



AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program E-Newsletter

2009 – Week 17

*Visit the AFL Umpiring Development website for the latest umpiring info -
<http://www.afl.com.au/umpiring>*

Through the AFL Umpire Coach PD program the Australian Football League along with each State Umpiring body is continuing to commit to its promise of providing stronger support and training to Umpire Coaches throughout Australia. The AFL sees Umpire Coaches as having the greatest influence over the environment in which an umpire participates in, and sees the coach as the key person in providing support for all umpires within their group.

Beating the "SELF Beat Up": Using expertise under pressure

(MUST READ)

Being mentally tough is a call often made on successful sports people – officials included. There are a range of definitions, but one thing we know is that what sets aside the top umpires from the rest is 'mental toughness', whether those umpires are at the AFL or officiating in community footy.

Those umpires who are able to perform consistently under pressure (or what others see as pressure situations) can be considered mentally tough. These umpires have cool heads, a calmness or composure in their approach to decision making and managing different situations. They are in control of themselves and focusing on what is important in any given situation – prior to, during and following an event.

Others often revert to being distracted by our mental response/s to different situations or undertaking "SELF Beat Up" as Jason Patchell a Psychologist at the Australian Institute of Sport refers.

What can you do as a coach with your umpires in the important area of mental skills? There might be an idea or a thought in the attachment which is a copy of a presentation given by Jason Patchell (ASC) to the AFL Academy Umpires recently. We thank him for it and hopefully you find it useful for your umpires and thought provoking for your coaching!

International Perspectives – Nauru

Australian Football has undertaken something of a revival in Nauru throughout the first half of 2009. Unfortunately, matches had been suspended following a series of violence towards players and umpires in 2006. A major component of the revival of the Nauruan national sport revolves around umpire recruitment, education and development. The AFL would like to thank John Tannang, who is working tirelessly to develop the game in Nauru, for this insightful perspective of umpiring in Nauru.



UMPIRES – PART OF THE REVIVAL

The current push for reviving Australian Football in Nauru, which involved a series of exhibition and preseason games during March & April earlier this year, has included, for the first time, payment of umpire's fees. Sadly for Nauru, the revival is a consequence of a series of violence towards players and umpires that culminated in the suspension of club football since 2006.

Historically, the appointment of umpires for football matches was done on voluntary basis. In the 60's



and 70's football on Nauru was fortunate to have many expat Australians workers to help develop the game. These expat's were playing, administrating and umpiring matches. It was a common sight to see a white man as the man in white for many football games played on Nauru.

Progressively, local Nauruans took up umpiring to help bolster the umpires' roster for a rapidly expanding competition. Many of these local umpires had attended boarding schools in Melbourne and Victoria where they played the game. All of the local umpires were players from the traditional 6 district club teams participating in the local league; that NAFL. Eventually the clubs were appointed by the league to attend rostered umpires' duties when their side had the bye.

There has never been a formal National Umpires Organisation formed although some ventures have been attempted in various forms with limited success. It may be that the common major challenges that stood in the way were training for key people and support resources. However, a significant issue here on Nauru was that everyone involved in football is aligned to a

District club. This resulted in a stigma that may have branded any club umpire as bias by the many football supporters. Often this has led to abuse and even assaulting of umpires.

The revival of AFL on Nauru is a positive. Interestingly, AFL is a sport that Nauruans can claim as our national sport. Umpiring form a challenging component of a successful revival. The concept of paying umpires' fees is obviously an incentive to bring in more umpires. Umpire recruitment – it's a good start for AFL Football Revival in Nauru.

John Tannang
Nauru

It is interesting that the recruitment of umpires and the battle to create supportive environments for umpires are challenges not isolated to any one group and through the Umpire Coach PD program we are able to share ideas to help groups through such situations. For example, research suggests that the umpire payments are only part of the reason people start umpiring and become a less significant factor in umpire retention.

Goal Umpiring Videos

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

Last year the AFL Umpire Coach PD Newsletter featured goal umpiring videos with associated teaching points. Umpiring groups were encouraged to use these videos as a training resource for goal umpires. We have received a number of requests for these videos to be provided once again.

Please [click here](#) and then on the left hand panel you will need to click on 'Game Development' and then 'Umpiring' to view the 17 video examples. We would like to acknowledge Mostyn Rutter, former Goal Umpires Coach, SANFL for providing these popular video examples and accompanying teaching points.



Video Example:
Teaching Points:

Example 1 - Shot on the run from just inside the 50 meter arc. A contest forms in the left hand behind area and the umpire straddles the behind line. The umpire is calm, assertive and is in a very good position.

Example 2 - Shot on the run from approximately 25 meters out. The umpire correctly positions himself behind the bounce and remains calm and positive.

Example 3 - A defender punches the ball through on the goal line. The umpire is slow to read the play and react and as a result is not correctly settled astride the goal line for the decision. Very close decision but correct.

Example 4 - Shot on the run 40 meters out. The goal umpire chose to stay under the flight of the ball. However, with the defender contesting the ball, being astride the goal line would have been the optimum and correct position.

Example 5 - Shot on the run from 50 meters out right in front. The umpire read the contest on the goal line well and as a result the correct decision was made. Very good straddle on the goal line.

Example 6 - The umpire read the play well resulting in a very good straddle of the goal line in anticipation of the defender carrying the ball over the line.

Example 7 - Contest on the goal line from a set shot. Well read by the umpire to straddle the goal line.

Example 8 - Quick snap shot from in front. Well read and very good movement to be under the flight of the ball. The umpire remained calm and positive.

Example 9 - Umpire under the flight so there isn't a need to look at and face the boundary umpire. In this situation just be under the flight and complete the required procedure.

Example 10 - Out of bounds on the full on the right hand side. Moved early to position and gave a very clear signal to the boundary umpire.

Example 11 - Shot on the run from 25 meters out through the left behind area. The umpire showed very good speed to cover the ball. Sharpe and confident.

Example 12 - Set shot from 50 meters with contestable ball on the goal line. Very good straddle of goal line, well read.

Example 13 - Set shot from 35 meters out on an angle, ball hit the right hand goal post. Very good position under the flight of the ball.

Example 14 - Ball misread by the goal umpire and as a result he was not settled astride the goal line for the contest. Poor positioning behind a contesting player.

Example 15 - Shot on the run from an acute angle. Umpire under the flight, confident and positive.

Example 16 - Shot on the run from 50 meters on an angle. Well read, very good position straddling the goal line for the contest.

Example 17 - A "pressure kick". Set shot on an angle from 50 meters. Umpire under the flight, calm, confident and positive

These teaching points are also available on the AFL website by clicking [here](#).

Essentials of World Class Coaching

Over the next 10 weeks we will delve into 10 essential characteristics for world class coaching. Wayne Goldsmith from www.sportscoachingbrain.com has found that successful coaches across various sports share similar characteristics. Umpire coaches should take the time to consider whether they have each characteristic and how they can enhance this characteristic in their coaching. The 7th essential characteristic of a world-class coach is 'outstanding communication skills'.

7. Outstanding communication abilities.

Coaching is communicating. And not just yelling and shouting or screaming instructions from the sidelines. Coaching is understanding – communication and all its subtleties. It's being able to sit quietly with a player, talk with them about what's important and change his / her life. It's about understanding how to communicate with individuals through understanding who they are, what they value and what motivates them. It's about understanding how to communicate with Generation X, Generation Y, Generation I and every Generation because you take an interest in everything about every person you coach. It's about listening. It's about teaching when you need to and learning more from the people you coach than they learn from you. Great coaches understand that the best communication is delivering the right message at the right time in the right way – and to do this means knowing when each person is ready to listen.

Source: Wayne Goldsmith, www.sportscoachingbrain.com

Coaching Topic – Roles and Responsibilities of the Umpire

This week we conclude the 16 part series that takes an in-depth look at the key skills involved in umpiring.

Hopefully, these have provided coaches with practical advice about the key teaching points of each skill.

The final umpiring skill to be examined in this 16 part series is the roles and responsibilities of the umpire.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Umpires

Learning Outcomes –

- The umpire must take control on match day by:
 - Being decisive on-field and making decisions in accordance with the spirit of the laws
 - Being positive in attending to all administrative requirements on match day
 - Checking that the environment is safe for players and officials
- The role and responsibilities can be addressed under 3 headings:
 - Pre-match
 - On-field
 - Post-match
- To effectively carry out these responsibilities, you must ARRIVE at the ground EARLY say one hour before the start time, depending upon your local league conditions.
- The best way to meet your responsibilities is to have checklists so you don't need to rely on memory or risk missing something important.

Activity –

- One good way of conducting a participative coaching session with your umpiring group is to require the group to collectively compile checklists on a whiteboard.
- Each umpire must write on the board one task to be done on match day until the list is complete.
- He or she can be asked to role-play the task to clarify any doubt.
- The tasks will be relevant to your local league.
- When complete, the list is typed up with appropriate headings and logos and distributed to all umpires to be used on match days.
- By having the group contribute to this process, the checklist is “owned” by the umpires and can be reviewed by them from time to time.
- Resources required for this activity are whiteboard and markers.

Method –

PREMATCH checklist could include

1. Meet captains and coaches of teams if possible and introduce yourself.
2. Meet the team managers and check whether match day checklists have been completed and signed.
3. Ask home team manager whether stretchers are available.
4. Check that timekeepers, goal and boundary umpires (and interchange steward if appropriate) are in place.
5. Inspect the oval surface, pitch, sprinklers, goalposts, lines and fences and ask home manager to remedy any deficiencies.
6. Check that satisfactory balls have been provided and are inflated to correct pressure
7. If appropriate in your league, attend change rooms or warm-up session of each team to inspect players for protective equipment/bandaging, jewellery, studs, rings, spectacles or any other thing that could cause injury to player or opponent.
8. Give timekeepers cards to timekeepers or to home team manager.
9. Complete form confirming names and details of umpires in attendance.
10. Give scorecards and match result card to goal umpires.

ON-FIELD responsibilities can be summarised as follows and need not be brainstormed by the group:

1. Be decisive
2. Communicate decisions firmly
3. Don't tolerate abuse or violence: penalise it
4. Ignore spectator comments: focus on your job
5. Remove players from the field who are actively bleeding so they get medical attention
6. Stop the match if conditions become hazardous (eg. lightning)

HALF-TIME: check that completed and signed team sheets have been provided

POST-MATCH responsibilities could include

1. Complete best and fairest voting card
2. Collect goal umpires scoring and match result cards
3. Check timekeepers cards have been handed in
4. Check that interchange stewards sheet has been handed in
5. Complete form reporting any player for an offence and get it checked by another umpire
6. Advise team manager of any report and ask him to collect a copy when you have completed it

7. Complete your match report form
8. Check that goal scorers record has been provided by team managers (sometimes on teamsheet)
9. Seal above in match envelope and deliver to league or home team manager

Key Points –

- Take control
- Use your checklists

Umpire Coach Advice

Getting to know your umpires is an important undertaking of the coach. There are several benefits to that, including, the umpire feeling that someone is interested in him/her, a stronger connection between umpire and umpiring group and the coach being more aware of the umpire's motivations which all contribute to a much stronger relationship/s. That action can significantly impact in a positive way on your umpiring group environment.

Below is a checklist which is used by Southern Umpires. The checklist is used by the Boundary Umpire coaches in one-on-one sessions with their umpires in an attempt to get to know their umpire's needs, motivations and aspirations. There is no reason that the same format could not be used by other disciplines.

Thank you to Steve Penny, Assistant Boundary Coach, Southern Umpires for sharing the checklist following a recent Boundary Umpire's teleconference.



Knowing your umpires

BOUNDARY UMPIRES

Name:

Age:

Years umpiring:

Level umpired: (circle) 1's 2's 3rd's

Main reason(s) for umpiring: (put **1** next to the main reason and circle any others)

- Love umpiring
- Fitness
- 'Because my friends are doing it'
- Money
- To be involved in footy
- Other _____

What level do you want to achieve this year: (circle) 1's 2's 3rd's

Do you hope to run finals: (circle) Yes No Maybe

If yes, what level: (circle) 1's 2's 3rd's

What do you do outside of umpiring (eg. other sports, fitness work):

How do you rate your fitness:

- Really fit
- Good
- OK
- Not great

- Can't even beat the coach

What would you like to improve this year: (circle)

- Positioning
- Throwing
- Fitness
- Consistency
- Effort
- Reading the play
- All aspects
- Other _____

At what level are you aiming to umpire in 5 years time:

- Southern Umpires Association (local)
- VFL
- AFL
- Probably won't be umpiring
- Other _____

In future, would you be interested in field umpiring: (circle) Yes No Maybe

What can we do better to help you improve:

Any specific training drills you would like us to do more of:

If you have any coach advice you would like to submit to the network of umpire coaches please email them to Umpire.Development@afl.com.au. We encourage umpire coaches to submit their advice.

Ask the Ump

In this section coaches are invited to send in questions which are answered by the AFL Umpiring Department (Jeff Gieschen, Rowan Sawers and Peter Howe). The idea is that this provides an opportunity for umpire coaches from across the country to seek technical advice on any area of umpiring they may be interested in learning more.

Please send your questions to Umpire.Development@afl.com.au.

Umpire Coach Activity

If you have any coach activities you would like to submit to the network of umpire coaches please email them to Umpire.Development@afl.com.au. We encourage umpire coaches to submit their activities.

Umpire coach activities from last year can be found on the AFL website by clicking [here](#).





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