



AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program E-Newsletter 2009 – Edition 1

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.

Umpiring promotional activities

Umpiring groups and umpiring coaches are often looking for ways to promote umpiring and generate recruits. Mark Noonan, AFLNT - State Umpiring Manager uses the following activities when visiting schools to provide an introduction to the basic skills of each discipline. The activities may be valuable for junior umpires or at 'come-and-try' sessions at local umpiring groups.

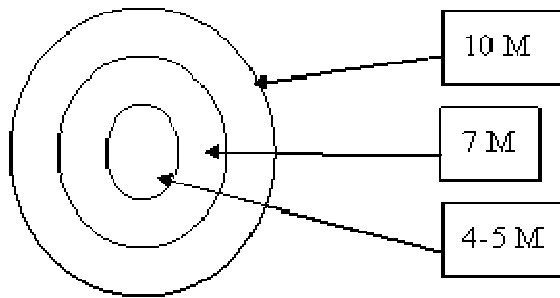
- Set up markers (as per diagrams below)
- Verbal instruction about the skill
- Visual demonstration of the skill
- Let them practice the umpiring skills for themselves for a few minutes
- Help with their technique during the practice time
- Finish with "The CHALLENGE" to see who the top umpire in the group is for that particular skill.

FIELD –"BANG GOES THE BOUNCE"

After providing instruction, giving a demonstration and allowing them to practice, start with everyone standing around the outer circle (around 10m) and work through the group. If it is straight or has great height or good potential style, then they can progress to the next round.

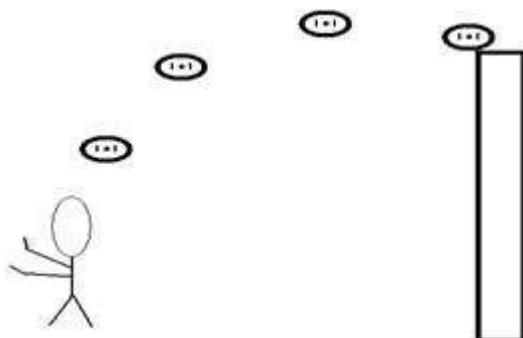
Those that have been eliminated now help judge the remaining contestants. Repeat the process with the middle circle (7m) and the best 2-4 students go into the final and try their skills out in the smallest circle (4-5m). The aim is to bounce the ball high enough whilst keeping the ball within the circle.





BOUNDARY –“THROW-IN UP TO THE TOP”

After providing instruction and giving a demonstration, pair people together with a football between them and let them practise their throw-ins over 10-15m. Then ask the students to



line up in two lines, around 10-15m (depending on age) in front of the two behind posts and take it in turns of trying to hit the top of the behind post. Rotate the participants through to ensure all people spend some time standing behind the behind posts to help retrieve the balls.

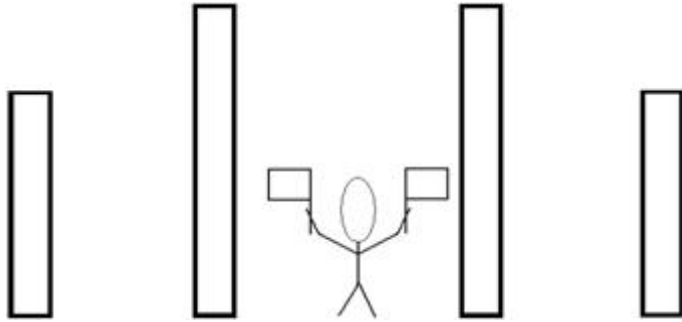
Obviously, the aim of this competition is to try and hit the highest point on the behind post. If no one hits the post, then the one closest to the top of the behind post will be considered

the winner.

GOAL–“FASHIONABLE FLAG WAVING”

After providing instruction and giving a demonstration, spilt the group in half and set a few markers about 20m on a 45 degree angle with 6 footy's. On your instruction one student will kick the football at the goals and another student be the goal umpire and will have to position there-selves under the flight of the ball or straddle the line in the ball bounces towards them. Give the appropriate score signal and then wave off that particular score.

Once the kicker has had their turn they will retrieve the balls they had kicked and then line up in the goal umpiring line. After completing their turn at goal umpiring duties, they will go and line up for a kick on goal line. The aim is to practice positioning and correct decision making.



We thank Mark for allowing us to share this valuable resource.

We encourage umpire coaches to provide drills or activities that we can share with other umpire coaches. If you have any drills (regardless of the format) please email them to Andrew.Hughes@afl.com.au.

Umpire Uniform Program

With the season fast approaching we would like to remind umpiring groups who use the AFL's National Umpire Uniform Supply Program to place their orders early to ensure delivery prior to the commencement of the season.

For further information on the uniform program, including a uniform order form and a catalogue of items please visit <http://www.afl.com.au/umpiring/uniforms>.

All completed orders are to be sent through to Andrew.Hughes@afl.com.au.

Umpiring Plan

As has been discussed in previous editions of this e-newsletter, the need for each coach to develop an umpiring plan is an important component in developing a successful umpiring environment.

Steve Keating, Geelong Football Umpires League, has provided a list of items that need to be considered when developing your coaching plan:

- Outline your coaching structure
- Conduct a SWOT analysis to determine your own Strengths, Weaknesses,

- Opportunities and Threats - 4 dot points for each
- Develop a theme for the year (eg. teamwork)
 - Develop an expectation of other coaches within the group – (eg. PD program, teleconferences, etc.)
 - Develop your coaching aims – (eg. build depth, provide opportunity, etc.)
 - Organise a leadership group structure and outline what responsibilities that group will take on
 - Develop an exchange program
 - Develop standards relating to abuse around social issues (eg. racism, bullying, female abuse, etc.)
 - Clearly stipulate your plan for reviews (ie. when will they be held, how will they be done - eg. mid-season, one-on-one, group)
 - Develop a communication strategy to deal with leagues and coaches (ie. when, how, why, etc.)
 - Include some measurables and get some umpires to rate skill practice and coaching sessions.
 - Present your umpiring plan to your board and umpiring group

Note: you may only need to present certain sections within your plan depending on the group you are addressing (eg. your umpires, the board, club coaches, league administration).

We would like to thank Steve for providing the areas he considers when putting his coaching plan together.

Umpire Coach Professional Development Program

The Umpire Coach Professional Development Program has been providing support to umpire coaches at all levels since 2006. Now in the 4th year of the program we are expecting over 200 coaches to participate in the program.

Registration in this program is free and you will receive resources (eg. newsletters) and support (eg. teleconferences) to assist with your coaching as a direct result of being involved in the program.

If you would like to be involved please contact your State Umpiring Manager.

STATE	State Umpiring Manager	Email Address
NSW/ACT	Graham Glassford	Graham.Glassford@aflnswact.com.au
NT	Mark Noonan	mnoonan@afInt.com.au
QLD	Greg Howell	ghowell@aflq.com.au
SA	Mark Hardham	markh@sanfl.com.au
TAS	Wayne Povey	wpovey@footballtas.com.au
VIC (metro)	Neville Nash	Neville.Nash@aflvic.com.au
VIC (country)	Gerard Ryan	Gerard.Ryan@aflvic.com.au
WA	Steve Hargrave	shargrave@wafc.com.au

Mentoring – roles and characteristics

Mentoring is crucial to the development of umpires. The notion of mentoring is widely

supported. However, the following questions are often posed when looking to implement a mentoring program within an umpiring group:

- What is the role of the mentor?
- What are the characteristics required to be a mentor?

Fortunately, Brian Goodman, VAFA - General Manager Umpire Operations, has put together a guide to the roles a mentor may be required to fill and the characteristics that make a successful mentor. See the roles and characteristics of mentors below.

Mentor Roles

There are ten different roles a mentor can assume. Which role a mentor assumes depends on the needs of the mentee. On any given day, the mentor may perform one of the roles or all of the roles. Over time, and with experience, mentors can learn to assume different roles more easily. Each of the ten roles is described below.

Teacher: As a teacher, a mentor needs to teach the mentee the skills and knowledge required to perform his/her position successfully. This role requires the mentor to outline the "nuts and bolts" of the position and to share experiences as a seasoned professional. It is important that the mentor also share the wisdom of past mistakes. A mentee cannot only learn from past errors, but also must realize that no one is perfect.

Guide: As a guide, the mentor helps navigate through the inner workings of the organization and decipher the "unwritten office rules" for the mentee. This information is usually the "kernels of knowledge" that one only acquires over a period of time. The inner workings of the organization are simply the "behind the scenes" dynamics, or office politics, that are not always apparent, but are crucial to know. The "unwritten rules" can include the special procedures an office follows, the guidelines that are not always documented, and policies under consideration. It is also important for the mentor to explain who does what, the critical responsibilities each performs, and the office personalities involved.

Counsellor: The role of counsellor requires the mentor to establish a lasting and open relationship. In order to create a trusting relationship, the mentor needs to stress confidentiality and show respect for the mentee. A mentor can promote confidentiality by not disclosing personal information that the mentee shares. The mentor should always show respect by listening carefully and attentively to the mentee and by not interrupting the mentee while s/he speaks.

The counsellor role also encourages the mentee to develop problem-solving skills. A mentee must be able to think through problems rather than always depending on the mentor to provide the solution. The mentor can develop the problem-solving skills of a mentee by advising the mentee to first attempt to solve the problem before seeking assistance.

Motivator: As a motivator, a mentor may at times need to generate motivation with the mentee. Motivation is an inner drive that compels a person to succeed. It's not often that mentees are not motivated. In general, mentees are enthusiastic about their job. After all, mentees tend to be characterized as highly-motivated individuals with a thirst for success. Mentors usually perform the role of motivator only when there is a need to motivate a mentee to complete a difficult assignment, or to pursue an ambitious goal. Through encouragement, support, and incentives, mentors can motivate mentees to succeed.

One of the most effective ways to encourage a mentee is to provide frequent, positive feedback during assigned tasks or while the mentee strives toward goals. Positive feedback is a great "morale booster." It removes doubt and builds self-esteem that result in a sense of accomplishment.

Sponsor: A sponsor creates opportunities for the mentee—opportunities that may not otherwise be made available. These opportunities can relate directly to the job or indirectly to the mentee's overall professional development. The goal of the mentor is to provide as much exposure for the mentee as possible, with a minimum of risk. Opportunities should challenge and instruct without slicing away the mentee's self-esteem. A mentee should not be set up for failure. New opportunities can increase the visibility of the mentee, but mentors must be careful in selecting these opportunities.

Coach: Coaching is a complex and extensive process and is not always an easy skill to perform. Specifically, coaching involves feedback. A mentor needs to give different kinds of feedback as the situation demands: positive feedback to reinforce behaviour and constructive feedback to change behaviour. Both types of feedback are critical to the professional growth of the mentee. Feedback should be frequent, specific, and based on direct observation of the mentee (not second-hand information). When giving constructive feedback, the mentor should be descriptive about the behaviour and not use labels, such as "immature" or "unprofessional." The mentor should neither exaggerate, nor be judgmental, and should phrase the issue as a statement, not a question.

Advisor: This role requires the mentor to help the mentee develop professional interests and set realistic career goals. As the old saying goes, "If you don't know where you are going, you don't how to get there." This saying holds true for a mentee's professional development. The mentor needs to think about where the mentee wants to go professionally and help set career goals. Career goals should be specific, time-framed, results-oriented, relevant, reachable, and flexible to accommodate the changing dynamics of the organization.

Role Model: As a role model, the mentor is a living example of the values, ethics, and professional practices of the agency. Most mentees, in time, imitate their mentors. As the proverb states, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." Teaching by example may be a mentor's most effective developmental tool. The mentee will learn as he or she observes how the mentor handles situations or interacts with others. The mentor needs to be careful how they come across to the mentee. The mentor needs to strive for high standards of professionalism, solid work ethics, and a positive attitude.

Referral Agent: As a referral agent, the mentor works with the mentee to develop an action plan that outlines what knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed to reach career goals. Once the action plan is in place, the mentor can then use the action plan as an "enabler" to move the mentee toward career goals that have been set.

Door Opener: The role of door opener is to open up doors of opportunity. This role primarily involves helping the mentee establish a network of contacts within the agency, as well as outside the agency. The mentee needs a chance to meet other people to spur professional development. As a door opener, the mentor can introduce the mentee to the mentor's contacts to help build the mentee's network structure. As a door opener, the mentor also opens doors of information for the mentee by directing him/her to resources that may be helpful.

Mentor Characteristics

A successful mentor is characterised as:

Supportive: A mentor is one who supports the needs and aspirations of the mentee. This supportive attitude is critical to the successful development of the mentee. A mentor must encourage the mentee to accept challenges and overcome difficulties.

Patient: A mentor is patient and willing to spend time performing mentoring responsibilities. A mentor allows adequate time to interact with the mentee. Time requirements are defined by both the mentor and the mentee.

Respected: A mentor is someone who has earned the respect of peers within the agency, the community and his or her profession.

People Oriented: A mentor is one who is genuinely interested in people and has a desire to help others. A successful mentor is one who has "good people skills," who knows how to effectively communicate and actively listen. A mentor must also be able to resolve conflict and give appropriate feedback.

Good Motivator: A mentor is someone who inspires a mentee to do better. A mentor needs to be able to motivate a mentee through encouraging feedback and challenging work assignments (where applicable).

Effective Teacher: A mentor should thoroughly understand the skills required of the mentee's position (or desired position) and be able to effectively teach these skills to the mentee. A mentor must not only teach the "skills of the trade," but also manage the learning of the mentee. This means the mentor must actively try to recognize and use teaching opportunities.

Secure in Position: A mentor must be confident in his/her career so that pride for the mentee's accomplishments can be genuinely expressed. A mentor should appreciate a mentee's strengths and abilities, without viewing these accomplishments as a threat. A secure mentor delights in a mentee's discoveries and welcomes a mentee's achievements. In truth, a mentor enjoys being a part of the mentee's growth and expansion.

An Achiever: A mentor is usually a professional achiever, one who sets lofty career goals, continually evaluates these goals, and strives to reach them. A successful mentor is usually one who takes on more responsibilities than is required, volunteers for more activities, and tends to climb the proverbial career ladder at a quick pace.

A mentor attempts to inspire a mentee with this same drive for achievement. This "attempt at

achievement" is the flint that sparks a mentee's desire for career success. In this way, a mentor helps a mentee to set, evaluate, and reach career goals.

Able to Give Mentee VAFA Visibility: A mentor is someone who can give the mentee the right amount of exposure within the VAFA. One way to give exposure is to secure challenging projects for the mentee. Another way is to talk with others about the mentee's accomplishments.

Values of VAFA and Work: A mentor takes pride in the VAFA and relishes the everyday challenges that typically arise. A mentor understands the mission, vision, and values of the VAFA, and supports the association's initiatives. A mentor should be well versed in VAFA policies and in the procedures of the particular areas in which he or she works.

Accepts Others: A mentor is one who shows regard for another's well-being. Every person, including the mentor, has certain vulnerabilities and imperfections that must be accepted. A mentor should learn to accept a mentee's weaknesses and minor flaws just as the mentee must learn to accept the areas of improvement and flaws of the mentor.

It is important to note that the role the mentor delivers will depend on the mentee. We also need to understand that whilst umpiring experience is desirable the mentor does not necessarily require background in umpiring to successfully mentor an umpire. Remember, mentees must also take responsibility for driving this relationship to ensure maximum benefits are achieved.

Thanks to Brian for providing this valuable resource.



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)