



AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program E-Newsletter 2009 – Week 8

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.

Umpire Recognition Round – Round 4

Round 4 of the 2009 Toyota AFL Premiership Season the AFL will be Umpire Recognition Round and is a follow up to the successful 'Green Shirt' round in 2006.

The round will aim to raise awareness and create a greater understanding of the AFL Umpire Green Shirt Program throughout the football community. The AFL Umpire Green Shirt Program is an umpire education and development program that aims to use experienced umpires to mentor new and inexperienced umpires.

During all Round 4 matches, all AFL field umpires will wear a special 'light green shirt.' As part of the 'Green Shirt' program, local leagues across the country use the light green shirt to signify a new or inexperienced umpire that may be still learning the game. The greater the awareness that an umpire in a light green shirt is 'in training', the greater likelihood players, coaches and supporters will offer their encouragement and support.

The Green Shirt program, now in its fifth year is critical to the retention of umpires around Australia, as the majority of umpires who quit umpiring do so within their first or second year of umpiring due to the lack of support/understanding while they are still learning the craft. The AFL's 'Umpire Recognition Round' aims to recognise approximately 1800 green shirt umpires along with 700 mentors from across the country.

Additionally, all Round 4 AFL umpires will pay tribute to their pathway to the elite umpiring ranks by displaying the names of their former local umpiring group on the front of their game shirt. On completion of the rounds matches, all shirts will be returned to each local umpiring group.



The following is a summary of activities planned for the weekend -

1. AFL Umpires wearing light green shirts to signify the AFL Green Shirt Program
2. AFL Goal Umpires will wave light green flags to signify the AFL Green Shirt Program
3. Field Umpire shirts to include the name of the umpires 'community club' to signify the umpiring pathway – community clubs will be presented with the shirts in the weeks following the match
4. Adam Goodes to feature in an AFL Record story regarding previously being an umpire
5. Michael Voss to feature in a AFL website story regarding previously being an umpire (click [here](#))
6. Jay Clark (journalist) to write a feature article for the Sunday Herald Sun regarding the professionalism of the AFL Umpires after attending AFL umpires training – Jay will be briefed about AFL Umpiring Development initiatives including the AFL High Performance Umpiring Academy
7. Jeff Gieschen to conduct an interview on SEN radio the Tuesday before the round to promote umpire recognition
8. Hayden Kennedy (TBC) to feature on the 'Before the Game' inside 60 segment – Andrew Maher to be briefed regarding the round
9. Channel 7 to interview an umpire on the way out to the ground before Friday night's match against Brisbane V Collingwood (TBC)
10. Media release on the Wednesday before the weekend to promote the round of football and the AFL efforts regarding umpiring development
11. AFL website stories regarding outstanding umpiring achievements will run all next week (click [here](#))

Outstanding Umpire Achievement at Community Level

"A Family Affair"

Article by Corey Wastle

Aspiring AFL field umpire Ben Laycock's progression through the Western Australian umpiring ranks has been unconventional yet equally remarkable. But what makes his story so special and unique is very much a family affair.

Laycock 17, began his umpiring career at the age of ten, under the shadows of his well established older brothers. Emerging as a quality goal umpire for the Swan Districts Junior Umpiring Association, Laycock partnered older brother Jonathon (then 14) in several games, the pair quickly becoming a classy goal umpiring act. Together they goal umpired both the under 17's grand final and Amateur League Division A Colts grand final for three consecutive years. The pair could've grown to become something very special as they progressed into the WAFL, following older brother Matthew who had established himself umpiring at reserve level. Even local media got in on the act with The Western Front, a pre match day TV program filming a story on all three brothers umpiring the one match. The family act was already creating quite a buzz.

On top of this brotherly dominance on the umpiring field, Laycock's mother Anne-Marie Laycock was creating her own legacy. Anne-Marie selflessly attends all junior training sessions and cooks up a storm for the umpires at the end of each cold night. She has since won a SDJUA Clubman Award for her efforts and is a highly respected and loved woman in the Swan Districts fraternity and a proud mother of her aspiring boys.

Laycock, already amassing achievements at the Swan Districts, quickly set his sights on bigger things. He decided to break away from the trend of his flag waving brothers to blow the whistle instead as a field umpire. It was a decision and commitment Laycock took extremely seriously, and one that would be supported at Swan Districts Juniors.

Laycock was an eager participant in the AFL's Green Shirt Program, wearing the now traditional green shirt for new and inexperienced umpires. "I found the green shirt to be extremely beneficial, I really got the support of the coaches and players which is great," said Laycock. Laycock's first year mentor and now AFL Goal Umpire Brett Rogers reflects on Laycock's obvious potential, "I was lucky enough to be a mentor for Ben in one of his matches in the green shirt. It was then where I clearly saw first hand his potential as a field umpire." In the few years that followed, Laycock developed this potential through the guidance of Swan Districts Junior Umpiring Association coaches and mentors, preparing Laycock of the next level.

The next level was to be the Field Umpiring Development Squad, an AFL structured pathway for umpires with identified potential. The squad aimed to bridge umpires' skills with hopes to field umpire in the WAFL. The

extra intensity and commitment required of the umpires at this level, was where Laycock thrived. Still umpiring juniors, Laycock's dedication was rewarded with the SDJUA Umpire of the Year Award, after officiating the under 17's grand final. Laycock was still only 15 years old.

Late 2008, a delighted Laycock got the call up to the WAFL, debuting in Round 23. Over the summer Laycock dedicated himself to improving his fitness and cementing a permanent spot at WAFL level. Pre-season trials saw Laycock clock an impressive 13:58sec for the 4km time trial, the second fastest time in the group. To many onlookers, the youngsters results may of come as a surprise but not to Laycock's umpiring coach Sav Borg, "he's extremely determined and never gives less than 110 percent, you couldn't ask for anything more," said Borg.

Laycock was quickly elevated to the WAFL Panel in early 2009 and has already made an impressive start to the season. The determined Laycock, not one to sit back and admire his own achievements is firmly focused on his bright future, "umpiring at the elite AFL level is my ultimate goal," said Laycock. When questioned on the possibility of umpiring at AFL level with older brothers Matthew and Jonathon Laycock who are each progressing well in their pursuit of goal umpiring at the elite level, Laycock quipped, "I would love nothing more than to share such an experience with my two brothers, that would be a family affair to remember."

Coaching Topic – Marking Contests

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

These should provide coaches with practical advice about the key teaching points of each skill.

The 7th umpiring skill to be examined in this 16 part series is the decision making process in contested marking situations.

Marking Contests

Learning Outcomes –

- **Spirit:** The player whose sole objective is to contest the ball shall be permitted to do so
- All infringements should be penalised
- Incidental contact (ie no infringement) when the ball is the sole objective is permitted
- When a player leaps (early) and makes contacts with his opponent, the marking attempt must be realistic (ie able to touch the ball).

What the laws say: (15.4.5[d],[b] and [e])

A free kick will be awarded against a player who the umpires is satisfied pushes, bumps, blocks or holds, or interferes with the arms of, an opponent who is in the act of marking or attempting to mark the football.

A free kick also applies against a player who pushes an opponent in the back unless the contact is incidental to a legitimate attempt to mark the football

A free kick applies against a player who pushes, bumps, holds or blocks an opponent when the ball is more than 5m away or out of play.

- Because the ball in flight travels 5m in a fraction of one second, these laws mean an infringement for pushing, bumping, blocking or holding applies both in the lead up to, and in the act of a marking attempt

Activities –

- Either on-field or in the warm-up room
- Each person in the group is asked to nominate and demonstrate in a simulation one example of marking interference until the list is exhausted.
- Confirm decision on each before proceeding to the next. Confirm understanding by viewing relevant section of AFL DVD.
- Equipment required: Ball, DVD and DVD player

Method –

- **Examples of infringement:**

- Holding around the body during attempt
- Pulling by the shoulder to prevent attempt or completion
- Chopping the arms or forearms
- Holding one arm that is reaching for the ball
- Punching or forearming the head
- Pushing the opponent forward under the flight using arms or shoulder
- Propping in front opponent moving to the fall of the ball
- Reversing into an opponent to force him away from the fall of the ball
- Moving across the path of an opponent to block his approach to the fall of the ball
- Bumping opponent out of the contest before the ball arrives
- Pushing the opponent from the front or side when in the act of marking
- Leaping early not able to reach ball and contacting opponent preventing contest
- Blocking an opponent in the run for the contest without seeking a marking position
- Raising a foot or knee to the front, back or side of opponent to prevent mark
- Frontal contact on opponent before or during the act of marking

- **Examples of incidental contact:**

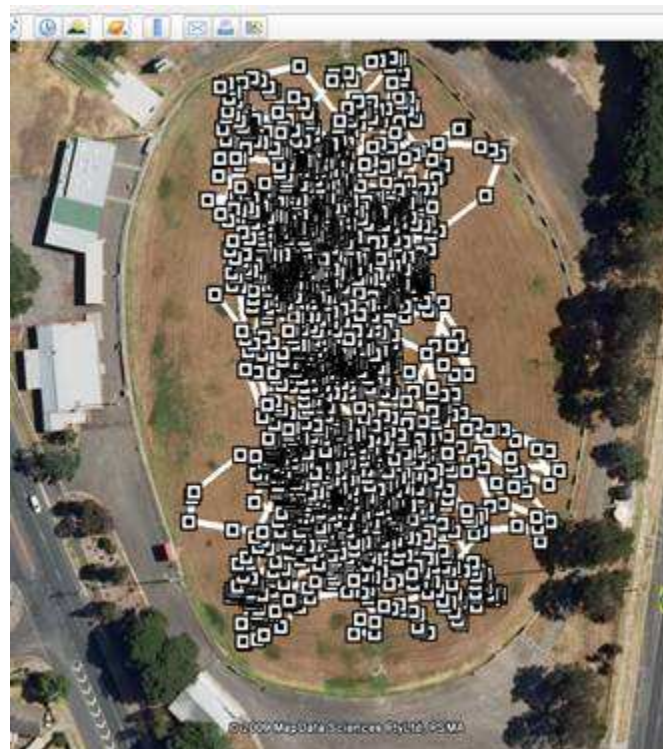
- Contacting an opponent's head or shoulders when arms are extended from behind to attempt to mark.
- Jumping for a mark and contacting opponent's shoulders when rebalancing to mark
- Contacting opponent's back with knee in jumping for a mark from behind
- Contacting the marker's hands when reaching to mark or spoil

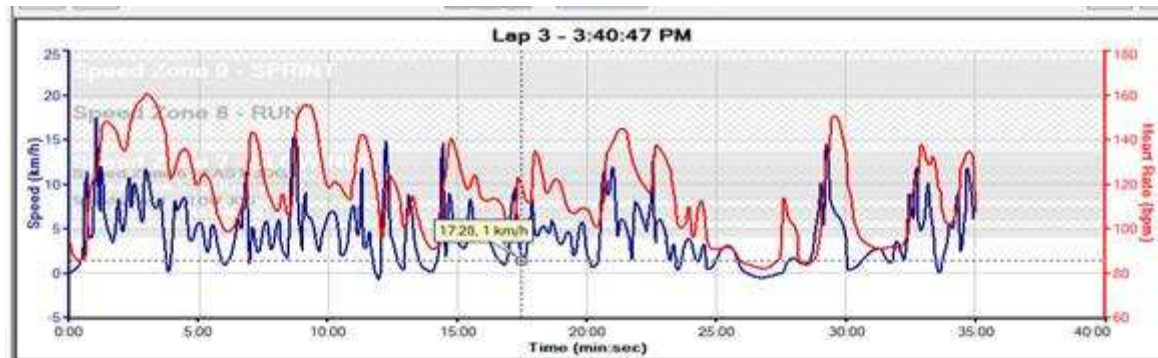
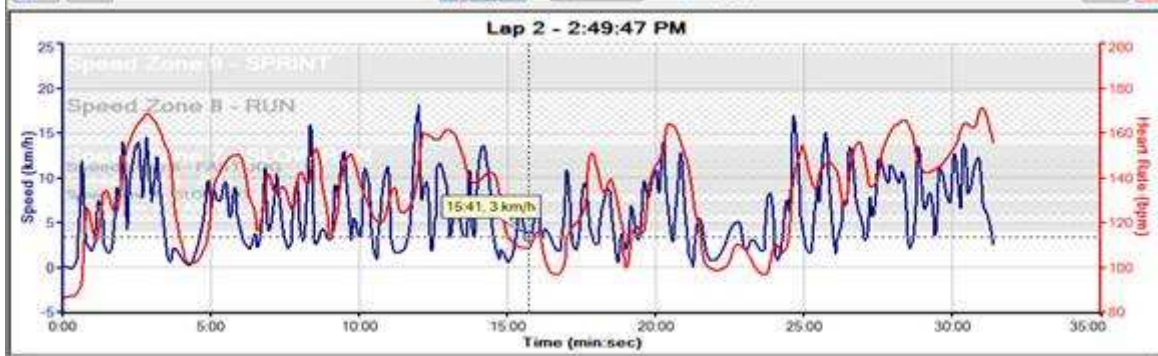
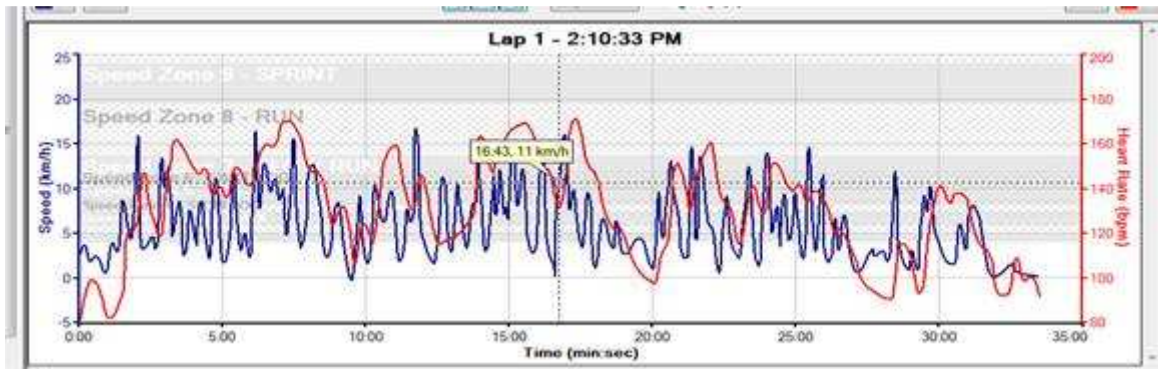
Key Points –

- Understand when a fair contest has been prevented by the opponent NOT contesting the ball

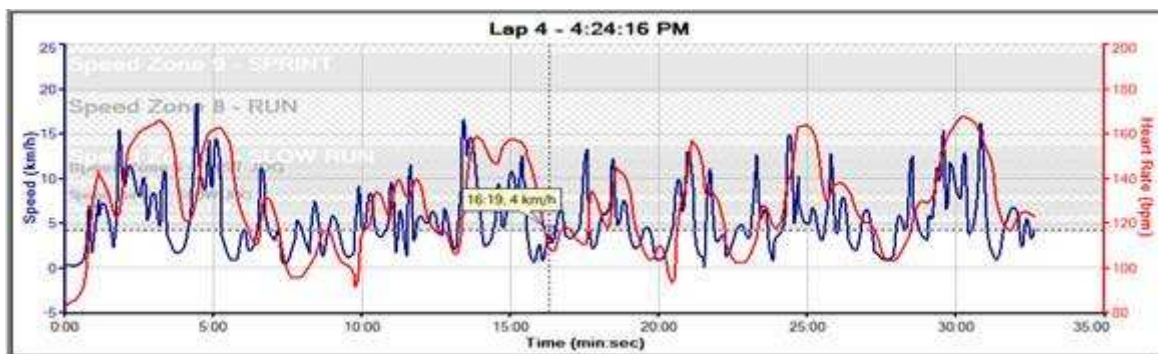
GPS Tracking on Geelong Umpires

The following is the result of GPS tracking for umpire Peter West at St.Albans v Leopold match on Saturday 4th April 2009, 3-Umpire system in Geelong Football League.





* - Stretcher on field in 3rd ¼ between 24 and 28 minute mark.



What can we take from this info:-

Peter ran 11.84km, max. speed 17.1k/h, and max. heart rate of 172, which is working extremely hard for a 45 year old. We need to be careful not to overtrain Peter during the week. Peter is best to do something light every day, working toward max. heart rate and max speed of around 17/18k's p/h., with one night on running in a group. It is important Peter trains in a group with umpires of similar athletic ability to avoid risk of injury.

Game Related Practice

- When setting up skills practice, we need to do more central corridor exercises, decision-making, positioning, changing direction, acceleration, backwards preferably with footballs and players involved. We also need to practice running deep into forward/defensive areas.
- An effective game-based skill practice session is to do full length of ground match play with some umpires as players in 2 teams. By organising players as 4 against 2, or 5 against 2, in each end, mid and end zone, we get continual ball movement up and down the ground, from goal square to goal square and can involve boundary and goal umpires also, with minimal competitive body contact by our player/umpires.
- Field umpires can react to whatever occurs, paying marks, frees, verbally controlling play under "almost" game-like conditions. You can rotate players and umpires every few minutes.
- You can pair up experienced and inexperienced together in each zone and get the experienced umpires to do the coaching, and inexperienced umpires to trail.
- This is a favorite amongst our group. You can combine this session with a running group and alternate the groups after 15 minutes.

The AFL Umpiring Department would also like to thank Steve Keating for this information. Steve currently participates in Year 3 of the AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program and is the head coach of the Geelong Football League umpiring group. We are pleased to announce that Steve has also been appointed 'Head Coach/Manager' of the AFL U16 National Championship umpiring group. Steve will oversee the U16 program and will 'live in' with the 8 field umpires who will be attending from around Australia. He will also manage the boundary and goal umpires who will be participating in the championships.

The AFL Umpiring Development department is pleased with Steve's appointment as we are keen to continue to promote and develop our umpire coaches around Australia. You may remember that Brian Goodman of the VAFA coached/managed the U16 National Championship umpires in 2008.

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](#).

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.



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