



AFL Coaching Newsletter - July 2009

This month we bring you advice from the AFL Medical Officers Association on reducing the impact of flu in your club, information on the 2009 AFL High Performance Coaching Course, a link to some new drills and a look at the role of taggers in modern football. There is an article on the AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program and the success it is having in developing a highly successful coaching system in place for maintaining and improving the standard of umpiring, updates from individual states and a calendar of coaching events coming up in each state.

Flu – Reducing the Impact in Your Club

With the onset of winter the “flu” season upon us and all football clubs will be faced with players catching colds and the flu. There are some simple things, basically related to personal hygiene, that football clubs can put in place to prevent or reduce the spread of influenza type viruses. The AFL Medical Officers Association provides the following advice in this regard.

Infection control is essentially reducing the risk of saliva, nasal discharge and faecal spread, therefore:

- avoid sharing of food and drinking utensils
- use drinking bottles with the chin plate rather than those with a mouthpiece
- wash hands frequently, especially after going to the toilet
- avoid coughing or sneezing when other people are around
- if you have a bad cold or gastro stay away until better (if possible)

Note also that training when you have a fever interferes with your recovery.

“It’s probably doing what you should do all the time – personal hygiene - the things we’re putting in place shouldn’t have to be said ... not sharing drinks and towels, not coughing and spluttering on people, and washing your hands, all the things you instil into your three year-old kid. It’s more reinforcing how important it is in terms of spreading contagious illnesses, particularly by airborne spread, through hands and mouth and nose droplets.” (Nathan Gibbs, Sydney Swans Club Doctor - Sydney Morning Herald)

AFL High Performance (Level 3) Coaching Course

The AFL is conducting a High Performance (Level 3) Coaching Course at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra from Sunday 27th September to Friday 2nd October 2009.

The course will cover the following areas of competency applied to a high performance coaching program in Australian Football.

Coaching philosophy, program management, communication strategies, advanced skill development, game plans, game analysis, training programs, sport sciences, individual needs, talent identification, umpiring support, AFL policies and regulations, and public relations.

The target group is coaches who are aspiring to elite/representative coaching. This would include State League Coaches, TAC Cup, State U17 and U19, Representative Teams. Attendance will be by invitation only, using the current application and selection processes.

The course fee is \$1,000 (which does not include travel to and from Canberra). In certain circumstances subsidies may be available to assist coaches to attend.

The current application form and selection procedure documents are available through the AFL website by clicking [here](#).

For further information about the course contact your state coaching manager or AFL National Coaching, Umpiring and Volunteers Manager, Lawrie Woodman (contact details available through the AFL website).

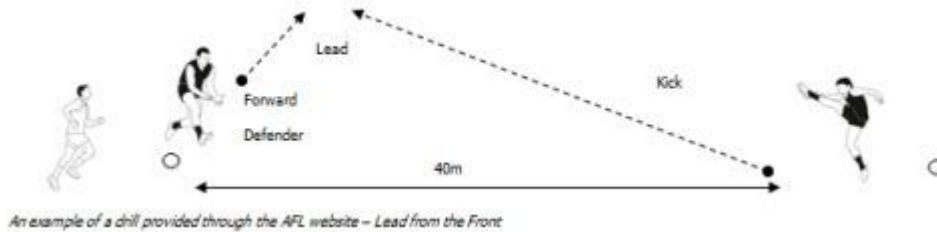
Applications should be made directly to the State Coaching Manager in your state.



DRILLS & SKILLS

Conducting effective drills is important for skill development. This month the newsletter looks at effective drills for coaching kicking. Please click [here](#) to visit the AFL website and view a variety of training drills that look at the following tactical situations:

- Using a drop punt to kick the ball to the leader's advantage from a distance of 40 metres
- Using a drop punt to kick the ball from inside 50 metres to accurately shoot for goal.
- Using a snap shot to kick the ball through the goals from an angle that warrants the use of that kick.
- Using a weighted drop punt to kick the ball over different distances.
- Making the correct decision to kick to the best option using the drop punt.



An example of a drill provided through the AFL website – Lead from the Front

COACHING EDGE

Last month AFL Coaching released Coaching Edge, a new national electronic coaching magazine. The magazine, edited by Ken Davis, will be published three times a year and hosted in the coaching section of [afl.com.au](#) from where it can be read, downloaded, saved, printed or emailed.

Coaching Edge will contain interviews, drills, skills, information from the AFL High Performance Programs and recent research and a range of views about football and coaching. Read the first edition (May 2009) by clicking [here](#).

Do Taggers have a Role in AFL Football?

By Adrian Fletcher

Historically, the survival of taggers has been based upon restricting their direct opponent's influence on the game by limiting their possession rate.

With the continual evolution of the modern game, the zoning defence has become more prevalent. Evidence of this game style was demonstrated in the 2008 Geelong vs Hawthorn AFL Grand Final. The aim of a zone is to defend an area of the ground as opposed to a direct opponent. There are several rationales for employing this strategy. Firstly, using a team defense fills spaces that the offensive team aims to lead into. Secondly, zoning is deemed proactive, as opposed to one-on-one where the defender tends to react to offensive moves. Ultimately these lead to the conservation of energy for offensive moves.

Another pivotal factor is the high player rotation now used by all clubs. Further, most clubs are using traditional midfield players in a variety of roles, such as in the forward line and half back line. Additionally, stoppages have reduced from 90 to 60, which works against the often used philosophy of taggers driving opponents into traffic.

In the past taggers followed and aimed to smother assigned opponents. Contemporary employment of zones now dictates that all players are responsible for effectively defending their area, whilst also offering assistance to teammates. However, the trade-off is that offensive teams rack up more possessions because of the high use of the short pass. In turn the "tagged" player has the luxury of more space and potentially growth in confidence that comes with increased ball possession, further negating the effectiveness of the tagger. Also, with increased rotations, the tagger has less time to stifle a direct opponent. An example of this is Kirk v Black, who previously battled directly for 100 minutes, but today would only oppose each other for around 50-60 minutes. Constantly changing opponents does not allow the tagger to get into a rhythm or wear down their opponent, which was the hallmark of an effective tagger.

The reduced number of stoppages has decreased congestion and sped up the game. This increased game tempo has made it almost impossible for a slower tagger to continually stay with a faster, offensively minded player. Moreover, many dominant players are now leaning toward the offensive end of the ground, further reducing the effectiveness of tagging. An example is Gary Ablett Jr who, whilst a dominant midfielder, also spends a large majority of the game in the forward line.

There is a role, albeit abbreviated, for taggers in the modern game. However, the traditional means of measuring their effectiveness - reducing a direct opponent's absolute possessions - is no longer applicable. Rather the tagger must be judged individually in terms of negating forward movement of the opponent, and hence their overall impact on the game. Arguably this can only be truly determined by the coaching staff who are aware of the role the tagger has been assigned.

In contrast to taggers of the past who were often slow but physically intimidating, relying on out muscling opponents, the modern tagger needs similar attributes to their opponent, such as comparable speed and size because of the pace and openness of today's football.

Adrian Fletcher is an assistant coach at the Brisbane Lions. This article was written as part of the requirements of the AFL High Performance Coaching Course.



AFL Umpire Coach - Professional Development Program

Staying ahead of the game

By Cathy Reid, Australian Sports Commission

Despite having a highly successful coaching system in place for maintaining and improving the standard of umpiring, the AFL has established a professional development program for umpire coaches to ensure it stays ahead of the game at community level.

The AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program has already made an impact in just four years, according to Jim Cail, AFL Manager, Umpiring Development.

'The program is all about improving community-based umpire coaches and equipping them with the skills to ensure they can continue to improve,' Jim said.

The program focuses on two key areas:

1. The environment in which the umpire operates; and
2. The approach to coaching and communicating with the umpires.

'The AFL has recognised that we can do all the recruiting we like, but if the environment in which an umpire participates is not positive, friendly, interactive and supportive then we will lose new recruits.'

Now in its fourth year, the program supports over 200 umpire coaches around Australia.

The first stage of the program is a 'Coach in Training' year. In the second year the coach undertakes their Level 1 Coach Accreditation, while in the third year coaches either go into a 'Specialist Coach Group' or into the 'Head

Coach Group’.

The fourth year of the program sees the coach delivering mentor training to experienced umpires within their group.

The program is delivered through a series of workshops, teleconferences and an annual conference.

‘These provide an ideal way for coaches to interact, share ideas and experiences and strengthen their networks while developing strategies to improve their approach to coaching,’ Jim said.’

Facilitator, David Levens, from Glenlyon Consulting, believes the key to success is the program’s supportive environment and engagement with umpire coaches.

‘We believe if we get the environment right we are more likely to attract and retain people. Then it’s a matter of keeping it interesting and challenging,’ David said.

‘We provide an opportunity for people to come together, share their experiences and build on what they already know, rather than just tell them how things should be done.’

‘It’s all about growing. In year one the umpire coaches start on a professional development plan. In year two they identify a project they are going to work on related to their coaching and in years three and four they are expected to provide a stronger leadership role in the program.’

Leading by example is Brian Goodman, the Victorian Amateur Football Association Umpires Coach, who is in his third year of the program.

Brian was appointed Umpire Coach for the 2008 AFL National Under 16 Championships at the Gold Coast.

‘I had to work out a strategy to manage every aspect of the championships from the umpiring techniques, drills, fitness, appointing umpires to games and providing feedback on performances,’ Brian said.

‘I was completely out of my comfort zone, but I felt prepared and confident that I could do it because of the skills I’d developed through the AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program.’

‘I think it is one of the best things that has happened in the AFL from an umpiring perspective. The program certainly gave me the confidence to be able to go to the next level.’

Another bonus is the retention of senior officials like Hugh Moore, who is one of the longest serving umpire coaches.

‘If it weren’t for the program I would have retired from umpiring three years ago,’ Hugh said. ‘It really gave me new lease on life and a different outlook to my coaching.’

The Dandenong Juniors Umpire Coach looks after a team of seven umpire coaches and manages the appointments for 72 games each weekend.

‘We put together a training program for their coaching and fitness skills, then go and observe the umpires each week and provide feedback.’

‘Thanks to the program, I’ve changed the way I conduct my coaching sessions and we now have more numbers than we’ve ever had. I put it down to the environment we’ve created, and our philosophy of doing it right first time.’

For more information please contact Jim Cail, AFL Manager, Umpiring Development.



STATE NEWS

STATE

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Development of an Indigenous Module for Coaching Courses

Flexibility in delivery and ensuring a coaching course meets the demands of the participants is important in developing quality education for football coaches. With this in mind AFLNT, in conjunction with the AFL, are working on the development of an indigenous module for coaching courses. The module will focus on...

- Flexibility and understanding when coaching indigenous players.
- Encourage natural flair within a team environment.

The development and trial of this module will be monitored and enhanced with the long term view to provide this module as an option for coaches who have a specific demand for further education about coaching indigenous players.

VICTORIA

Inclusive Coaching

The AFL and AFL Victoria are committed to the inclusion of people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds in Australian Football. Subsequently, the Dandenong Level 1 Junior Coaching course incorporated a trial of a new inclusive coaching component. Importantly, the inclusive component focused on developing subtle changes to the existing course structure and subsequently did not result in additional time being required to complete the course. The inclusive component focused on modifying drills to cater for all abilities. Essentially, the ability to modify drills forms the foundation of good coaching practice. Following on from this trial, the AFL hopes to refine and improve the inclusive coaching component of its courses.

2009 AFL Multicultural Academy Camp

The Australian Football League is giving 50 young people an opportunity to attend an Academy Camp during the 2009 AFL Grand Final week. From Sunday 20th – Thursday 24th September, selected participants will take part in a free live-in camp in Melbourne where they will be exposed to AFL organised training sessions, sessions with AFL players, fitness and skill testing and guest speakers. The intention of the camp is to provide an opportunity for talented young people from multicultural backgrounds to continue their development as players and leaders in their communities. Male students, in year 7 & 8, from a multicultural background are invited to apply for the camp. For further information please contact Yuta Kobayashi at Yuta.Kobayashi@carltonfc.com.au.

The following selection criteria will be applied to determine participants:

- Participants selected based on athletic ability and potential.
- All participants must be of multicultural background (ie. newly arrived or at least one parent born overseas).
- Participants selected based on leadership qualities and willingness to develop.
- All participants must be in regular attendance at school (certified by the principal).

Note: an AFL Female Multicultural Camp will take place in 2010.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

New Direction for Australian Football Coaches Association



Nurturing new coaches and rewarding coaching excellence are two of the key aims identified by the revamped Australian Football Coaches Association (WA) heading into the future.

The AFCA, which was established in the early 1980s to develop and encourage coaching development in WA, has provided an invaluable service to the football community over the years, coordinating coaching accreditation, seminars and recognition programs.

But with the structure of football in WA shifting, as WAFL clubs are developed into Centres of Excellence, the AFCA is undergoing a restructure to ensure it remains a viable and important part of the WA football landscape.

Part of the restructure will see the annual election of representatives including a president, secretary, treasurer and nine WAFL District representatives to form a support network for coaches and promote the value of accreditation and education programs.

WAFC High Performance Coach Rob Wiley has been appointed AFCA president for 2009, while Ken Ferguson remains treasurer and Kevin Xanthis returns as secretary. All district coaching coordinators will also become official AFCA committee members.

The new direction for the AFCA will also see the committee play a key role in the planning and delivery of the official WA Coaching Awards Night, where awards will be presented to football coaches who have shown excellence and measurable achievements over a number of years.

Nominations can be made for the 'JJ Leonard Medal' Coach of the Year, Ken Armstrong Community Coach of the Year, and Greg Brehaut Memorial Scholarship, which are each presented in recognition of three stalwarts of our game.

This year, Coach of the Year Awards will also be presented to outstanding coaches from Auskick, Modified Rules, Youth, Senior Community and Female competitions.

Nominations must be submitted to Tarryn Kailis at the West Australian Football Commission, PO Box 275, Subiaco 6904, or fax (08) 9381 1764 by Tuesday, September 1.



WAFC High Performance Coach Rob Wiley has been appointed AFCA president for 2009

What's On!

Victoria

July

AFCA Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Southern)
Presenter – Melbourne FC
Topic – Coach the Coach and Train the Trainer (U18 - Seniors)
When – Wednesday 15th July, 6.30pm – 8.00pm
Where – Casey Fields, Cranbourne
Contact – Mark Wheeler (03) 9791 8656

AFCA Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Eastern)
Presenter – Eastern Ranges Coaching Staff
Topic – Eastern Ranges Training
When – Tuesday 21st July, 5.00pm – 6.30pm
Where – Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Colchester Road Kilsyth
Contact – Shawn Wilkey (03) 9724 9488

AFCA Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Dandenong)
Presenter – Melbourne FC
Topic – Coach the Coaches
When – Tuesday 21st July, 6.30pm
Where – Casey Fields, Cranbourne
Contact – Mark Wheeler (03) 9791 8656

AFCA Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Eastern)
Presenter – Wayne Campbell and Brian Royal
Topic – Stoppages, Structures and Strategies
When – Wednesday 22nd July, 7.00pm – 8.30pm
Where – Club Kilsyth, Canterbury Road, Kilsyth
Contact – Shawn Wilkey (03) 9724 9488

AFCA Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Northern)
Presenter – Blake Caracella and Paul Hudson - Collingwood FC
Topic – Midfield, Forwards and Finals
When – Wednesday 22nd July, 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Where – Ivanhoe Grammar School
Contact – Phiv Demetriou (03) 9432 2427

AFCA Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Bendigo)
Presenter – Essendon FC Coaching staff
Topic – Tactics and stoppages. Advanced skills and drills
When – Wednesday 22nd July, 5.30pm – 7.30pm
Where – Golden Square Football Ground
Contact – Tony McNamara 0419 103 178

AFCA Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Western/Calder)
Presenter – Leon Cameron and Paul Williams Western Bulldogs
Topic – Preparing for Finals
When – Monday 27th July, 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Where – Crofts Reserve Altona North
Contact – Graeme Pratt (03) 9390 0611 / Andrew Johnston (03) 9350 7407

AFCA Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Southern)
Presenter – Simon Dalrymple - Western Bulldogs FC
Topic – Kicking to Success
When – Wednesday 29th July, 6.30pm – 8.00pm
Where – Mordialloc Baeside JFC Walter Galt Res Parkdale
Contact – Mark Wheeler (03) 9791 8656 or Gary Brown (03) 9555 3982

New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory

July

ACT Launch of the AFL NSW/ACT Coaching Association
Presenter – John Blakey and Peter Berbakov (Sydney Swans FC) & Melbourne FC Coaching Staff
When – Sunday 26th July, 8.30am – 10.00am
Where – The Manuka Room, Eastlake FC, 3 Oxley St, Griffith, ACT
Contact – Kim Coventry
kim.coventry@aflnswact.com.au - (02) 6228 0307

Tasmania

November

Level Two Coaching Course - Tasmania
When – Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th November
Where – TBC
Contact – Nick Probert, High Performance Manager
nprobert@footballtas.com.au or (03) 6230 1800

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