



AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program E-Newsletter

2009 – Week 21

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.

Female Involvement in Umpiring

The AFL is committed to the inclusion of people from wide variety of backgrounds in umpiring. Rod Threlfall, VCFL Umpire Development Manager has provided this insight into the inclusion of females in umpiring and in particular the use of female liaison officers to allow females easier integration into umpiring. The AFL would like to thank Rod for providing this insight.

By Rod Threlfall



Over recent years there has been a stronger focus on including females in umpiring. This has resulted in discussions on catering for needs of female umpires including ways to better service their involvement and participation. A number of initiatives have resulted including: 'all female umpiring day at Geelong Football Umpires League', involvement of female umpires in VCFL V/Line Academies, and the V/Line Leadership Program. Through the AFL Umpire Coach PD Program umpire coaches have been challenged to explore ways to improve the environment for females. One strategy implemented by some umpiring groups has included the appointment of a female liaison officer. This initiative was reported to have had a significance impact with female umpires. A teleconference for female liaison officers was held to further explore ideas and approaches in this area.

The appointment of a female welfare officer at the recent V/Line Under 15 Carnival was another important step in enhancing the umpiring environment and experience for eight female umpires. "It was great to have someone we could go to and discuss a personal issue", one girl said.

There are in excess of 740 female umpires across Australia and with continued support and improved environments this number can grow so that more girls can be involved in our great game.

Rod Threlfall is a VCFL Umpire Development Manager.

Appointments, appointments, yet more appointments!

Many umpire coaches find themselves spending countless hours on appointing umpires (putting names next to games). This is time which is spent away from interacting with their umpires. Arguably, this time could be spent more effectively. We would like to put together some examples of 'best practice' strategies in this area that are time efficient and effective for coaches.

Please email your responses to David Levens.

Umpire Coach Advice – Coaching Briefs

Roger Crowhurst, Umpires Coach for the Black Diamond AFL Umpires Group provides his umpires with coaching briefs that are designed to re-enforce the key points from coaching sessions as well as provide something his umpires can print off and refer to as required. This week we have provided the 3rd of the coaching briefs; **effective communication**.

AFL Umpiring Development would like to thank Roger for this contribution. Umpiring groups may like to consider producing similar coaching briefs to reflect the key points from their coaching sessions.

Effective communication

Effective communication is a key ingredient for effective umpiring.

While it is imperative that the Umpire controls the match – players, officials and spectators expect this – it is also essential that he or she does so in a manner, which encourages mutual respect and understanding between players and umpires.

This contributes to creating a positive environment which is an essential part of umpiring.

The ability to handle players and situations is important to the conduct of the match. Umpires who are skilled in this area will be better equipped to umpire their matches and therefore find umpiring much more enjoyable.

In controlling the match, the umpire is called upon to make certain decisions and these must be carried out. It is important, therefore, that umpires be firm and assertive in their approach. Umpires have developed strategies and techniques in the art of effective communication that have stood the test of time and proven to be beneficial to umpires, players and the conduct of the match.

Included among those strategies and techniques are the following:

1. KEEP CALM

Umpires must remain calm in all circumstances. The ability to remain "cool under fire" communicates to others a sense of control, composure, maturity and skill in handling turbulent situations.

By remaining calm, the Field Umpire can think clearly thereby avoiding any tendency to "rush things" and become flustered.

Thinking clearly allows the umpire to prioritise the options and to choose the most appropriate course of action.

2. TREAT PLAYERS WITH RESPECT

Umpires have to earn respect. Respect is earned by what Umpires "say and do" and how they "say and do it".

Umpires should treat players in a manner that they themselves would like to be treated, as equals – preferably on a first name (nick-name if appropriate) basis.

Umpires should not speak down to players or patronise them. All players know and understand that the umpire makes the final decision so there is no need for the umpire to continually reinforce this fact by making comments such as "I'm the umpire, what I say goes".

3. USE POSITIVE AND APPROPRIATE BODY LANGUAGE

Good umpires exhibit self confidence. This can be achieved by using appropriate and positive body language, smiling or nodding at appropriate times.

When speaking to players, don't intrude into their personal space, stand further than an arm's length away, don't point your finger or thrust out your chest.

Wherever possible, if you are listening to a player or talking to him, maintain eye-to-eye contact. Correct and positive indications for decisions that the umpire makes are other non-verbal actions that demonstrate self confidence.

4. LISTEN ATTENTIVELY

Communication is a two way process, talking and listening.

Listening attentively means participating actively in the communication process by acknowledging and responding (where appropriate and possible) to the speaker's words and feelings.

Not all comments directed to umpires during a match could be classified as a complaint. A question or comment made in a rational and mature manner needs a rational and mature response.

5. COMMUNICATING DECISIONS

Competent umpires communicate their decisions effectively and strongly.

Positive communication of a decision reflects self confidence and demonstrates a security in the knowledge that the decision was correct.

Players appreciate umpires who communicate their decisions effectively. They have a lot more confidence in umpires when they know and understand what they are doing.

6. DO NOT EMBARRASS PLAYERS

Good umpires do not embarrass or belittle players. Most competent umpires avoid being the centre of attention and work hard at not embarrassing the players.

7. PENALISE ACTIONS, NOT CHARACTERS

At times, the umpire may have to caution a player to cease certain actions to avoid being reported. When communicating this, the umpire should be mindful to focus comments on the offending behaviour or actions, not on the person's character or personality.

This is particularly important when the player is angry or frustrated.

8. SELECTIVELY IGNORE COMMENTS

Some issues are better left alone, not every remark requires a response, especially if the remark was viewed as a natural expression of frustration.

On occasions, it may be better to ignore the remark at that time but take the opportunity to follow up at a later stage if necessary, when the player may be more responsive.

9. AVOID SARCASM

Sarcasm is a barrier to effective communication. The purpose of sarcasm is to hurt the feelings or reduce the self esteem of others; it is unprofessional and has no place in umpiring.

10. DO NOT TRY TO HAVE THE LAST WORD

In many instances the umpire will not change the player's mind then and there. It is good practice for umpires to answer a question. Your answer should be brief and direct yet provided in a calm and respectful manner.



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.

Question

We had a situation last week where there was only one ruckman in the centre circle when the ball was ready to be bounced and no other team member entered the 10m circle. The umpire threw the ball up and before the ruckman was able to contest the ball an opposition player ran into the 10m circle and laid a heavy bump on the ruckman. The umpire paid a free kick against the non ruckman. Was this correct? We were debating this contest for a while. Is it fair? Is the player entering the 2m circle allowed to interfere with the ruckman? We could not agree on this incident and thought it was worth discussing in this forum. Can you assist us in getting a ruling on it?

Answer

Thanks for the question. Firstly, it is important to clarify that according to the laws a team must nominate their ruckman (11.3.5) and they are the only players who can contest a straight bounce. If the umpire calls "play-on" because the bounce is off line any player can contest the ruck contest.

If a team does not have a nominated player inside the centre circle at the time the umpire commences his approach to bounce they cannot contest the ruck unless the umpire calls "play-on" for an off line bounce. Players can enter the circle but the ruckman who was in the circle is the only player who can contest the ball if the bounce was straight. A correct free was awarded against the player who bumped the ruckman in this circumstance because he cannot be interfered with until he contests the ruck.

Hopefully this helps clarify this for you.

We would like to thank Jeff, Rowan and Peter for taking the time to answer these questions.

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

Interstate field umpires wanted for Northern Territory FL

INTERSTATE FIELD UMPIRES WANTED

Join the TIO NTFL Umpiring panel for the 2009/10 Season

Are you looking for a unique experience?



Want to fast track your umpiring career?



AFL Northern Territory is looking for Level 2 Accredited Field Umpires for the upcoming 2009/10 TIO NTFL season. If you are looking for an opportunity to **fast track your umpiring career** then this may be for you.

AFL Northern Territory will be offering full and semi seasonal contracts for this season, for those interested in the full 2009/10 TIO NTFL season or just a 3 month stint. AFLNT will pay the bond for rental accommodation, return travel costs from your current address and (return flights home for Christmas for full season applicants only). You will also be paid in-accordance of the AFLNT/NTFLUA's 3 year CBA agreement. If you are successful AFLNT will endeavour to assist you to find employment whilst in Darwin.

To become a successful applicant in this program you will need to consider following points:

- Must have Level 2 NUAS in Australian Rules Football Field Umpiring
- Must be available to Field Umpire during the 2008/09 TIO NTFL season which runs from 2nd of October 2009 to 14th of March 2010 which includes a 2 week break during the festive season
- Field Umpire to the best of your ability
- Prepare fully and professionally
- Learn as much as you possibly can during games and at training sessions
- Behave well on and off field
- **Enjoy the whole experience** of what the Northern Territory has to offer



Past participants in the NTFL competition include current AFL Umpires Hayden Kennedy and Brett Rosebury. Brett umpired the 1998/99 NTFL season and the NTFL grand final before heading back to his WAFL umpiring panel. Since 2000, he has been a member of the AFL panel.

Brett (pictured right) when asked to reflect on his experience umpiring in the NTFL said "it was a great experience in the Top End for the 6 months I was there and it was a great stepping stone in my career by umpiring good quality footy in a 3 umpire system".

APPLICATIONS CLOSE 5.00pm (CST) WEDNESDAY 26th OF AUGUST 2009.

For further details about this once in a life time opportunity please contact:

Mark Noonan
Umpiring Development Manager
AFL Northern Territory
Work: (08) 8980 4811
Email: mark.noonan@aflnt.com.au

Information is also available through the AFLNT website by clicking [here](#).

JOIN OUR TEAM!



Goal Umpire Quiz - CORRECTION

Last week we provided the answers to a goal umpires quiz. We would like to clarify the answer to question 13. The following is what was provided last week.

13. Ball kicked by attacking player, siren sounds, and ball continues bouncing towards goal line. Forward is shepherding an opponent, ball bounces awkwardly, hits forward on the boot and crosses the goal line.
- a. What is the result?
Behind (if all clear given). P 46 12.5.2 (F/u decides if ball is 'assisted').
- b. What if defender punches ball across score line?
Behind P 46 12.5.2 (G/u keeps umpiring until f/u gives all clear.....ends play).

However, the answer should have been as follows.

13. Ball kicked by attacking player, siren sounds, and ball continues bouncing towards goal line. Forward is shepherding an opponent, ball bounces awkwardly, hits forward on the boot and crosses the goal line.
- a. What is the result?
If the ball strikes any player below the knee, no score is allowed. If the f/u gives all clear and g/u is 100% certain that the ball has struck below the knee of any player, the g/u is to consult with f/u and inform them of this fact. The f/u umpire will then take control.
- b. What if defender punches ball across score line?
Behind P 46 12.5.2 (G/u keeps umpiring until f/u gives all clear.....ends play). There seems to be an anomaly in this - a defender may 'punch' the ball over the line to stop a goal after the siren and score a behind, however if he reaches out with a foot and 'kicks' it across the goal line, there will be no score. This may go to the rules committee for some clarification.

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](#).

Heading Overseas?

If you have an umpire that is heading overseas and may be interested in umpiring or helping some of the locals out, we would like to hear from you. Please email Umpire.Development@afl.com.au with the umpires name, email address, phone number and overseas destination and we will aim to put them in touch with the local group to get things started.



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