bit (Version 21H1 or newer), DirectX 12, and 100 GB of available hard drive space.

Available here: F1® 25 System Requirements for PC - Electronic Arts

Component	Minimum Requirements	Recommended Requirements
OS	Windows 10 64-bit Version 21H1 or newer	Windows 10 64-bit Version 21H1 or newer
Processor (Intel)	Intel Core i5-6400 / i5-9600k (VR)	Intel Core i5-9600k
Processor (AMD)	AMD Ryzen 3 1200 / Ryzen 5 2600X (VR)	AMD Ryzen 5 2600X
Memory	8 GB RAM	16 GB RAM
Graphics (Nvidia)	GTX 1060 (6GB) / GTX 1660Ti (VR) / RTX 2060 (RT)	RTX 2070 (+VR) / RTX 3070 (RT)
Graphics (AMD)	RX 570 (8GB) / RX 590 (VR) / 6700XT (RT)	RX 6600XT / RX 6700XT (VR) / RX 6800 (RT)
Connection	1Mbps up, < 60ms ping	3Mbps up, < 30ms ping

11. Terms & Conditions of Entry

The 2026 AEL Virtual Grand Prix which can be found at www.ael.org.au/terms

Need Help?

Contact the AEL via Teams through the Teacher's Hub or via vgp@ael.org.au

Happy racing!

The Australian Esports League