

CoachingEdge

Incorporating Coaching Update | VOLUME 23, No 1 May 2009

**How AFL
Coaches
Learn**

**Jeff Gieschen's
Coaching
Lessons**

Celebrating Culture

**Getting the best out
of Indigenous players**

DWS



CoachingEdge

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BEST IN THE BUSINESS: Geelong coach Mark Thompson has transformed the Cats into one of the most dominant sides of the modern era; after round six this year they had won 45 of their past 48 matches.

INTRODUCTION

A resource for coaches at all levels

>Welcome to *Coaching Edge*.

As part of the changes to the Australian Football Coaches Association (AFCA) structure in 2008, in which membership is now automatically a part of the process of AFL coach accreditation, the AFL is now providing services nationally to complement those provided by state and regional branches of the Association.

This includes improvements to the coaching section of the AFL website, monthly electronic newsletters that are sent to all currently accredited coaches whose email addresses have been provided to the AFL coaches' database, and now the *Coaching Edge*, which will be published three times a year.

Coaching Edge is a continuation, in a new electronic format, of the respected magazine *Coaching Update*, which was first published in April 1988 after the VFL assumed responsibility for football development in Victoria and formed

the Australian Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Vic Branch in 1987. There was also a predecessor, *Australian Football Coach*, published by SANFL from 1972 until 1975.

The inaugural AFCA Vic branch president was Allan Jeans, who provided the initial editorials. Allan was supported by an active committee, including VFL Development Manager Kevin Sheehan, now AFL National Talent Manager, who put the early editions of *Coaching Update* together.

Other managing editors over the 20 years it has been published were successive State Directors of Coaching Rod Austin (now AFL Football Administration Manager), Peter Hanlon and, from 1998-2007, Anton Grbac (now AFL Victoria High Performance Manager). Until his retirement at the end of 2007, Ray Allsopp, AFL Victoria Research and Resources Officer (and for many years also the executive officer of the Junior Football Council, which

conducted junior development programs until the VFL assumed responsibility for state development in 1988), was the editor and designer of the magazine throughout its life.

Coaching Edge is edited by Ken Davis. Ken has a long history of involvement in sport, physical education and coaching.

Each *Coaching Edge* edition will contain interviews with significant coaches, skills, drills, information from the AFL High Performance program, research-based information and a range of views about football and coaching.

Please give us your feedback about the magazine and the information you would like to see. Best wishes with your coaching for the remainder of the season.

Lawrie Woodman
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CoachingEdge

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The Slattery
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Coaching Edge, Vol
23, No 1. Copyright
Australian Football
League, ISSN 18369545

Welcome to Coaching Edge

▶ This publication aims to provide information for coaches of Australian Football. Coaching can be a lonely business and it is hoped that Coaching Edge can become a valuable resource for all practicing and budding coaches. We hope you are extended in your thinking, and can modify your behaviour to improve your coaching.

The format for the magazine will evolve and will benefit from feedback provided by you, the reader. You are encouraged to write or email the editor about any issues you'd like to be discussed in future publications. We want you to influence the content so the material can be considered relevant to coaches in the field.

No doubt there are differences in approaches needed to coach at an elite level compared to coaching a junior team, however some core principles govern both. It is possible for coaches at both levels to learn from each other.

In this issue, several features are presented and it is hoped that you find each interesting. In the featured interview section, former Richmond coach and current AFL Director of Umpiring Jeff Gieschen outlines his philosophies and challenges in an extensive coaching journey, which began with Maffra in the Latrobe Valley League and continues to this day with the pressure cooker role in the AFL Umpires Department.

'From the ivory tower and beyond' will try to bridge the gap between theory and practice. So much research doesn't filter down to coaches because often coaches don't seek this valuable information, and often it is written in a way that is difficult for those in the field to understand. A brief summary of research or theoretical articles are presented and their relevance

to coaching is explored in this section. In addition, the wisdom of coaches' experience will be explored in an endeavour to go beyond the ivory tower and provide some lessons acquired at the coal face.

The mind is such a powerful influence on our behaviour and can impact on performance in so many ways. In 'Mind Games' the mental skills that can be developed by a coach will be examined. Not only should these skills enhance one's own coaching performance, but they will also enable players to optimise their potential. This segment will commence in the next edition of the magazine.

The role of women in AFL football is increasing as a logical consequence of their interest and enthusiasm for the sport. Women are covering football in the media; they are engaged at board level in many clubs; they feature on talkback radio; and have even infiltrated the umpiring ranks. So, any coach will need to understand, and indeed welcome, the input that women can offer AFL football. It is timely then, that our professional writing consultant, Brooke Davis, will present in her own inimitable and engaging style insights into football from a female's perspective. Her first article addresses the delicate role of coaching your own child – from a child's perspective.

Ever wondered what it is like to be suddenly thrust into the Aussie football culture? Every day someone new to this country experiences this cultural phenomenon. If we could get inside the head of a football novice perhaps we could gain some insights into how best to progress with our education on the game. What things are difficult to understand about the game? How can we help develop this understanding and passion for the sport? Are there any

terms we use that are confusing to newcomers? These and many other issues confronting a neophyte to football will be articulated by Chris Donahoe, a Canadian who became an Australian resident in September. He presents his first article from the shores of Nova Scotia, having heard a little about the game but having never seen a live game. It should be interesting to study his involvement in our 'religion', that is football.

In each issue, a report from the AIS Football program will be presented. It is important that we are all aware of developments that are occurring in this program. State of the art techniques for managing players will be presented so that we all are exposed to new developments that may be of assistance at all levels of coaching. We will also present some drills that are worthy of consideration in your program. The charter then for this rebirth of our professional coaching magazine is indeed very broad. It will provide both serious and light-hearted material, but will always have as its focus the improvement of coaching performance, either directly or indirectly. It will hopefully be written in an interesting and practical style. We are delighted to be able to present this first publication of the 'Coaching Edge'. We hope that you can gain an edge over your opponents by implementing some of the thoughts expressed in this magazine.

As expressed above, feedback is most welcome. Also it would help if any aspects of coaching you would like addressed in future issues are brought to our attention. In this instance, please email Ken Davis at kdxlsports@bigpond.com. Enjoy!

Ken Davis



A brief profile of Dr Ken Davis

- ▶ Taught in secondary schools for five years
- ▶ Lectured in Human Movement & Physical Education at Deakin University – 20 years
- ▶ Sport psychology consultant to Geelong & Richmond FC – seven years
- ▶ Fitness advisor – Geelong FC – three years
- ▶ Sport psychology consultant to AFL umpires – last four seasons
- ▶ Coached at premier cricket level in Victoria & WA for more than 20 years
- ▶ Coach of Victorian Spirit women's cricket team five years – won two National titles and was awarded Coach of the Year from VicSport awards in 2005
- ▶ Australian Youth Women's Coach – 2003 – 5
- ▶ Lectured in Coach education courses (Levels 1, 2, & 3) in a range of sports including cricket, football, tennis, polocrosse, rifle shooting, hockey & golf
- ▶ Published a host of papers in Applied sport science and coaching areas and presented papers at National and International Conferences

The AFL Coaches Association (AFLCA)



The AFL Coaches Association (AFLCA) was established in 2002 with the aim of representing the interests of AFL coaches throughout the AFL.

The current CEO of the AFLCA is Danny Frawley and the president is Kevin Sheedy.

The seven member AFLCA Executive includes Mark Thompson, Paul Roos, Mark Williams, Neil Craig, Alastair Clarkson, Guy McKenna and Chris Fagan. Each AFL club has an assistant coach acting as the club delegate.

Membership currently includes all AFL senior coaches, assistant coaches and former AFL coaches.

The AFLCA's core objectives are well defined and focus on continuing to enhance the professionalism of elite coaches in the AFL via development and ongoing support.

The overall benefit of this focus is to help grow our indigenous Australian game in partnership with the AFL, clubs, players and coaches.

AFLCA CORE OBJECTIVES

- Provide a forum for coaches to meet and discuss opportunities and challenges
- Recognise contributions of coaching, leadership and excellence
- Develop the skills and expertise of all coaches, in particular assistant coaches
- Provide career transition and support to coaches and assistant coaches both into and out of the coaching profession
- Define coaching pathways and develop the talent pipeline
- Promote the profession of AFL coaching and continue to foster relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders

COACH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Several programs have been identified based on feedback from members and major stakeholders. These programs address the personal and professional needs of members of the AFLCA.

AFLCA AND AFL AGREEMENT

In December 2008, the AFLCA and AFL signed an agreement in which both will better combine their efforts to grow the game and increase the professionalism of coaches at all levels.

Under the agreement, the AFL will provide funding to the AFLCA that will be used to implement a range of programs focusing on state and country development, tertiary education and career transition.

In return, the AFL's 16 coaches will assist the League in its efforts to grow the game by giving their time and expertise to key development initiatives.

Frawley said AFL coaches have a vast bank of knowledge that can be tapped into for the good of the game.

"This agreement ... will be about developing the skills and expertise of AFL coaches and those hoping to make a career out of coaching," Frawley said.



NEW COACHES' HEAD: Former Richmond coach Danny Frawley took over as AFL Coaches Association CEO at the end of last year.

PROGRAM	FOCUS
Coach Development Program [personal and professional development]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → AFL coaches → AFL assistant coaches → Assisting coaches become more effective
Career Transition Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Prospective coaches seeking to enter AFL system → AFL coaches transitioning out of coaching, or recently retired → Providing advice, guidance and support
Tertiary Education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All members → Focus on qualification development (L1, L2, L3 Coaching then Diploma, Degree and Masters) → Assist the recognition of skill sets/competencies of AFL coaches
Ex-coach engagement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Re-engaging former coaches to assist growing the game → Coaching ambassadors and mentors
Coaching Development at State and Community levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → State Coaches → Community Coaches → AFLCA act as knowledge base (Website)
Coach Induction program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All AFL Coaches (understanding the wider AFL industry) → Engagement with industry stakeholders including AFL, umpires)

FEATURE STORY

Memoirs of a Gieschen

Jeff Gieschen commenced as a playing coach for Maffra at the tender age of 22, and now is the AFL Umpires' Manager. He progressed through the coaching ranks with each step producing higher expectations and pressures.

In this interview we move from his early influences in coaching to the present day, where we contrast his role with managing the AFL umpires to coaching at the AFL level. His pathway to the top makes for intriguing reading. We explore his early days in coaching, his time as coach of Richmond and his current role.

The apprenticeship – learning the art and science of coaching

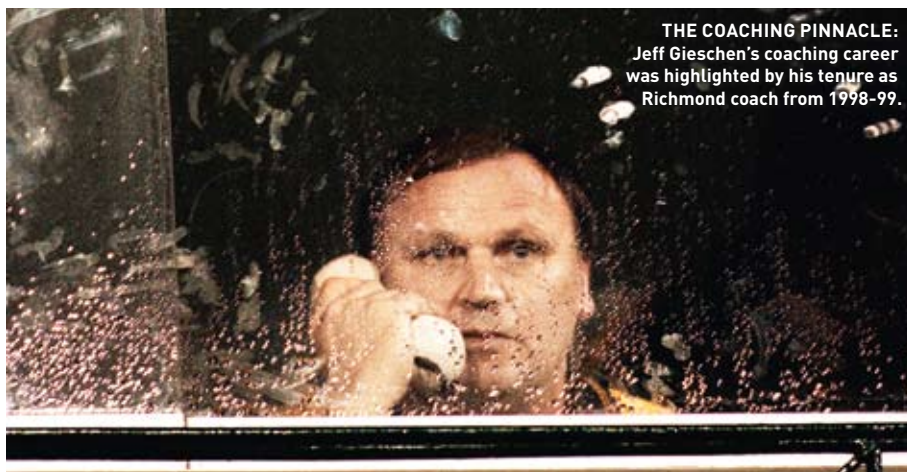
PRE-COACHING INFLUENCES

JG: The first coach to have a serious impact on me was Peter Caplan who coached the Latrobe Valley under-15 schoolboys. He gave coaching a whole new perspective – he was motivating, had plans of how to play, introduced me to the tactical side of football, and taught me how to deal with defeat and victory. From there, the first coach I had at senior level was Kevin Dore, who had played for South Melbourne. As a 15 year old playing in the seniors in the Latrobe Valley, Kevin Dore wasn't just my coach, he was also my protector. He gave my parents a verbal guarantee that if they allowed me to play in the seniors, he would personally protect me in games. I saw him as a real father figure in showing me how a coach can have an impact on a player and make him feel secure in his environment.

I was then recruited to Footscray, and was coached by legends Bob Rose and Billy Goggin. Both had a profound impact due to their experience and standing in the game. The strength of Bobby Rose was that he was a person of impeccable character. He was honest, made you want to play for him, and gained my instant respect based on what he had achieved in the game. I was too young to pick up tactically or strategically what was happening. Billy Goggin's strength was his competitive nature. He wanted his players to be supremely fit and fiercely competitive in every situation. That rubbed off on me. He taught me that to be successful you really need to have a fierce competitive streak. He showed me that to be successful you had to leave no stone unturned.

STARTING COACHING

JG: I had been a captain in all under-age sides, Maffra U15s, the Latrobe Valley Schoolboys, the Victorian U16s etc and had started to develop a strong feel for leadership. At 22, I was still very wet behind the ears. I still had so much to learn and experience about football. I saw this first senior coaching opportunity as a great learning curve. I saw coaching Maffra as a starting place from which I could develop. Once I became responsible for my own team as a senior coach, I took it upon myself to try and become the best coach I could possibly be.



THE COACHING PINNACLE:
Jeff Gieschen's coaching career was highlighted by his tenure as Richmond coach from 1998-99.

EDUCATION AND GROWTH

JG: Back in those days you were influenced by what you saw and read about the VFL level, so the top coaches of the time – David Parkin, Ron Barassi, and Tom Hafey – were massively influential. At this stage it was just reading about what they did and said, not talking to them. I wanted to take it a bit further. After Maffra's Saturday games and Sunday morning training, I used to go and watch VFL games on Sunday afternoons in Melbourne, as the VFL was just branching out into playing the odd game on a Sunday. Because Maffra was in Footscray's zone I got to know Mick Malthouse the then Footscray coach quite well. I was most impressed with the way he was developing the Bulldogs and from time to time he would let me come in to the rooms pre-game and sit in on the odd team meeting and talks before the games. This was a wonderful experience for a rookie coach.

I also sought out people like Peter Power who worked for Essendon as the fitness coach, and arranged one-on-one sessions with him. We discussed ways of preparing players physically, because as a coach in the country in those days you had no specialist support like today. I spent time with him looking at different drills and activities, and he gave me literature that he had. I wrote to coaches like David Parkin and Allan Jeans, and to their credit, they responded. Parkin, particularly, would provide a lot of detail. So I became absorbed in coaching and got as much information as I could.

I would go and watch some of the other teams in my competition play and train. When coach education became an option I got into that as well and attended the various courses.

OBSERVATIONS OF ELITE COACHES

JG: David Parkin was very organised and very big on assessment and feedback. This struck a chord with me. I saw this as helping players to develop – the players could go away and

work on specific things, consolidate on the things he had given them feedback about. He also seemed to be very strategic, quite forward thinking. He was a great orator and inspirational – really knew his stuff. He has outstanding 'footy speak'. He talked about football in such a distinct language, and I really saw him as a doctor of football, with his vast knowledge of the game.

Allan Jeans seemed really cunning, and had a deep understanding of what he expected from his group. He simplified the game into three phases – they've got it, we've got it, it's in dispute. He developed his tactics and style around those three facets of the game. He was fiercely loyal to his players and protective of intellectual property. People were always guessing as to what made the Hawks such a great side, and certainly through the media, he gave nothing away. He influenced me in that regard, always be loyal to your players and keep your club and your team close to your chest; that's private information.

Ron Barassi was super competitive. I read the book *The Coach*, by John Powers and knocked it over in a couple of days. It was so enlightening and uplifting, and was probably the first book of its type at that stage. The fact that it was written in a premiership year added to its intrigue. I copied a lot of the things he did and said.

For a young coach, Michael Malthouse had great strength of character and strong beliefs about the game. He was single-minded about what he expected from his players and the team, and had amazing attention to detail in nailing the opposition. He devised tactics around how to stymie the opposition and maximise the ability of his own players. He knew the opposition inside out and back to front, and did all he could to exploit the opposition.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM TEACHING (JEFF IS A QUALIFIED TEACHER)

JG: In teaching, you have to be very well prepared, you can't just make things up if you want to be effective. At every training session or team meeting, there was a plan and a structure to it; I didn't just walk in and talk off the cuff. There was a purpose behind everything we did. The skills of planning, researching and being structured I picked up from teaching. The manner of communicating the message to players was developed through teaching. You can stand up in front of your group and just rave on but in the end you lose them if you have no substance or plan to what you say. I learnt through teaching that you have to make your presentations worth listening to – get to the point, make it interesting, provide anecdotes and examples. The bottom line is you want them to hear a message and then be able to carry out that message. Don't over do it, keep it to a minimum, but emphasise key points strongly. In the early days, I am sure I over-communicated, gave too much info, which is confusing and gets diluted.

When I reviewed games, I analysed what we did well and didn't do well, and how we could improve, just like a good teacher does every day.

KD: Did your background in teaching enable you to communicate better one on one with players?

JG: Yes, I felt comfortable in front of whole groups and certainly one on one. Having to spend time with students who required something extra was good to transfer across to players who might not have understood how you wanted them to work. Not every player receives the messages the same so you have to individualise with some to get your points across effectively. Looking back I would have to say that effective communication skills are a key element to successful coaching.

COMPARISON BETWEEN COACHING AT COUNTRY LEVEL TO AFL LEVEL

JG: There is a massive difference although the same principles still apply. The major difference is the scrutiny and accountability rises tenfold as you go up the chain. In Maffra, the town is built around the footy club. At that stage we didn't have a lot of success because we were up against it in terms of the pool of players (the town's population was just 4000). Moving to Wodonga was a step up in that I was now coaching a team in a town with 30,000 people. Bigger pool of players, better resources and competition for spots in the team. We played against other large centres, like Albury and Wangaratta. Coaching in bigger places with better facilities and resources creates higher expectations. I was now having players being drafted out of my team to the VFL. Next, I went to West Perth.

The pathway was very smooth for me. I went from a district country town, Maffra, to a major country town, Wodonga, to a state league team, West Perth, which were all great stepping stones. It was like I was taking small steps along the way.

West Perth was in the strong WAFL competition, which obviously was a higher standard of footy. It was a tad daunting when I got there especially doing radio and television; having to deal with newspaper journalists after the game. There was a lot more scrutiny and accountability.

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

JG: I had watched closely what the VFL coaches were doing at the time. Allan Jeans kept things close to his chest, Parkin was articulate and well planned. I tried to draw on a combination of what I saw from those people. My policy was to be honest but I didn't want to give too much away. I was always pretty passionate but at the same time fairly guarded. I didn't find it that difficult, particularly at that level.

KD: What about when you had really disappointing losses and you were down?

JG: I had a rule of whether we won or lost, I tried to keep a pretty even keel, particularly publicly. The players might see my devastation or excitement a bit more but I always tried to keep controlled, especially in public.

CHANGING A LOSING CULTURE – WEST PERTH EXPERIENCE

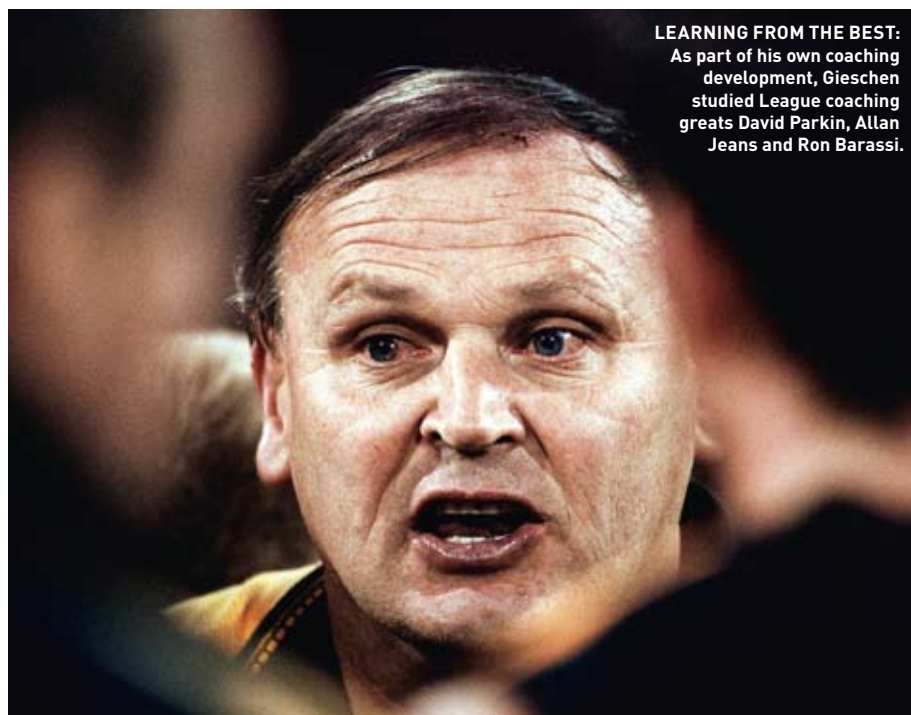
JG: I had to experience for myself what the culture was about. At that stage it was a losing culture with a lot of bad habits apparent. There was little commitment to training, and a lack of feel for the team ethos and discipline. I wasn't aware of these problems when I got the job, I was just thrilled to get the opportunity to coach a great club like West Perth in a strong state league competition. It wasn't until we had started training that I saw first-hand just how much work needed to be done.

I had left Wodonga which was in far better shape than West Perth. I just had to slowly but surely try to turn around the attitudes and bad habits that existed in the club. It was a fairly slow process with challenging man management issues to deal with. I spent a lot of time working with individual players and staff explaining what we needed to do to raise the levels of professionalism. I had to well and truly lead by example and demonstrate what I meant regarding work ethic, communication, planning, passion etc. I think many at the club were taken aback by my assessment of where we were at. I certainly wasn't winning any popularity contests at that stage, however I knew we had to stay strong about what we needed to do to change the culture.

Our problems really hit home in games. We won our first game, more on the adrenalin rush of having a new coach. But then we lost our next five games in a row by significant margins. We were overrun in last quarters, with players going back to playing for themselves, not teaming together, not competing fiercely, lacking discipline etc. Without being disrespectful to the people who were involved before me, the club was in a desperate position (The previous season it won three of 21 games and had an average losing margin of 64 points). We certainly had a major challenge on our hands Piece by piece we started to change things. First thing I did was attack player preparation and physical fitness so that they were physically capable of competing at the WA level.

I went really hard on this, even though it was during the season. I didn't have time to wait, as my credibility and the club's was on the line. We adopted strong training procedures to try and turn that around. Then we addressed the lack of teamwork and individual focus and lack of discipline within the team. We developed a set of behaviours and standards. Players soon got to know what was and what was not acceptable. It was difficult getting players fully committed to the team at all times and this took some time, but by the end of the year after not tolerating selfishness and undisciplined acts, the players started to adapt.

I had been uncompromising in what I wanted. My approach had been confronting for the players, which can strain relationships.



LEARNING FROM THE BEST:
As part of his own coaching development, Gieschen studied League coaching greats David Parkin, Allan Jeans and Ron Barassi.

My tenure at the club could've been only 12 months if we didn't start to achieve results due to the hard-nosed and focused approach adopted. We put high expectations regarding standards on the group and if they fell away from those they just didn't play in the team until they conformed to what was required. Eventually, by about two thirds of the way through the year we were left with the players that were extremely fit, disciplined and very team-orientated because that was the reason they were getting games. As a result, our performances started to turn around. We won four of our last five games, and those were against the top-four teams. It was very exciting. A lot of self belief grew, and our methods were being vindicated. The players jumped in behind what we were doing. All of a sudden this down-trodden group was developing self-respect and respect from the wider football community. The players deserved their success.

That gave us a lot to go into the summer with. We won seven games for the season which was four more than the year before. We'd started to play a brand of footy that now resembled what I considered an elite football club to be like. We maintained our hard-training routine. Teamwork and discipline were now the norm. We could now start to refine our tactics and really shape our game plan. We lost our first two games the next year which was a bit of a hiccup, but then we won nine in a row and finished top of the ladder. After three wooden spoons this was a great achievement by the club, which hadn't had an influx of star players. It was very exciting and everybody at the club felt the success was justified because of the hard work that had been done. It just didn't happen. Our focus now was on being consistently successful with the aim of winning premierships.

KD: In that period when you are working, are you looking for players who can impact on the group positively?

JG: Absolutely. It took a little while but we were able to identify leaders and gave them responsibility. If you came into this club you were expected to play, train and behave like a Dean Laidley, Derek Hall, Todd Curley, Mark Merenda, Paul Milka, Craig Nelson, Darren Harris, Robbie West etc. They were outstanding in how they supported me. As a result, the younger or new players coming through the system saw those players' behaviours and attitudes as the norm of what was required. The culture had changed dramatically. Our club was now being looked at in a real positive light. Through the three-year period I was at West Perth we had about 15 players drafted, West and Mildenhall won Sandover medals and I think Derek Hall came runner-up. We won games consistently and became respected as a professional, hard-working and disciplined outfit.

KD: What about the flipside?

JG: There was one game during my first year where we were playing Claremont who always used to smash us. We were in front with a couple of minutes to go. We get the ball to 'George Lair' at the top of the 10-metre square

and all he had to do was walk into an open goal. He held the ball up in the air, waved it back at the Claremont players, shaped as though he was going to kick it, turned and waved again, shaped as though he was going to kick it again, goaded them some more and then he kicked the goal. That was sort of typical of what we had going on at that stage. Whilst I understood the delight in being about to kick the match-sealing goal it was clearly undesirable behaviour from a player and a team.

So I talked to George at the end of the game and explained that wasn't acceptable; we wanted to do everything right, show respect for the opposition and be humble.

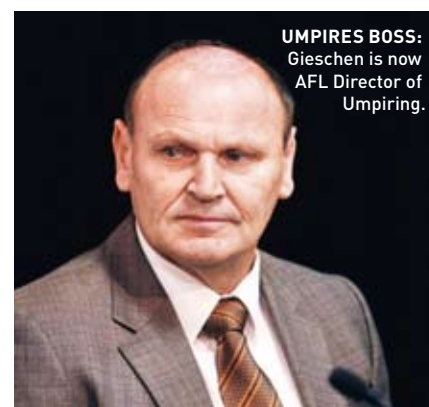
We lost a lot of players when we picked up the training level. One night three players, who had all played senior football, came up to me and said if that's what we have to do we don't want to play at this club anymore. I told them that was a pity, thanked them for their efforts for the club in the past and wished them all the best. Eventually we were left with the players who were up for the challenge and wanted to be there. That sent a very clear message – if you wanted to play for this footy club you had to rise to the standard that we were setting.

IN THE BIG SMOKE AT SLEEPY HOLLOW

JG: I was delighted to get an opportunity at Geelong and work alongside Gary Ayres. He gave me responsibility and allowed me to pass on any coaching ideas I had picked up over 16 years of coaching. He was a great user of resources, and gave me a lot of opportunity to assist in helping how Geelong footy club was going to play. Gary was a very strong leader and had a profound impact on discipline as he set about modifying the culture at the Cats. We had a number of star players who had played in multiple finals series. We lost a lot of players from the previous year but Gary, who had coached the reserves the previous year, was keen to get some fresh blood into the side. With Malcolm Blight's exit as coach and the departure of 1994 Grand Final players Mark Bairstow, Steven Hocking, Tim Darcy, Andrew Wills and Stephen O'Reilly, there was a feeling Geelong would struggle, especially with Gary Ablett snr and Billy Brownless getting older and Barry Stoneham sustaining a serious leg injury. But we managed to have an outstanding season only bowing in the Grand Final to the great '95 Carlton side. Obviously, there were always frustrations as I didn't have my own team to coach, but that is the role you have to play as an assistant. We had some terrific success there, the team played right up to its potential on 95 per cent of occasions that year. I was really grateful Gary gave me the opportunity to push through some thoughts and ideas.

BEST AND WORST COACHING BEHAVIOURS

JG: Two situations stand out: the 1970 Grand Final when Collingwood were dominating the game and Carlton were pretty well shot, but there was a complete turn around after half-time. I know that can happen, but clearly things changed. As Carlton coach, Ron Barassi obviously asked for quick movement and for his players to take risks from the backline. It was play-on and keep the ball moving at all costs. All the momentum shifted Carlton's way. By the time



UMPIRES BOSS:
Gieschen is now
AFL Director of
Umpiring.

Collingwood worked out what they were doing, Carlton had hit the front. This was a memorable example of a coach changing the face of a game through some tactics and getting his message across at half-time.

Probably Kevin Sheedy in the 1984 Grand Final, too. Again, Hawthorn looked in control and Kevin made some structural changes to his team that changed the face of that game as well. This was only possible because Kevin had made flexibility a key component for his players during his coaching. All the changes clicked and the Bombers stormed back into the game to run away convincing winners.

I've also seen Malthouse one day in a Bulldogs versus Hawthorn game at a time when Hawthorn were clearly the outstanding side of the competition. I saw him sell his game plan before the game. I was privy to his tactics, which were focused on placing pressure on Hawthorn who had stars all over the field. He really sold his message on tackling, chasing, harassing and minimising the impact of the Hawthorn stars. The game plan he set up with the pressure and the tackling just went like clockwork. The Bulldogs won the game. Nothing much has changed as we saw when Mick's Collingwood side defeated the champion Geelong side in 2008. Mick's sides have always been capable of choking the very best teams.

KD: Any examples of disasters?

JG: In a preliminary final in 1993, West Perth was dominating East Fremantle but couldn't put the score on the board. We had had 18 shots to about five at half-time. I was really worried at half-time, because we hadn't put this opposition away even though we had been dominating play. I knew that at some stage in the game they would have their moments. At half time I said, "I know that they are going to come at us hard. These first 10 minutes are critical. If we can keep them at bay, we can win the game. Just don't let them get any momentum in the first 10 minutes."

They then dominated us for the first 10 minutes, kicking four or five unanswered goals. In hindsight, what I had done was reinforce how good the opposition was. Made them aware they would come at us hard and not to stuff things up. I should have reinforced all the wonderful play that had created the numerous scoring opportunities and demanded we maintain that work ethic and style of play. I had made the group worried and too conscious of the opposition. When momentum shifts in a game it is hard to arrest. We ended up getting beaten.

Coaching in the big time – reflections on coaching Richmond

IMPORTANCE OF STEPPING STONES

JG: I was extremely grateful to get the opportunity to coach at the highest level. Looking back, I felt very comfortable in the role. I wondered how I would cope, but certainly sitting in the box, and at training, I was a lot more comfortable than I thought I was going to be and I think that was based around the little steps I had taken along the way throughout my career – Maffra, Wodonga, West Perth, Geelong assistant, Richmond reserves, Richmond head coach.

When a situation cropped up at the AFL level I was ready to go. I knew how to deal with it because I had been there before, even though it wasn't at that level. A lot of the same issues that you have as a junior coach happen at the AFL level, they're just more exposed and magnified. For example, in the first ever NAB Cup game, we played the reigning premiers Adelaide, who came out and kicked eight or nine goals in the first quarter.

Had I not been in that position before several times in my coaching career, I wouldn't have known what to do. I remember walking out and saying, 'Yeah we are down nine goals to one, but we can work our way back into the game. We may not get there by half-time, but if we work diligently to our plan, we can work our way back into the game.' As luck had it that night we

actually drew level with them at half-time. Certainly there was no panic or despair, we had a plan.

SUPPORT STAFF

JG: I chose assistant coaches in Brendan McCartney and Ross Lyon who were very young and had no experience at the level, but they were brilliant. History has shown that those choices were very astute. But back in those days when you had an ex-country and reserves coach as your head coach and novice assistants it didn't give your coaching staff a lot of credibility within the club or the competition, when you are coaching against legends like Sheedy, Parkin, Matthews, Malthouse and the like.

So from a credibility point of view it was always going to be tough. As soon as we didn't win a game, people would say, 'The coach is inexperienced'. But I've looked back and know that with that group we did a superb job with what we had at the time. We got good results.

MATCH-DAY APPROACH

PRE-GAME

JG: It is important to present as a relaxed but focused coach. Ensure that all pre-game preparation has been carried out professionally and methodically. Touch base with individuals to ensure they are comfortable with their game roles and reinforce understanding of what is expected. I made sure my coaching information on the

boards was set out in an easy to understand, informative manner. Ensure the team all knows what is expected and reinforce tactics and plans. Give some motivational sting to the group just prior to hitting the ground (a couple of minutes maximum). Ensure all coaches are relaxed and well prepared for the battle ahead.

IN COACH'S BOX DURING THE GAME

Be in control. Be positive. I had a theory of five positive messages and one negative to ensure as a group we did not focus on negatives. Players feel the vibe of the coach so it is important to reinforce positive behaviours and actions. It is important to correct negative behaviours and actions but ensure you are coaching, not abusing, your players. I used the runner a lot to teach, reinforce and give information. I would gather thoughts and ideas from my fellow coaches, not continuously but at various times through the quarter so we weren't reactive or wasting energy. I would make sure at each break I had the key points of my coaching address well constructed on a pad or board so I was accurate with what I needed to deliver.

AT BREAKS

Aim to be controlled. Give off a positive vibe. Speak to individual players that need advice or information. Try to deliver to the whole group the most appropriate and effective messages. Try to keep the messages to the point. Try not to give off too much



THE 'BIG V': As an AFL coach Gieschen (above, far left) was invited into Victoria's rooms ahead of its 1999 clash with South Australia. Here, he speaks with Ron Barassi, as (from left to right) Bob Skilton, John Nicholls and Robert Walls look on.

information. Keep it succinct. Use your voice or body language to reinforce strong points. Ensure the team and individual players know their exact position and role. Finish with a motivational sting (10 seconds).

POST GAME

Try to remain calm in wins and defeats (very difficult at times in both circumstances). I found that after a good win was the best time to raise corrective advice as the mood was good and the players were receptive to corrective feedback. But after bad losses I would often search for positives and reinforce those behaviours for future consolidation. I would be careful not to be too critical unless I was 100 per cent certain of the facts behind certain aspects of performance. Where individual or team praise is warranted, give it. Leave a message for next week. Always give the vibe: we are going to get better and we are still searching for the perfect performance. For example, "If you thought today was good just wait and see what we will produce next week. I have a plan to take us to another level." This kept the players interested and motivated about what lay ahead. After finishing the team debrief with coaches and staff, start planning for next week.

Coaching experience as foundation to umpiring role

CREDIBILITY WITH COACHES

JG: My previous coaching experiences enables me to have empathy for the coaches and clubs. I understand their frustrations, so think I can give clubs feedback without being too defensive or slanted towards the umpires. Coaches generally accept that umpiring is a tough job and understand mistakes will be made. Coaches appreciate an accurate and honest account of umpire performance and if I explain why mistakes were made and give clear clarification they will accept that. I also make sure the coaches and clubs are aware that the umpires are very accountable, to the extent they are probably more heavily scrutinised and assessed than the players are. When they hear that, they then respect the professionalism of our methods. I think having coached football teams at all levels for more than 20 years has also enabled me to pass on some of my coaching experience, methods and philosophies to Rowan Sawers, Peter Howe and Bryan Sheehan quite well. Coaching umpires can be an insular role, therefore bringing in some ideas from the playing side has helped to broaden their knowledge. I think we manage the umpires' preparation, education, assessment and attitudes very well. I have a great deal of respect for how the coaches deal with our umpires.

PRESSURES OF UMPIRING

JG: The pressure in umpiring exists 24-7. We have eight games requiring a high level of performance. We commence games on Friday night and finish usually late on a Sunday. Coaching a team you have the responsibility of one game plus the need to scrutinise your upcoming opponent. When coaching a team



WINNING FEELING: Gieschen and his side salute the crowd after a win at the ground formerly known as Optus Oval.

you enjoy the thrill of a victory, albeit it only lasts a short while as your attention turns to your next opponent quickly. With umpiring, there are no victories, just the satisfaction that the group has done their job in each game as well as can be expected.

The criticism and scrutiny of umpiring is very unfair. There is an unrealistic expectation that every decision will be 100 per cent accurate. Our umpires are only human and they officiate what I believe is the toughest sport in the world to umpire. Our umpires can perform really well in seven and a half games, but if they have a bad half or quarter umpiring is terrible for the week. Our umpires are based all over Australia, so it is very challenging to effectively communicate with them. We use a wide range of resources and methods to achieve the most consistent results possible. Every week, the AFL Umpiring Department appoints 192 people to officiate or be involved in the eight AFL games each week. In a way it is like putting out six-seven football teams. With that many people performing very difficult and heavily scrutinised roles, it is inevitable there will be mistakes. But, by and large, our umpires and officials do an outstanding job.

SUPPORT FOR UMPIRES

One of the first things I set out to do in this role was to give our umpires the same sort of support and structure that the clubs give to their players. We have almost all the same resources and facilities the clubs have now. The fact that all our umpires are part-time is another challenge. All of our training and coaching is conducted after hours. This means the work hours and demands on our department is at times extreme.

EMPOWERMENT BY COACHES

JG: Over a period of time I have become a fan of the player-umpire empowerment method. I think there needs to be a build up of trust and respect for each other's roles. There also needs to be a bit of a familiarisation transition period as the coaches/managers and players/umpires get a feel for each other.

In recent years we have developed a strong and responsible leadership group who have lifted attitudes and behaviours in the group to a very high level. It is based on open and honest communication and a level of drive and motivation to have all individuals and the group performing to their maximum potential. The group develops an ownership of many aspects of their preparation and performance. It stands to reason that when the coaches and the players/umpires are all working in the same direction results are bound to improve. The respect and relationships between our coaches and umpires has never been stronger during my nine-year involvement with the group.

Editor's Note: It is clear from the above interview that Jeff Gieschen has taken on enormous challenges in his professional life. Not many would realise that his record at Richmond is better than any of his counterparts in the past 20 years. He has helped to develop a structure in the Umpiring Department that is second to none and his communication skills have enabled him to educate us all about the complexities of umpiring. He is always calm amidst criticism and has shown a refreshing honesty about the performance of his umpires. He is aware mistakes will be made but he and his team of coaches have done much to ensure that consistently high standards are maintained. Thanks Jeff for sharing your journey in football coaching.

COACHING YOUR OWN CHILD

Most of us who are engaged in coaching, have at some time or other faced the challenge of coaching their own children. Initially, I'm sure many are reluctant to do so, because of the perceived favouritism that one may exhibit towards their own. However, when one looks at the alternatives it is clear that there is often little choice. **BY KEN AND BROOKE DAVIS**

Either your child gets little or no effective coaching or you have to take over the role and both you and your child have to learn to deal with the issues as they emerge.

As with parenting, there is little training available for this role of parent coach. There has been much reported about the 'ugly parent syndrome' and that certainly should be at the back of your mind when you begin to coach your children. However, there are other issues to deal with apart from how you communicate with your own children. How will others view you? Will they think you are favouring your child? Should you deliberately make it hard for your own child just to make sure you can't be accused of favouritism? Do you alienate your child from the rest of the group? In the following letter, my daughter Brooke Davis provides some reflections on growing up playing sport with me as her coach. Now this may appear to be a little self indulgent, but hopefully the richness of Brooke's examples will ring true for all readers who have either faced this problem, or will face it in the future. The purpose of this letter is twofold.



Firstly, it allows me to introduce you to my assistant editor who is a professional writer and will be contributing a regular column in this magazine. Essentially she will create her own topics but will provide a refreshing look at football and coaching from a female's perspective. Secondly, it provides some revealing lessons – both good and bad – on the task of coaching your own child.

More than anything else this letter shows how impacting you can be as a parent coach. Incidents that you can hardly remember are seen as significant events to your child. Particularly those in which you have treated your child harshly! Your own modelling of competitive behaviour is constantly on show. Your child invariably will have to deal with side issues with other players in the team. Inevitably, as a parent coach you reach a stage when your child is turning into an adult, and your advice (even though it is very good!) falls on deaf ears. I hope you enjoy the richness of this sporting story and are able to learn more about the challenge of coaching your own children. Even though I know I made many mistakes along the way, I loved it. I learned ... and it appears my children did too.

A Letter to my Dad, the Coach

(of Me, of Everything, of the Universe)

Thank you for the 5 a.m. tennis practices in the week leading up to our Grand Final. It was too cold, and we were only 10, but it made us feel important. Thank you for never letting me win – at anything. Tennis rallies, sprinting races, games of Monopoly: even now, as you move into your 60s and I get closer to my 30s, I get a sick pleasure out of beating you. Thank you for coaching me whenever, whatever, wherever I asked. Thank you for teaching me the word ‘fartlek’ when I was only 11. I found it funny then, and I find it funny now. Thank you for running several kilometres with me, even down the long asphalt hills that made you ice your knees for hours afterwards. Thank you for teaching me the sports that only boys play. Thank you for cataloguing my every sporting moment to use as material for your lectures, drills, pep-talks and general conversation. It would’ve been embarrassing had I known about it. Thank you for taking me to the football, cricket, tennis, any-sport-I-wished. You explained big concepts to me and expected me to understand. I liked that. Thank you for knowing the answers to all my questions, and finding out what they were if you didn’t. Thank you for not crashing while driving and showing me how to hit a volley simultaneously. I wondered, sometimes, how you were able to do that. Now, as an adult with a full licence, I know that you were probably just lucky. Thank you for allowing me to make mistakes, but correcting me before I made too many. Thank you for taking the time with me: to create, engage, develop, watch, criticise, encourage.

Do you remember the time you ‘tsked tsked’ me? I had hit a forehand volley into the net and you ‘tsked tsked’ with such force it seemed to echo throughout the entire indoor tennis complex. I remember the seething look I gave you and the feeling that I wanted to wrap your tsking tongue around your neck. You didn’t seem to notice. Do you remember the time I kicked the ball under the net to the opposition? You yelled, ‘Pick it up!’ so loud my ears rang for days afterwards. Do you remember the time I broke my (very expensive) racquet? As it snapped in half, mid-air, I remember thinking, ‘Thank God Dad isn’t here.’ Do you remember the time you started questioning line calls to make sure we weren’t being cheated? We were playing together in a tight important match. We won, but they didn’t like us. This was the when I realised our most important difference: you would rather win and I would rather make friends.

Did you know that whenever you coached a team I was in I would bear the brunt of subtle (and not so subtle) favouritism jibes? (How could I tell them that I knew you wouldn’t give me those chances had I not deserved them?) Did you know that people would say things behind your back and I pretended not to hear them? Did you know I once heard some jack-ass call you Papa Smurf and have never wanted to know karate more? Did you know that everyone sought your approval, more than anyone else’s?

I’m sorry about the time I said (in that testily elongated way only teenagers know how), ‘I know Dad,’ when you helpfully pointed out a flaw in my – what I believed to be perfect – footwork/grip/swing/kick/throw/defence/shot. Well, OK, it wasn’t one time; it was, in fact, many times. Sorry about that. If it helps, I always felt bad afterwards. Let’s face it: it’s hard to be receptive to criticism at any time. It took me a long time to learn to separate myself from my work/serve/cover drive and see criticism as helpful. Perhaps you could’ve taught me more about that?

I’m sorry I quit the Victorian Cricket under-19 state squad to focus on Year 12. It was the hardest thing I ever had to tell you. I cried in my room and to Mum for hours beforehand, trying to work up the nerve. I liked cricket – loved it – but didn’t need it. When you said: ‘You know Brooke, you could be as good as you want to be,’ I believed you. But I was happy being as good as I was.

I’m an adult now and you don’t coach me much anymore. Is that because you think I won’t listen? Or because you think I don’t need it? What do you think, I wonder? When people talk of coaching successes, how do you see me? I’m not at the top of any sport, but I love it, understand it and can do it. What’s the difference between coaching your daughter and coaching a person off the street? People who have been coached by you sometimes refer to you as a ‘hard man’. I know better (they just weren’t trying hard enough) and only saw this ‘hard man’ the very few (ridiculous) times I believed it necessary to answer back to you.

Whatever you are Dad, coach, friend: what I know is that you were there, always, in the crowd and hard to miss (what with all the yelling). Most of all, thank you for that. **CE**



NUTRITION FOR FOOTBALL PERFORMANCE

The aim of the AIS-AFL Academy's Nutrition Program is to educate the athletes on various sports nutrition strategies for exercise, so that individually their football performance and health can be optimised.

By Michelle Cort, Sports Performance Dietitian

THE ROLE OF SPORTS NUTRITION IN AFL FOOTBALL INCLUDES:

- Optimising training sessions
- Preparation for game day
- Maximising game day performance
 - Concentration
 - Skill level
 - Endurance
 - Speed
 - Power
 - Strength
- Optimising body composition
 - Decrease body fat levels (where necessary)
 - Increase lean muscle mass
- Enhance recovery after exercise sessions
- Maintain hydration
- Protect immune system function

BASED ON CURRENT RESEARCH THE MAIN NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR OPTIMAL FOOTBALL PERFORMANCE ARE:

- Base most meals and snacks on carbohydrate food
- Consume good quality protein foods, and spread them throughout the day
- Limit fat intake
- Eat a variety of foods for vitamins and minerals
- Use fluids during and around exercise so that sweat losses are replaced

BASE MEALS & SNACKS ON CARBOHYDRATES:

A footballer's most precious fuel is glycogen (stored carbohydrate), as it is the key to endurance. The emptying of glycogen stores is a major limiting factor in football performance. When glycogen stores are used up, a footballer becomes exhausted and his performance falters. Not eating enough carbohydrates will also result in compromised muscle growth.

Foods rich in carbohydrate are the preferred source of energy for footballers. These foods should be consumed at all meals and snacks: *bread, rice, pasta, noodles, potato, sweet potato, corn, fruit, milk, yoghurt.*

Sugary carbohydrate-based foods such as honey, jam, confectionary and soft drink provide energy, but little other nutrients. They are useful for athletes with high carbohydrate/energy needs.

PROTEIN

Football players have higher protein requirements than less active individuals. Protein is used to build and repair muscle tissue.

It is important that athletes include some good food sources of protein at each main meal. Protein has been shown to be best used by our body if it is spread evenly throughout the day.

Good sources of animal proteins include: *lean red and white meats, poultry, fish, dairy product and eggs.*

Plant proteins are called incomplete proteins and do not work as effectively as the animal proteins in building and repairing lean muscle mass. These include: *cereals, legumes, lentils, nuts and seeds.*

FATS

Fat is an energy source. However it supplies twice the kilojoules as an equivalent



TUCKING IN: Young North Melbourne centre half-back Lachie Hansen is on an intensive diet to build bulk and strength.

amount of carbohydrate and protein, and is not as efficient as carbohydrate as an energy source.

All football players should avoid excess fat in their diet. While carbohydrate stores can be easily depleted, we will never run out of fat.

There is no need to cut out groups of foods from an athlete's diet to reduce the fat content.

It is just a matter of knowing what the fat content is and how to prepare these foods to minimise it:

eg: **Meat:** Lean red meat, with all of the visible fat removed is no higher in kilojoules than chicken or turkey (no skin) or fish. It is also a good source of protein and iron.

Dairy Products: football players need dairy products as a source of calcium. Choose reduced fat or low fat dairy products.

Fatty Foods: fat is a flavour enhancer, so it is hidden in many processed foods, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, chips etc. Keeping these foods as an occasional treat rather than a regular food choice is important.

A balanced diet for footballers does not exclude all fat. Small amounts of fat should still be provided in the diet.

Mono-unsaturated varieties are the best choices eg: canola or olive oil varieties.

Omega 3 fats are also important to include in a football player's eating plan as they act as an anti-inflammatory agent. Cold-water fish (e.g. salmon, sardines, mullet, mackerel) and pecans and walnuts contain good amounts of omega 3 fats.

SNACK CHOICES:

Snack foods are an essential part of a football player's daily eating plan. They help to top up energy stores before training sessions or refuel afterwards. Choosing appropriate snacks will ensure that your energy levels remain high and that adequate muscle repair and growth occurs between sessions.

Good snack choices are high in carbohydrates and other nutrients and low in fat, eg:

- fruit (fresh, tinned or dried)
- fruit loaf/raisin toast/fruit buns/fruit scrolls
- cereal bars
- creamed rice
- baked beans/spaghetti
- low fat smoothies/milk shakes
- yoghurt

FLUID:

It is important that all footballers aim to avoid dehydration as even small amounts of dehydration impact on performance. Concentration, skill level, endurance and speed are all reduced if dehydration occurs before or during training or a game. Drinking fluids such as water, cordial, sports drink and juice throughout the day is necessary to prevent starting training or a game dehydrated.

Once exercise has begun a regular intake of fluid and electrolytes (eg sports drink) is advised to replace sweat losses and aid in maintaining performance.

SUMMARY:

The nutrition strategies discussed in this article provide a basis for building an appropriate nutrition plan for AFL performance. More individualised advice is warranted for all players looking to maximise their performance and recovery to ensure personal goals are met.

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Coaching the Coaches

How do you become a better coach? The AFL and AFL Coaches Association have started to address that very question. BY PETER RYAN.

The most difficult part in terms of professional development when you're on the job is time," admits Adelaide coach Neil Craig.

I am speaking on the phone to him. It is 7.30 in the morning in South Australia. He has been generous enough to squeeze in a chat early in his day about how coaches learn. It's a hot topic in AFL coaching circles.

With the number of full-time coaches at AFL clubs now topping 100, the breakneck pace of change and the professional demands, both internal and external, on coaching staff growing exponentially, support on ways to get better is needed.

Time will allow Craig's coaching group to have three or four guest speakers address them each year about a specific issue. The topic might be leadership, how people best learn or how to design training drills. It's not a lot, but between the reality of a football season, post-season drafting and the need for a break, it is all that is available for formal professional development.

Like most coaches, Craig reads (leadership and strategies are his favourite subjects at the moment), has a group of mentors and seeks player feedback.

He also has an academic background alongside his playing career and was one of the country's most highly regarded sports scientists working with Australian cycling for many years. It has held him in good stead, particularly now he's the head coach.

"You're always getting professional development on the job by the experience you get – being on the job on a day-to-day basis," he said.

Many senior AFL coaches will visit a professional sporting club overseas in the off-season and there is the AFL National Coaching Conference to attend. All are committed to self-improvement.

The workplace has been found to be the most significant source of learning for AFL coaches but it is not always a positive education.

With little evidence as to what improves an AFL coach's effectiveness and a club culture that traditionally left the matter up to the coach, it is no wonder a more formal appraisal of what is best is now on the agenda.

The AFL has been aware of the issue for a while. The AFL Research Board commissioned the University of Queensland's Dr Cliff Mallett to research the learning environment for coaches in 2005.

His report *Coaching Knowledge, learning and mentoring in the AFL* was released last year. It was the first significant

step in creating better systems for developing coaches.

The research found the coaches' workload to be huge. Producing high performance was only one part of the role with expectations of leadership and management increasing significantly.

At some clubs, senior coaches were good teachers of assistant coaches. At others, they were more guarded. There was also no consistency in an assistant coach's job description.

The amount of data available is increasing but few can identify what is most relevant. It is also a role where finding people you can trust enough to admit your weaknesses is difficult.

Ten recommendations were made, suggesting ways to improve coaching.

"Coaches receive very little direct guidance," Mallett said. "They observe other people. They pick up a range of skills and qualities that help them to be better at what they do. It takes them a long time to work out whom they are happy to network with. At the end of the day, it's a highly contested environment."

Coaches have a DNA committed to getting better. A passionate bunch who love their sport, they enjoy their challenge. In his last year as Brisbane Lions coach Leigh Matthews said he'd probably be coaching somewhere even if he wasn't paid for it. Even after re-signing his post at the Lions, he did not rule out returning to coaching.

Coaches understand their responsibility. They chase success like a greyhound chases a bunny. This might make some laugh, but

6 YOU'RE ALWAYS GETTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE JOB BY THE EXPERIENCE YOU GET – BEING ON THE JOB ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS. 9 NEIL CRAIG

they're also an uncomplaining bunch.

Viewed from the outside, it's a thankless task. They carry a 50/50 chance of winning each week. Their tenure is uncertain. The public scrutiny is relentless. It's demanding on individuals and families.

Apart from the couple of hours North Melbourne coach Dean Laidley makes sure he spends with his children around dinnertime every day, from 7am until 11pm during the season, his time is devoted to coaching.

There is no pathway into the AFL system and the only coaching positions outside it are part-time, so losing your position requires a significant change in your life direction.

As legendary coach Kevin Sheedy says in passing when asked how coaches learn: "On the job."

Yet the early years in the senior job, when the greatest lessons are learned, a coach had better be successful or he will be gone.

"The issues in terms of development that coaches face within the AFL are consistent with any elite coaching environment," Mallett said. "We expect a lot of people once they're appointed. We don't do a lot at the structural level to support their learning. We already assume they're an expert."

Essendon is more aware of this than most. Bombers CEO Peter Jackson says the club's learning and development manager Leigh Russell, who was appointed at the end of 2006, spends 80 per cent of her time with the football department.

"We've just appointed Matthew Knights as a head coach but we're not assuming he knows everything he needs to know about being a head coach and judge him accordingly," Jackson said.

Jackson thinks it's fair to say that clubs haven't been as good at developing coaches as they should have been. "I think we're starting to understand we need to do more in this area," he said.

"Guys can be AFL players and play their last game in August and then they're an AFL coach. I think the presumption a lot of clubs have made is that because they have hired them as a coach, they know how to coach."

Mallett says the research put to rest one myth when it proved playing in the AFL alone doesn't sufficiently prepare you to coach in the AFL.

He says the participants in the research did not believe that being a good AFL player is necessary to coach well in the AFL.

He provides an example to illustrate his point. If a senior player is given the opportunity late in their career to pass on their knowledge to younger players – ostensibly to prepare for a possible coaching role – there is no guarantee their method of instruction is of a high quality.

Feedback channels have traditionally been poor. Who can tell someone whether their method for addressing the players at breaks is good? Who is able to determine whether the coach's box functions effectively? Is the game-plan solid and well communicated? The issue of how players learn to become

coaches is even more complex in the modern era when it is considered that most AFL players have been full-time footballers since leaving school.

Their 'real world' work experience is often limited. Will this make it more difficult for future coaches to mix goalkicking tuition with a dose of worldly advice as previous greats have been able to?

Mind you, being a great player doesn't stop you from being a great coach. Matthews' career was evidence that success is about attitude and smarts.

Not a voracious reader and having never undertaken formal study (he undertook a TAFE course on mentoring along with his coaching staff one off-season), Matthews had an earthy method of development.

His main approach was to be part of a constant and realistic revision of everything the coaching panel did.

"You're (always) looking for a better way of doing what you're doing and you know it will never stop," he said last year. "You never stop that process until you either stop coaching or die."

"Every now and then you will hear people who I coached at Collingwood talk about my coaching style and I would have thought they would have very little idea of my current coaching style because I think, I hope, I'm enormously different now to how I was 10 to 15 years ago."

It's sobering to remember that before Matthews was appointed Collingwood coach in 1986, the Magpies had consultant company Spectrum survey 200 members to ask who they wanted as coach. It's a pertinent reminder of a different era.

Matthews acknowledged one area he learned to be different in: "The value of positive reinforcement rather than negative criticism to get a better end result is something you learn all the time or you get reinforced to you all the time."

The AFL and the AFL Coaches Association (AFLCA) want to extend coaching development further. At the moment, the AFL offers well-regarded level 1, level 2 and level 3 coaching accreditation programs.

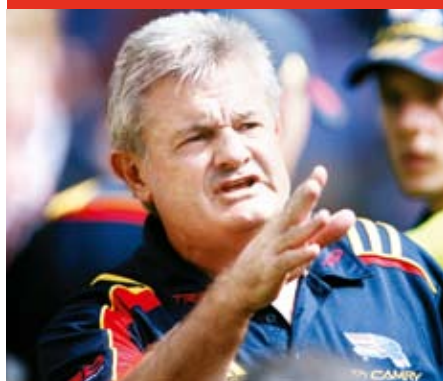
Both Craig and Matthews think these courses are valuable. But more is needed for those in the AFL system.

Former Melbourne coach Neale Daniher was chief executive officer of the AFLCA until he resigning last year to join West Coast as its football operations general manager. He said the clubs did a reasonable job to develop their coaches but it was not their primary role. "The club's primary role is to employ them to win games of footy," he said.

In his time with the AFLCA, Daniher worked with the AFL on ideas to improve the situation. The AFL Research Board is commissioning further research to examine coaching effectiveness.

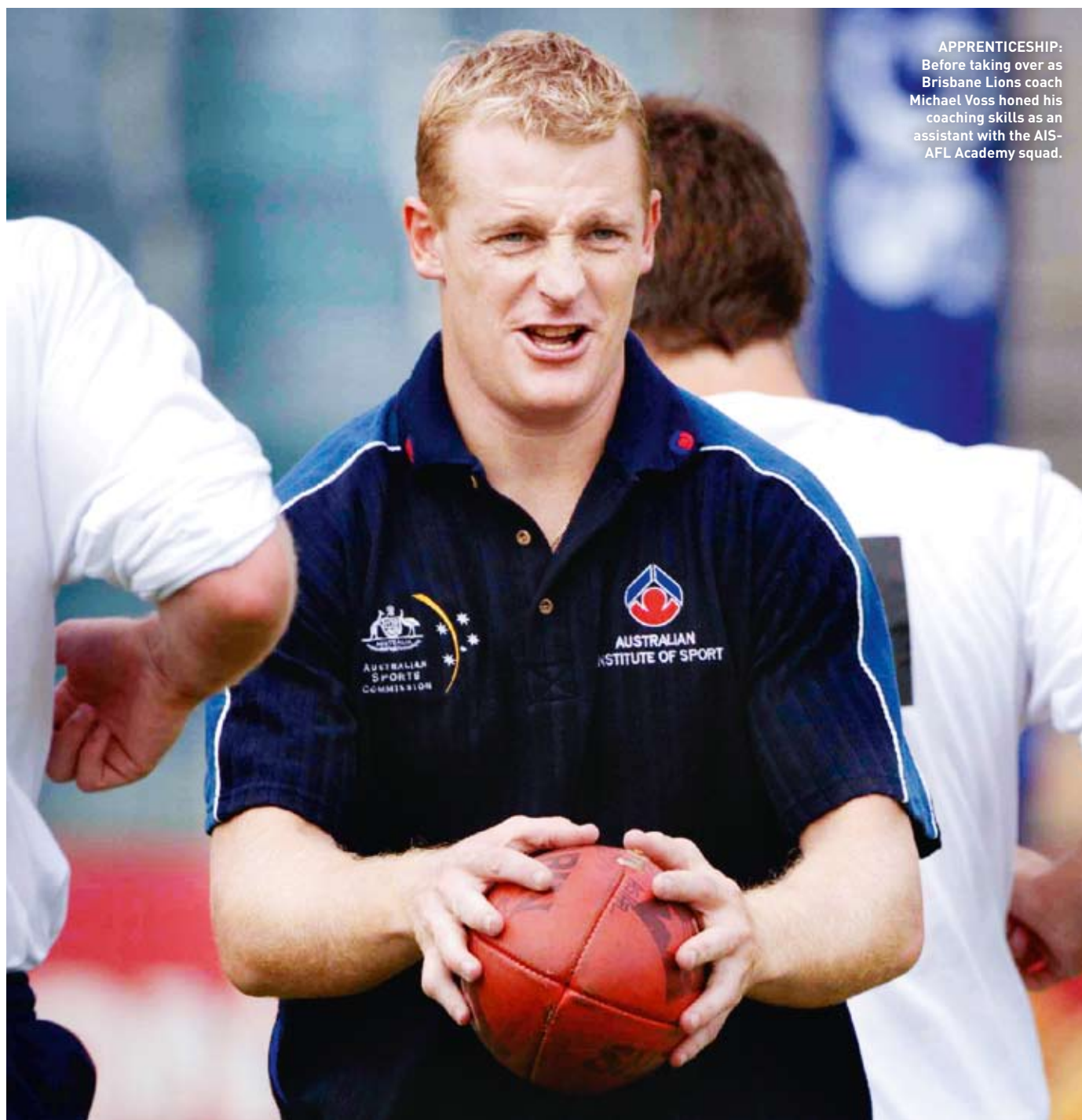
It will help the industry understand better the components that make a successful coach and increase knowledge about what is the best

CRAIG'S LIST



Neil Craig, who has also coached his daughter's netball team, says the factors coaches need to be aware of to coach successfully remain the same regardless of the level:

- 1 Organisation.
- 2 The way you relate to the kids or the players.
- 3 Make sure you're well planned.
- 4 Think about what the game entails so when you plan your training, you're giving activities that relate to the game, that are fun and make them better.
- 5 Have an empathy for how players respond to comments and be aware of how you conduct yourself.
- 6 Have good interaction with parents, whether it be at AFL level or underage level.



APPRENTICESHIP:
Before taking over as Brisbane Lions coach Michael Voss honed his coaching skills as an assistant with the AIS-AFL Academy squad.

preparation for those who want to become an AFL coach.

It is hoped the work will enable coaches coming through the ranks to be assessed, with strong candidates more easily identified.

Daniher reels some potential needs off the top of his head: "People management, situational leadership, use of technology, delegation, marketing, management upwards, management downwards, communication or emotional intelligence."

The evidence gained will not only assist AFL clubs but trickle down to the game's lower levels.

Daniher is hoping to partner with higher education institutions to extend a level 3 coaching accreditation program, adding four units to the course so graduates receive a diploma recognised by the AFL and the AFLCA. The diploma will be recognised

qualification for those who wish to enter a degree specialising in areas ranging from sports science to conditioning to business administration.

The AFLCA is also undertaking gap analysis to identify areas where coaches need to improve to make their powerful skill set transferable to business when the near-inevitable happens: their coaching tenure ends.

The ability to write reports or analyse and develop budgets might fill potential gaps.

The AFLCA, says Daniher, can provide mentors too.

Acknowledging the guarded nature of most senior coaches and their reluctance to network with their AFL counterparts, he is hopeful of setting up an information-sharing network of elite coaches from different sports, say, for example, a group containing a current AFL coach, basketball's Brian Goorjian and rugby

league's Craig Bellamy meeting occasionally to share case studies. Meetings with visiting coaches involved in global sports such as soccer, rugby union, cricket, athletics or swimming could also be organised.

There are discussions about providing coaches with one week a year devoted to professional development within work hours and negotiations with clubs to guarantee all coaches one day off a week.

Sport coaching is a competitive market. To attract the best sports scientists, conditioning coaches and player development staff, confidence in those in senior jobs is important.

Mallett's research showed head coaches were often isolated, struggling to find clear direction about how they can improve. Assistant coaches were also uncertain about how to progress in their

APPRAISAL SYSTEM:
Matthew Knights will
be judged by a detailed
criteria established by
the club.



‘THE GAME KEEPS TEACHING YOU BUT YOU NEED TO SEEK OTHER VIEWS.’

profession. Research examining what makes coaches effective will assist the industry to appraise coaches more precisely.

In selecting a new coach, Essendon has established a detailed criteria by which Knights will be judged in the future. It includes broad headings such as communication, understanding players, earning respect from the players so they want to do their best, creating a strong culture around the club, and understanding sports science well enough to ensure it is practically applied.

The prevailing wisdom is that coaching your own side at any level is a necessary precursor to becoming a senior AFL coach.

Justin Leppitsch coached the Lions in a NAB Cup game this year. He had never been in charge on match-day at any level and Matthews – a believer that coaching success is determined 90 per cent by planning and 10 per cent by what happens on game-day – saw the opportunity for Leppitsch to have the experience.

Collingwood's Gavin Brown, Essendon's Adrian Hickmott and Richmond's Jade Rawlings are all extending their coaching resume as VFL coaches this season.

Mallett's research suggests it is healthy for assistant coaches to switch clubs to learn different ways to coach.

Retired great Michael Voss challenged the whole notion of what was an acceptable pathway to coaching last season. He was an assistant coach with the AIS-AFL Academy and a commentator for Network Ten when he engaged in a public debate about when a coach was ready to be a senior coach.

Player feedback is extremely valuable to Craig. Their perceptions on how he is travelling are a good barometer for him.

"I have great trust in our playing group in terms of their ability, personality and character and want to know what they think," he said.

"It's their work environment and I actually want to know if there are things I'm doing in particular that is making the environment not as conducive to performance as it should be."

Craig uses four trusted mentors that know football but are away from the club to tell him how it is. Matthews says his main sounding boards come from within the club. Most meet with trusted outsiders from time to time.

Daniher lived the life for 10 seasons. He was a better coach when he left than when he began, but knows the struggle to learn.

"I reckon the senior coach has a bigger challenge than the assistants," he said. "They can learn by becoming a forward, midfield and then a backline coach and do more in the media, then have a bit more responsibility."

"For the senior coach, how do you learn? The game keeps teaching you but you need to seek other views, and it's a fairly insular environment." **CE**

This article originally appeared in the AFL Record in round four, 2008. Since then Matthews and Daniher have resigned as Brisbane Lions coach and AFLCA CEO respectively.



PREMIERSHIP JOY: Hawk coach Alastair Clarkson congratulates Cyril Rioli after the 2008 Grand Final.

Future management challenges of AFL coaching – coaching **Indigenous** players

By Jason Mifsud

The AFL And Indigenous Australia – An Overview

The AFL acknowledges Indigenous Australians are traditional custodians of this land and have strived to retain their culture and identity in all our programs. We value the skills, knowledge, experience and culture Indigenous people bring to our game. We seek to use Australian Football as a vehicle to improve the quality of life in Indigenous communities throughout Australia.

The AFL has developed an Indigenous framework to inform our programs. The underpinning principle of the AFL Indigenous Framework is a partnership between the AFL and Indigenous peoples. The partnership is based on acknowledgement, equality, respect and mutually beneficial outcomes.

Four pillars underpin this partnership: engaging the community; developing capacity; leadership and coordination; and celebrating culture and strengthening identity.

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL IS THE CONNECTION

Australian Football is the sport of choice for Indigenous people:

- 36 per cent of Indigenous males take part in AFL participation and promotional programs – 90,000 participants; and

- Indigenous Australians represent: 2.5 per cent of Australia's population; 11 per cent of current AFL players; and 10 per cent of the 2008 NAB AFL Draft.

In each state and territory, Indigenous people participate in proportionately higher numbers than the rest of Australia's population; their participation level is particularly remarkable in the Northern Territory, where Indigenous people represent 48.4 per cent of all participants in our programs.

Currently Indigenous participants make up 4.4 per cent of our total participants.

THE CHALLENGE FACING ALL AUSTRALIANS

Statistics show that Indigenous peoples are disengaged from education and employment opportunities and health measures when compared with non-Indigenous people. It is the AFL's ambition, using the strength of its brand and in partnership with Indigenous people, to provide this engagement.

POPULATION

As of June 30, 2006, the estimated Indigenous population of Australia was 517,200 or 2.5 per cent of the estimated resident population of Australia. Aboriginal people are young. In 2001, the percentage

of Indigenous people under 15 years old was 39 per cent, considerably higher than that of non-Indigenous people (20 per cent). The median age of Indigenous Australians is 21 years, compared with 36 years for the non-Indigenous population. Most Aboriginal people live in cities or regional areas (73.6 per cent) but 26.4 per cent of Indigenous peoples live in remote or very remote areas compared to just two per cent of the non-Indigenous population.

THE GAP – LIFE EXPECTANCY

The life expectancy of Indigenous people is estimated to be about 17 years lower than the life expectancy of the rest of the Australian population. Current male life expectancy is 59 years for Indigenous males compared to 77 years for non-Indigenous males. Life expectancy for Indigenous females is now 65 years compared to 82 years for non-Indigenous females.

HEALTH

Indigenous people are more adversely affected by chronic and communicable diseases. For example, Indigenous women are 10.1 times more likely to die from nutritional and metabolic diseases such as diabetes than non-Indigenous women, while Indigenous men are 5.1 times more

likely to die from Tuberculosis than non-Indigenous men. Hepatitis A is also detected in Indigenous people at eight times the rate it is in the non-Indigenous population. More than half of the Indigenous population aged over 15 years are overweight or obese (57 per cent).

EDUCATION

Nationally, Indigenous education-participation levels are low. Retention rates, though increasing, remain at about half that of other Australians, literacy and numeracy gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children are persistent, and absenteeism among Indigenous children is seen to have reached crisis levels.

- In 2003, national school participation rates for Indigenous children (five to eight years old), was 87 per cent compared with 93 per cent for non-Indigenous children in the same age range.
- In 2004-05, Indigenous adults who had completed Year 12 were, when compared to those who had left school in Year 9 or earlier:
- More likely to report excellent or very good self-assessed health; and
- Less likely to report high or very high levels of psychological distress.

EMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate of Indigenous people in 2006 was three times the rate of non-Indigenous people (16 per cent compared with 5 per cent). The median household income for Indigenous people was \$362 a week compared to \$642 for non-Indigenous people.

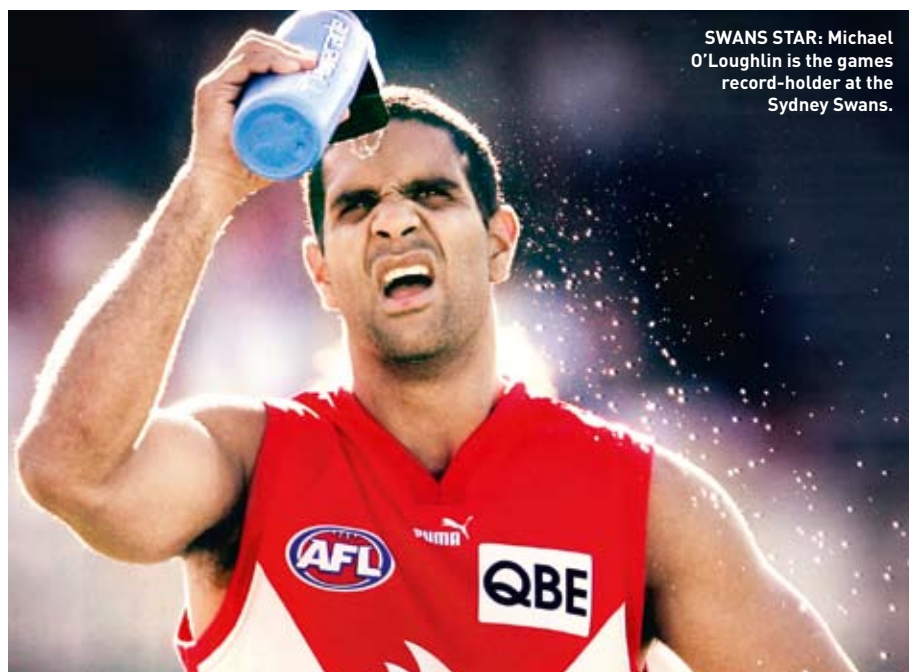
PRINCIPLES OF COACHING INDIGENOUS PLAYERS

1. Manage the person before you coach the player.

- Most don't know how much you know until they know how much you care.
- Time builds confidence. Confidence builds trust.
- Trust is how most Indigenous players will measure coaches.
- Trust enhances and accelerates performance.
- History has been unkind to many Indigenous people over generations. Due to the fact that Indigenous Australia has an oral history, these stories have been passed on and continue to cause suspicion, scepticism and mistrust.
- Investing time to gain the trust of Indigenous people is the most significant investment needed to build the coach-player relationship and confidence.
- Once this trust is gained, the free spirit that typifies Indigenous players is limitless.

2. Invest in and build the relationship – it is your responsibility.

- Acknowledge, accept and embrace that there is a point of difference with Indigenous players.
- Family and kinships – what influences are impacting/enhancing on their performance?
- Community and lifestyle – the AFL system is possibly their first time in a structured environment.
- Culture/Language/Land/Identity – how are you integrating these factors into your relationship or their development?



SWANS STAR: Michael O'Loughlin is the games record-holder at the Sydney Swans.

- Indigenous people have a different perspective on life generated by 60,000 years of practising a culture that continues today.

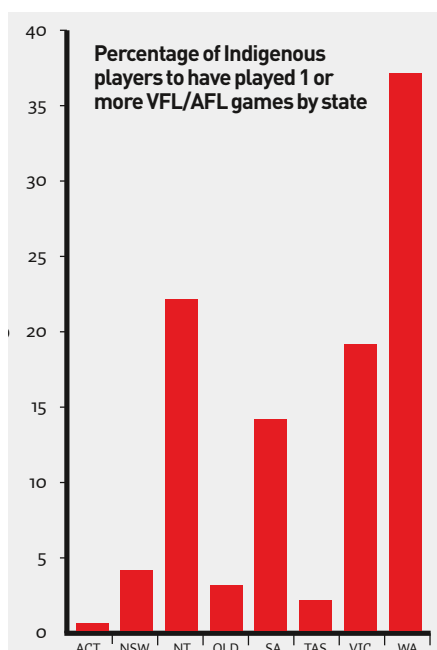
Family and kinships are the centrepiece of Indigenous culture and places enormous pressure on Indigenous people, especially high-achievers who are expected to provide in full for their families.

Indigenous culture is based simply having only what is necessary and not accumulating anything but cultural knowledge. Cultural obligations are very structured and disciplined, and allow for the freedom to explore and experience.

Encouraging and supporting this connection reinforces care and commitment.

3. Do not complicate the game – keep it simple.

- Always encourage the players to play to their strengths – do not limit their natural flair.
- Keep meetings, language, strategies and tactics short and simple and follow up to ensure the message is understood.



- Utilise vision, diagrams and walk-throughs to enhance education.
- Coach, don't lecture; Indigenous players do not respond to threats or abuse.

Indigenous players are only limited by their confidence. Do not restrict their sense of adventure – the 'impossible' is possible.

Indigenous people are predominately kinaesthetic, owing to their oral history and the fact they have traditionally learnt from the land and nature. So, the environment coaches teach their players in impacts on their capacity to absorb and understand.

Traditional practice has no theory, only practice, no mistakes, only lessons learned – this should be encouraged. Shame impedes and restricts development. Most Indigenous players already have some, don't contribute to it. Due to many cultural reasons, they can also feel shame when they are excelling.

4. Remember that for most Indigenous players, this is more than a game – Australian Football engages Indigenous Australia because it celebrates all the positives aspects of Indigenous culture.

- Manage high performance with a cultural overlay.
- Engage and invest in coaches/staff with dual skill sets.
- Develop organisational capacity and leadership and celebrate culture.
- Provide recognition and rewards.

Perspective: balancing the elite program with cultural, family and community responsibilities.

Working with Indigenous people/culture: how many coaches/staff are culturally attentive?

Include Indigenous people in your decision-making across all levels – player knowledge is your greatest asset – or engage the local community around key events (e.g. an Indigenous-themed round).

Keep the players engaged and focused by providing incentives based on family, community or cultural opportunity. **CE**

Jason Mifsud is AFL Foundation CEO and coach of Beaumaris in the VAFA.

From the ivory tower & beyond

In this section, the aim is to introduce and explore either relevant research articles or pearls of wisdom from successful coaches.

1. WOODEN THE PHILOSOPHER

The first snapshot comes from a doyen of coaching philosophers, John Wooden, who successfully coached the UCLA basketball team for a long time.

Wooden taught by using the 'whole-part' method, breaking the game down to its elements – 'Just like parsing a sentence,' he would say, sounding like the English teacher he had indeed once been. He applied the four basic laws of learning: **explanation, demonstration, correction and repetition**. And he developed a pedagogy resting on the notion that basketball is a game of threes: forward, centre, guard; shoot, drive, pass; ball, you, man; conditioning, skill, teamwork.

As a coach who shunned recruiting, put relatively little stock in the scouting of opponents and refused to equate success with winning, Wooden, most would have thought, would have become a great failure rather than college sports' pre-eminent winner of all time. An article of faith among coaches holds that one must be intolerant of mistakes, but here, too, Wooden was a contrarian. **He considered errors to be precious opportunities for teaching – preferably in practice, of course. And the games were exams.** 'Wooden isn't the game coach everybody thinks he is,' said Jack Hirsch, who played on that first title team. 'He doesn't have to be. He's so good during the week, he sits back, relaxes and has fun watching the game.' Wooden had a saying for that phenomenon, as he did for most things in life. In this case the quote is from Cervantes: 'The journey's better than the end.' Somehow Wooden's impossibly corny, middle-American way of imparting these larger truths actually got through to the rebellious baby boomers in his charge. Perhaps Wooden had taken conventional wisdom and stripped it down so starkly that it struck players like Bill Walton, Lew Alcindor and Keith Wilkes as revolutionary in some refreshing way.

(Editor's note – there is a great book about John Wooden that is well worth reading, entitled Wooden – A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections on and off the Court. The book is written by John Wooden with Steve Jamison and is published by Contemporary Books.)

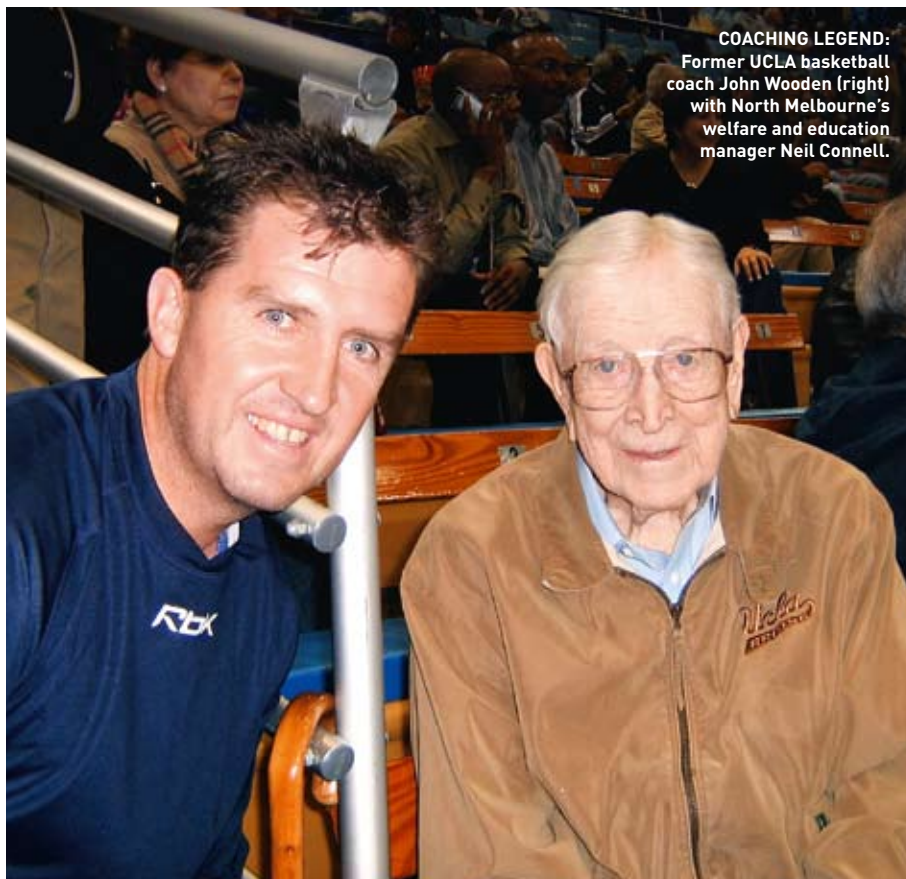
2. THE BACK OR FRONT PAGE

Former Chief Justice Earl Warren: 'I always turn to the sports pages first, which records people's accomplishments. The front page has nothing but man's failures.'

(Editor's note – Hmm, now I can at last justify my newspaper reading practice!)

3. KEEP IT SIMPLE

In a classically understated address to a gathering of the best of the best in the then VFL, famed orator and coach John Kennedy was reported to have only said this to his Big V team, 'One handpass and one long kick' and



COACHING LEGEND:
Former UCLA basketball coach John Wooden (right) with North Melbourne's welfare and education manager Neil Connell.

then left the room. The players were stunned by the brevity of the message but soon realised the wisdom. The only way the star-studded Vics could be beaten was if they over-possessed the ball and started to lairise with the ball. Sticking to the Kennedy dictum would ensure success ... and it did!

4. TOO OLD TO COACH? BE CAREFUL

In American Football, it was reported that Joe Gibbs, 63, was the latest proof that old guys are hip, even if that hip is artificial. The Washington Redskins just gave him close to \$30 million to coach for five years, and he hasn't so much as blown a whistle in 11 years. That's because the Redskins want to be more like the Kansas City Chiefs, who are led by a guy who is 67, Dick Vermeil, who wants to be more like Florida Marlins manager Jack McKeon, who won a World Series in 2003 at 72.

So when is one too old to coach?

5. MENTAL TOUGHNESS

→ In 'Coach, can you help me to be mentally tough?' (ITF Coaching and Sport Science Review, 15 (44), 2-4, 2008), Janet Young approaches a topic that knows no boundaries in sport, and illustrates how we can learn from other sports. The following attributes of mental toughness are identified in tennis:

- Unshakeable self belief in a unique set of skills and ability to achieve goals; Insatiable desire and inner drive to succeed; Passion for the game;
- Remains fully focused on what has to be done despite distractions and can switch sport focus on and off when required;
- Thrives on competitive pressure [accepts competitive anxiety is inevitable and knows how to cope];
- Rebounds from setbacks and losses with increased determination; and
- Pushes the limits of physical and emotional pain during training and competition.
- Encourage a player to dream – take them to high standard games; show video footage of champion players; provide the player with biographies of champions.
- Eagerly and earnestly prepare to compete – play one moment at a time; accept things a player cannot change e.g. windy conditions; give 100 per cent effort irrespective of the score; move onto the next phase of game after a mistake.
- Lead by example – demonstrate resilience, commitment, perseverance, coping skills, fun and confidence.
- Be consistent – show sensitivity and caring, whether your players win or lose.



KENNEDY SPEAKS:
Former Hawthorn and North Melbourne coach John Kennedy was known for his stirring player addresses. Here, North Melbourne players are all ears as they huddle around him.

- Empower the player – a player can't always control what happens in competition, but they can control how they respond to incidents. Encourage players to make decisions.
- Evaluate progress – receiving regular positive and constructive feedback from a coach on their mental toughness, can be most effective in guiding a player to stay on, or change their course.

[Editor's note: Clearly the above attributes and strategies can be readily adopted in AFL football coaching.]

6. LIFE AFTER SPORT

In the following article entitled 'After the ball: for star athletes, nothing matters but the game. When life catches up with them, the real match begins.' Pearlman (Psychology Today, Vol. 37, Issue 3) investigates the issue of life after sport for professional athletes. Even in community sport we see examples of players who lose their identity after they retire from active involvement, and who struggle with life after sport. The lesson here is to educate players for life after sport. The following excerpts from the article provide some graphic examples where athletes have struggled with life after sport:

"Because they've been so focused on sports from an early age, many athletes never develop necessary parts of the self," observes Cristina Versari, head of sports psychology at San Diego University for Integrative Studies. "There's a developmental arrest. When an athlete retires, it takes four to eight years to adjust to a new life."

In six years of running the National Basketball Association's education and career development program, Versari came across more than 400 basketball players, few of whom were ready for retirement. "Most of us spend 25 to 30 years doing a job that we've prepared for, and that becomes our reason to

get up each day," she says. "The professional athlete retires in his late 20s or early 30s and then has no idea what to do. You can only play so much golf."

Pick a sport – any sport – and it's easier to find 10 athletes who failed to make post-retirement life meaningful than 10 who instantly thrived. From former Houston Astros ace J.R. Richard, found living under a bridge, to former world-class sprinter Houston McTear, slumming on the streets of Sweden; from the drug problems of Mets slugger Darryl Strawberry to the AIDS-related death of one-time Padres second baseman Alan Wiggins, the sporting world offers a who's who of casualty tales.

"Too often, retired athletes just can't cope with being retired athletes," says sports psychologist John Chang, assistant professor at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. "Especially when their egos get in the way."

One of the more popular Women's basketball players, Rebecca Lobo, planned her 2003 exit from the WNBA. When she joined the New York Liberty in 1997, Lobo was a star who was greeted with suffocating attention. Fans lined up outside Madison Square Garden for her autograph; little girls wearing silver-and-black LOBO jerseys could be spotted all over New York. Yet throughout a solid seven-year playing career, Lobo never thought of herself solely as an athlete.

"There are a number of WNBA players who have decided basketball is the only thing they're interested in, and therefore it's the only thing they think about and do," Lobo says. "Not me." Several years ago, Lobo began working in the off-season as a college-basketball analyst for ESPN.

Many female basketball players finished the WNBA season, then immediately caught a plane to play professionally in Europe. Lobo, on the other hand, had a new identity as a

TV personality that could grow over time.

"An athlete who can find another identity for himself is promising a much healthier life," says Versari.

Professional athletes typically spend more years preparing for their career--starting in elementary school--than in it. It's not only all they know, Versari explains, they have not developed other areas of their identity. Many lack the social or academic skills that give others a sense of self-worth. "All athletes feel that they are not completely developed according to their chronological age," Versari reports. "When they leave the sport, they have to emotionally go back for 'structured building' to fill in the missing pieces."

Returning to college, either to complete undergraduate work or to pursue a higher degree, is the number-one way to minimise the inevitable doldrums of retirement, insists Versari. "When they go through school the first time, most athletes are studying the easiest subject to help them stay active," she says. "It's not about what you like. So now, later in life, they should go for it."

But continuing an education is not simply about getting a new post-sports job. A return to the classroom can provide the ex-jock with his first nonathletic feelings of achievement. Like sports, academics can be goal-oriented and intense. It also stimulates the mind which is something a lot of athletes probably need after their careers. **CE**

Editor's Note: Coaches then have an obligation to encourage the development of other skills in their players. They should try to develop well rounded individuals and provide them with the confidence to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to pursue other interests when they have finished playing football.

GAME-BASED TRAINING

Teaching 'Run and Carry'

Players discover what to do in a tactical situation by their own experiences, not necessarily relying on the coach telling them what should happen.

▶ Training provides opportunities for players to learn the game of football in a discovery-based environment. Players learn how to think about what to do in a game and how to do it. Game-based training can become a better learning tool when conducted by a skilled coach who can facilitate player learning through asking appropriate questions.

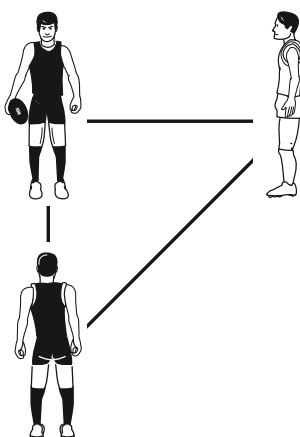
Game-based training allows players to feel more comfortable in the pressurised environment of match day through drills and activities that place the same tactical and technical challenges on them. We 'play' football, therefore, training should resemble 'playing'.

A key part of the modern game is having the ability to run and carry the ball. The most effective way to coach this tactic is to perform a series of game-based drills. The difficulty of the drills chosen will vary depending on the experience and skill level of your team.

In the following we have extracted some drills from David Wheadon's book *Drills & Skills in Australian Football* that will allow your team to practice 'run and carry' in a variety of situations. They will test players' decision-making skills, their ability to run angles and, ultimately, will teach players that the aim of 'run and carry' is to produce an effective kick.

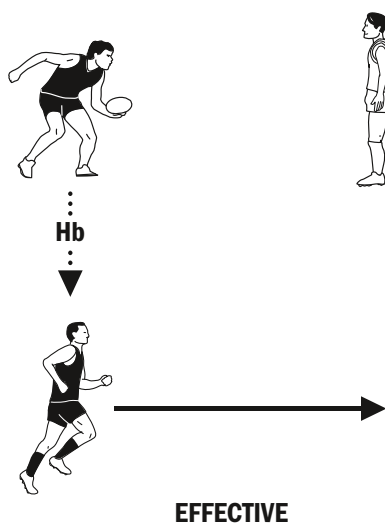
Introduction

1. Run and carry depends on creating triangles involving the ball carrier, receiver and opponent.



2. Ball carriers have 2 basic options:

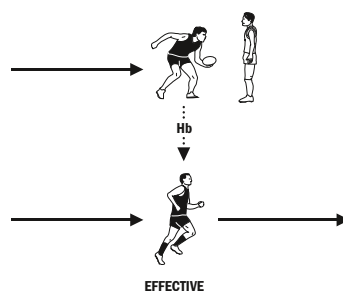
- a. "Instant handball" – immediately ball carrier recognises the receiver is in space a handball can go to the receiver allowing the receiver the width to run past the opponent.



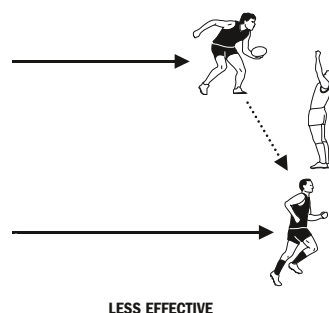
- b. "Run at the opponent" – the carrier runs directly at the opponent drawing the opponent to the ball and at the last moment executes a quick handball laterally to the receiver.

3. It is important that the receiver runs exactly laterally in line with the ball carrier.

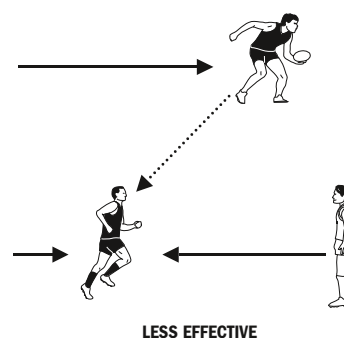
- a. If the receiver moves too far ahead the opponent can intercept the handball by closing down the angle.



- b. If the receiver is too far behind then the opponent can wait and defend the receiver.



4. If at any time the opponent commits to any particular player the space that the opponent leaves open should be exploited, eg, the opponent anticipates a handball and moves across towards the receiver, thereby allowing the ball carrier to hang onto the ball and run through the space.



5. Triangles are natural passing angles.

CROWS PLAYMAKER:
Adelaide's Andrew McLeod can break games open for his side with his run and carry from half-back.

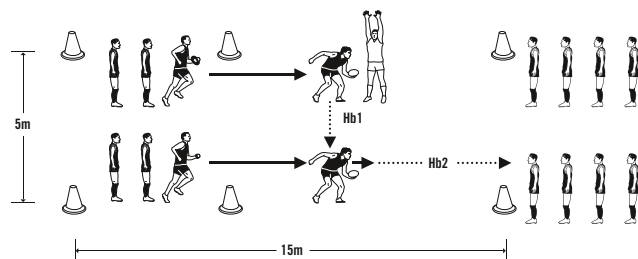


Basic run and carry

Purpose: Teach the basic science of run and carry.

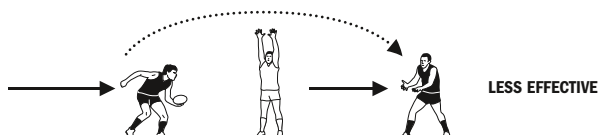
ORGANISATION

1. 17 players per group.
2. Work in pairs to continuously move the ball past the opponent with run and carry.
3. As the players become better at this skill encourage them to use subtle fakes and run angles that will move the opponent in order to create space for the ball to be moved past.



4. The biggest errors are:

- a. Too slow with the handball – the receiver is in space but the carrier holds the ball too long and when finally the handball is given the receiver is covered by a defender.
- b. Too slow with the feet – the carrier runs at the opponent then stops allowing time for the carrier to be covered.
- c. The receiver moving past and in a direct line in front of the opponent:
- d. 'Look away' handballs – once deciding to handball the carrier should momentarily turn his vision and focus on the receiver to execute a technically correct handball. 'Look aways' often result in turnovers. Handballs often have to be slower and higher to move above the opponent's raised arms and the receiver may have to be stationary to wait for the handball to arrive. In this situation the receiver should return to block the opponent and allow the carrier to run past.



Run and carry with pressure from behind

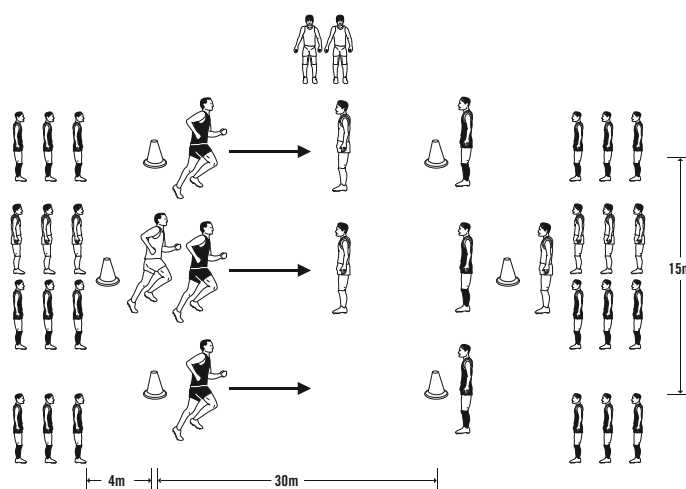
Purpose: Give experience in run and carry with pressure from a different angle.

ORGANISATION

- Up to 36 players (8 participating at any one time).
- Normal run and carry drill but with an extra opponent chasing from behind.
- The players should be encouraged to not delay but to keep moving the ball quickly.

COACHING POINTS

- The 2 opponents in front of the runners should attempt to delay the runners as much as possible in order for the third opponent to apply defensive pressure from behind.
- Increase or decrease the distance between the third opponent and the runners to change the degree of defensive pressure.



Kicking to inside 50 metres

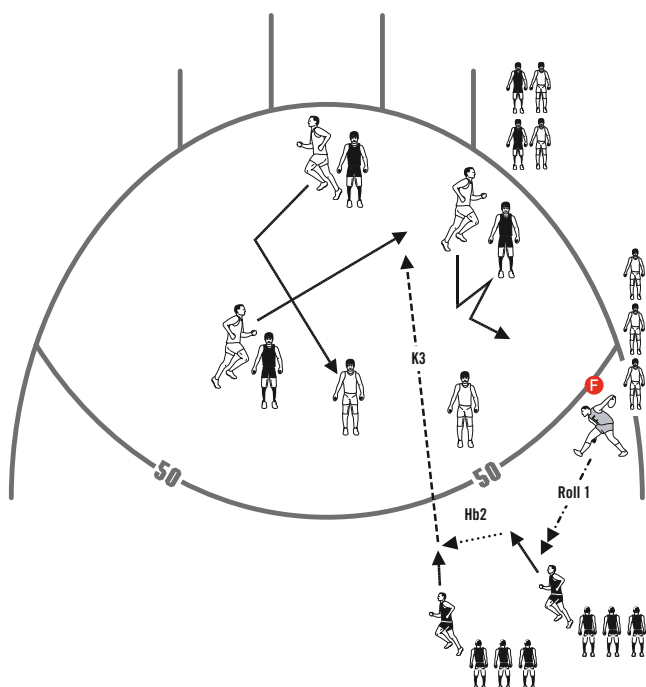
Purpose: Teach the players that the ultimate aim of run and carry is to produce an effective kick.

ORGANISATION

- 23 players (10 involved at any one time).
- F rolls the ball to any of the 2 runners.
- The 2 free opponents move to defend.
- The runners attempt to run and carry into space (Hb2) where they can effectively kick to inside 50 metres (K3).
- Matched-up forwards work to get free to receive the kick.

COACHING POINTS

- a. Move the position of the contest around the 50-metre arc to change the angle of attack and the distance out from goals to alter the types of kicks needed.
- b. Add another defender starting from behind the 2 runners to add more pressure.
- c. Effective kicking to inside 50 metres is one of the more difficult skills of football due to the increased defensive numbers usually found there.



Run and carry from the midfield to inside 50 metres

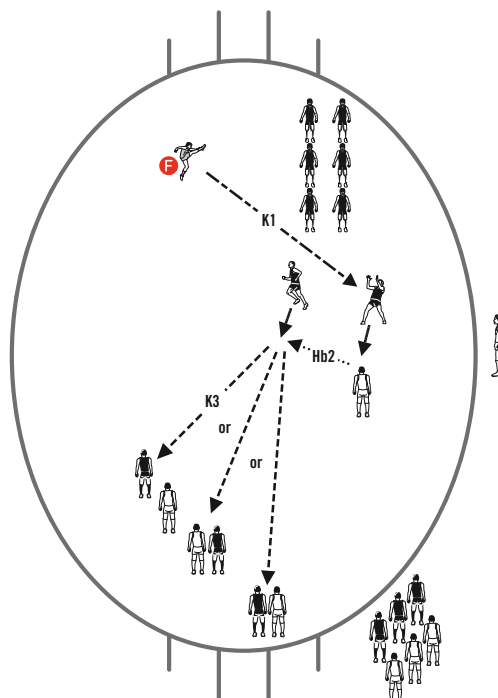
Purpose: Teach the value of ball movement through the midfield.

ORGANISATION

- 22 players (9 involved at any one time).
- F kicks to either runner.
- Run and carry is used to move past the opponent (Hb3).
- The kicker chooses any of the 3 targets in the forward line (K3).
- Rotate the players after a reasonable number of repetitions, but keep the backmen and midfielders as the runners and the forwards in the forward line if desired.

COACHING POINTS

- a. Change the starting positions of the runners to alter the depth and angle of entries into the forward line.
- b. To make the activity more challenging add more runners, opponents and targets.
- c. Fast ball movement disrupts back lines by forcing defenders to make quick decisions.



CAT CLASS: Geelong tries to get the ball to Gary Ablett at every opportunity so he can use his devastating pace to run and break opposition lines.



TOP TACKLER: Brett Kirk, pictured here tackling Jimmy Bartel in last year's Hall of Fame Tribute match, is one of the League's best tacklers.



Footwork is the key to **tackling** success

Andrew Hayman, Eastern Ranges midfield coach
(Contact details: 0418 328 958; or <http://www.plan-to-win.com/>)

Footwork is the key to ensuring a player gets close to their target and delivers an effective tackle. Without the correct technique and footwork players can miss tackles that can and will cost you a game. A missed front-on tackle is the one that hurts that most. If the opposition steps around a player they can use the ball without pressure. Priority one must be to stop the player; do not get caught up worrying about the arms.

The coach should work on teaching technique to improve and give confidence to players to allow effective tackling. A step-by-step approach to teaching the correct technique would focus on the following key points:

- Go in hard and low. Keep your head up looking at the target and not at the ground. Then hit the target first with your leading shoulder.
- Corral the player into position and keep them inside your shoulder.
- Mirror tackling from front-on.
- Ensure quick feet or 'stutter steps' to allow the player to steady on their target. Imagine the player has an elastic band between their ankles and large steps will snap the elastic band.
- Keep your arms slightly bent (cocked) and in line with the target.
- Upon contact with the target drive them back with strong legs and lower body. If the target has considerable momentum this may not be possible.

→ The tackler must keep their head out of the way and keep the impact on their shoulder. Initially encourage the tackler to put their head on their opponent's number as a coaching point.

→ When tackling from behind, the key is to not give away a free kick. Therefore, the tackler must roll the target's hips and drop at the knees to bring the target down and at least restrict their disposal options.

Having explained the correct technique to the players they should be given the opportunity to practice their technique in drills. There are several drills that can be used to practice tackling. Detailed descriptions and diagrams of each drill follow.

Drill 1 – Partner tackling

→ In pairs players practise tackling technique from approximately one metre apart.

→ Drill can be modified by varying the intensity or speed of the ball carrier.

Objective: (for the tackler)

→ Practise using the correct technique in performing a tackle.

Objective: (for the ball carrier)

→ Get hands free in the tackle.



Drill 2 – Group tackling

→ Ball-carrying group positioned off the fence.

→ Tackling group approximately five metres in front of them.

→ Tackler to move toward ball carrier and perform the tackle.

→ Drill can be modified by varying the intensity or speed of the ball carrier and whether they are trying to evade the tackler.

Objective: (for the tackler)

→ Practise using the correct technique in performing a tackle.

Objective: (for the ball carrier)

→ Get hands free in the tackle.



Drill 3 – Chase down

→ Players split into twos or threes.

→ One player runs away from the tackler and is chased down and tackled from behind.

→ Removing balls adds safety to tackle.

→ Drill may be modified to include a ball placed on the ground approximately three metres in front of the player being tackled. The ball carrier would have to pick the ball up cleanly off the ground. The drill may also include a target for the ball carrier to deliver the ball to by handball or kick.

Objective: (for the tackler)

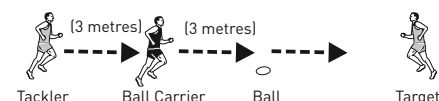
→ Practise using the correct technique in performing a tackle.

→ Focus on rolling the player and performing a legal tackle.

Objective: (for the ball carrier (if applicable))

→ Practise clean pick-up of the ball off the ground.

→ Practise accurate disposal of the ball while being tackled.



Drill 4 – Spinning tackle

→ Players in 2 groups, with the coach in middle out the front.

→ The coach handballs to one of the players.

→ The other player comes in to tackle, turning him in a circle.

→ The ball carrier raises his arms in the air at the time of impact and tries to handball back to the coach at the right time.

Objective: (for the tackler)

→ Spin the ball carrier.

Objective: (for the ball carrier (if applicable))

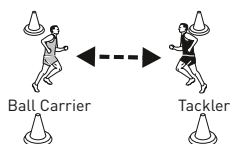
→ Raise arms at time of impact.

→ Release an accurate handball whilst being spun in a tackle.



Drill 5 – Gate tackle

- Players split into pairs.
 - Ball carrier attempts to run through a 1m wide gate made up by cones.
 - The tackler aims to tackle them and prevent them.
- Objective:** (for the tackler)
- Perform the tackle and ensure the player does not get through the gate.
- Objective:** (for the ball carrier)
- Try to break the tackle and get through the gate.



Drill 6 – Ground-ball tackling

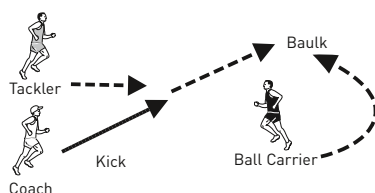
- Players separate in 2 lines, 2 metres apart with the coach in middle with ball.
 - The coach nominates a tackling end and receiving end.
 - The coach drops ball in the middle and the receiver moves in to pick up the ball and then tries to evade the tackler.
- Objective:** (for the tackler)
- Practice using the correct technique in performing a tackle.
 - Do not charge the player with their head over the ball.
- Objective:** (for the ball carrier)
- Gather the ball cleanly.
 - Keep the arms clear of the tackler.
 - Evade the tackler.



Drill 7 – The baulk

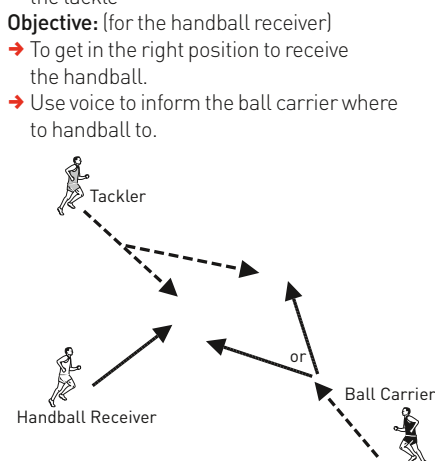
- Players separate in 2 lines.
- One group is the ball carrier the other is the tackler.
- The ball carrier takes a mark.
- The tackler takes up his position on the mark.
- The ball carrier then pushes back off the mark and wheels around on an arc as if to play on.
- Play on is called and the tackler on the mark then comes at the player who will try and baulk the tackler.

- Objective:** (for the tackler)
- Focus on footwork to ensure correct positioning for the baulk.
 - Practice using the correct technique in performing a tackle.
- Objective:** (for the ball carrier)
- Baulk the tackler to get passed them.



Drill 8 – Hand free in tackle

- Players separate in three groups; ball carrier, tackler and handball receiver.
 - The ball carrier runs toward the tackler and then cuts off the line.
 - The tackler approaches the ball carrier and then moves to tackle the ball carrier.
 - The ball carrier takes the tackle and focuses on getting the hands free and giving an accurate handball to the handball receiver.
- Objective:** (for the tackler)
- Practice making the tackle when the ball carrier cuts back inside
 - Try and avoid the ball carrier dishing the ball off
- Objective:** (for the ball carrier)
- Practice evasion skills (stepping, spinning)
 - Gets hands free in the tackle
 - Accurately give the handball whilst taking the tackle

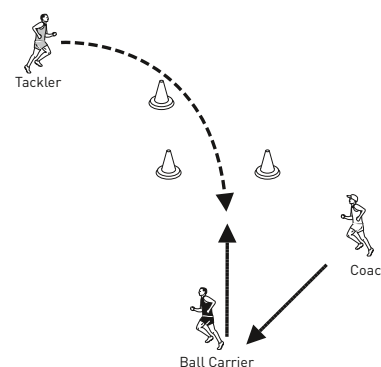


Drill 9 – Momentum tackling

- Players separate in 2 groups; tackler and ball carrier.
 - The coach delivers the ball to the ball carrier who aims to get through between two cones (the 'gate').
 - The tackler has to run around a cone before attempting to stop the player from getting through the gate.
- Objective:** (for the tackler)
- Practice tackling when the ball carrier is at close to full speed
 - Cut down available angles for the ball carrier
 - Improve tackling reaction time

Objective: (for the ball carrier)

- Practice evasion skills (stepping, spinning)



Drill 10 – Tackling/evading

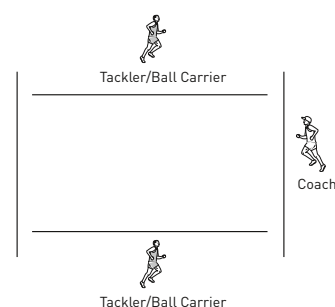
- Players separate in 2 groups; tackler and ball carrier.
- The coach stands in the middle and can deliver the ball to either player.
- The ball carrier then attempts to evade the tackler and get passed the line before the tackler completes the tackle.

Variation: Players are closer together (two metres apart)

- Tackler should be on him straight away- never miss a tackle
- Player being tackled has to try to get hands free

- Objective:** (for the tackler)
- To work on making the tackle when taken on
 - Lock the ball in (pin an arm)
 - Close down available options for the ball carrier

- Objective:** (for ball carrier)
- Evade tackler
 - Protect the ball (turn away from pressure)
 - Get hands free (give ball off when tackled)



Centre Half-Forward

BY BEN DIXON

Position Description

Role within the team structure

The centre half-forward (CHF) is one of the most important roles in the team. The CHF is the link between defence and attack, providing a focal point for backline transition and a hit-up option for the midfield. The CHF's role is also to control the most direct avenue to goal, so scoring is quick and, more importantly, effective.

Relationship to other positions in the team

The key relationship is with the midfield and attacking defenders and the CHF needs to know their characteristics and style of play. The forward line is a tight unit and religiously works together to recognise weaknesses in opposition players and exploit them effectively.

‘THE CENTRE HALF-FORWARD IS EFFECTIVELY THE CAPTAIN OF THE FORWARD HALF’

Player responsibilities for the position

The CHF should organise his fellow forwards; he is effectively the captain of the forward half. He has to read the game and his opponent, giving players in his area the best opportunity to score. He provides an option in every transition of play between the arcs, which creates space for fellow forwards' leads.

Characteristics required to play the position successfully

- Anaerobic and aerobic fitness
- Speed and strong hands
- Strong in one-on-one body contests
- Able to read the play
- Can organise fellow forwards around him

Specialised CHF situations (set plays)

The CHF can be involved in inside-50 stoppages, releasing the ruckman to play loose inside the forward 50. Also with opposition kick-ins he is best positioned on the last line of the zone for any long balls that may need a key position contest, supporting the ruckman.

Major characteristics of effective opponents

- Body strength
- Apply relentless body pressure (on the lead and prior to the ball entering the area)
- Provide offensive run
- Able to know when to leave the CHF and cut off other forward-line options

Tips for coaching the position

Key points to get across to player

It is essential that the player can identify ways and tactics to best exploit their opponent. The CHF should have strong body pressure when leading and be smart in timing leads. In one-on-one marking contests a CHF should mark

or, at worst, halve the contest to give small forwards the chance to kick a goal or lock the ball in. The CHF also needs to recognise when a leading lane can be better used by a midfielder; he needs to hold his lead or adjust it back to goal to engage his opponent.

Specific training for the position

Playing CHF requires explosive training over 10-20m and 20-40m to develop leading. It also requires repeated speed training to build the fitness needed for repeated efforts during a game; e.g. 150m and 200m sprints with a short recovery. One-on-one marking contests are a huge part of this position so specific gym training is important. Squats, power cleans, snatches and dead lifts will also benefit the player on the field.

Specific drills to develop player's competency for the position

- Plenty of one-on-one competitive work – including under high balls
- Work on body position – starting in front and testing yourself from the back also

- Leading in and out of the leading lanes toward the wing position – practising the hook lead and your ability to get back to the goal square as quickly as possible

Specific pre-match preparation

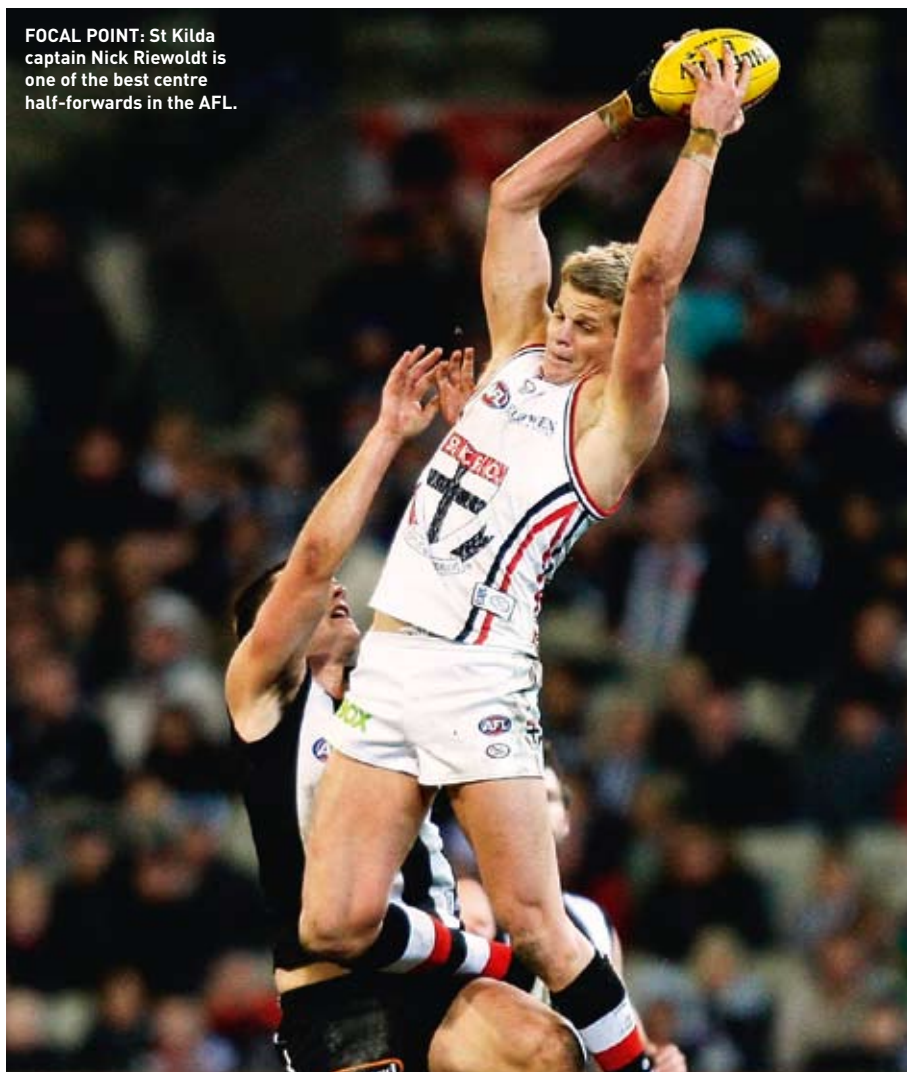
It's very important to analyse your opponents to know where you can exploit them; ask players who may have played on them before. Doing your homework on the opposition can give you the edge you may need to beat your defender and also assist other players in your team who may get them during the game.

Helpful hints to become a better player

Watch players who play in your position from opposition clubs. Go to their games, watch their work-rate and the way they understand the capabilities of their own teammates.

Ben Dixon played 203 AFL games for Hawthorn from 1997-2007. This article was written as a requirement of the AFL/AFLPA Level 2 Coaching Course. CE

FOCAL POINT: St Kilda captain Nick Riewoldt is one of the best centre half-forwards in the AFL.



POSITIONAL PLAY

Speed in Defence

BY SEAN WELLMAN

The game of Australian Football (in the AFL) is faster than ever before and the speed of the game continues to grow each year. Players are getting faster, stronger and with increased rotations the speed of the players is maintained throughout an AFL game. AFL teams averaged 30 rotations in 2004. Teams now average 80 – an increase of more than 250 per cent. In the past year alone rotations have increased more than 30 per cent. Speed is required all over the ground but when building a defence it has never been more paramount.

In the past it has always been more difficult to play in the midfield and up forward than it has in defence. These players require more 'tricks' to win the ball at congested stoppages and to find space and manufacture a goal in a flooded forward line. They are expected to make the play. However, the balance is shifting.

With the stricter interpretation of new rules in the marking contest (i.e. hands in the back/chopping of arms), it is now more difficult than ever to play in defence. If you are second to the ball in a marking contest the odds say your opponent marks or receives a free kick for an infringement. In defence this means an opposition shot at goal. Rather than whinge about the rules, defences have to adjust. One of the major adjustments is developing players in defence with elite leg speed. They don't need to be the most talented or have the most tricks, but speed allows them to be in the contest. In defence this is known as closing speed where a forward has 'split' on a defender only to see this gap disappear. Speed is so forgiving in defence.

Teams in the AFL are trying to move the ball more quickly than ever. Speed of ball movement allows teams to get the ball inside their forward 50 quickly and beat the opposition trying to get numbers back. Since 2002 the average ratio of long kicks to short kicks has changed significantly. In 2002 this ratio was 1:1, with the amount of long kicks equal to short kicks. In 2008 this ratio is 1:2 - twice as many short kicks compared as long kicks. As a result, the average number of uncontested marks taken by a side in a game has also increased from 65 to 95. Teams are more reluctant to kick long to a contest and want to move the ball quickly to an uncontested situation. A team's best chance of scoring is to move the ball quickly into its forward line for an uncontested mark and shot at goal. To get an uncontested mark, forwards need a gap on their direct opponent. Moving the ball quickly means forwards are able to work in more space. This space means defenders who lack leg speed are vulnerable.

Speed in defence not only allows players to beat their direct opponent. Speed allows players the confidence to leave their direct opponent and help out a teammate and create a two-on-one situation. How often have we seen Dustin Fletcher and Matthew Scarlett leave their man and, as a third man, intercept an opposition

DEFENSIVE DASH: Sydney Swans half-back Rhyce Shaw uses his pace to run off his Brisbane Lions opponent and set up another Swans attack.



‘WHEN BUILDING A DEFENCE SPEED HAS NEVER BEEN MORE PARAMOUNT’

attack by marking or spoiling. They are not only great decision makers but have great leg speed to complement their decisions. These players rarely get caught out leaving their man as they always get to the contest. Having players like Scarlett and Fletcher effectively means their teams are playing with seven defenders.

The latest Global Positioning Data (GPS) data shows players in defence sprint more than 100 times a game. Although rotations have increased, most of these rotations occur in the midfield followed by the forward line, with the least rotations in defence. This means defenders generally play more game time than their direct opponents. This is where a player's ability to repeat his top speed is crucial. A defender who can soak up big game time and continually repeat his top speed means will always be in the contest. Oppositions know players' strengths and weaknesses, including their physical capabilities. If a player in defence lacks certain physical attributes compared to his direct opponent, attempts will be made to exploit this. The first thing oppositions will try to expose is lack of leg speed in defence. This includes a player's ability to sustain his speed late in games.

A great defence also must have players with flexibility. Forward lines are changing more than ever. The Western Bulldogs have a smaller/mobile forward line with Will Minson their only

genuine tall. The Kangaroos can have up to four tall forwards - Petrie/Hale/Thompson/Jones. An opposition forward line can change instantly within a game and will go from a tall to small and vice versa to try to expose opposition defences. A good defence with flexibility needs six-seven defenders to be able to adapt to different forward lines. A classic example is Dale Morris who the Bulldogs can play on Matthew Pavlich but just as happily match up with Jeff Farmer. Harry O'Brien at Collingwood is another example. He can play on a marking forward like Scott Lucas one week and a ground-level player like Cyril Rioli the next.

Geelong's regular back six has no player under 185cm; they can all play tall and small. It is the most flexible defence in the AFL, able to adapt to any forward line. This means rather than be dictated to by opposition forward lines; Geelong's defence keeps its shape and is not match-up driven. They are never dictated to by opposition forward set ups. Keeping their shape allows Scarlett to remain deep and Harley high regardless of where the opposition forwards set up. With flexibility comes a settled defence that shows the cohesion of playing years of football together.

When looking to the future, players with speed and flexibility are key ingredients when building a defence. These ingredients will give you a settled defence able to match up successfully on all opposition forward lines.

Sean Wellman is an assistant coach at Melbourne. This article was written as part of the requirements of the AFL High Performance Coaching Course **CE**

YOU BEAUTY: North Melbourne's Aaron Edwards showcases one of Australian Football's most spectacular features – the pack mark.



From the Ice Rink to the **Footy** Field

This article is written by Canadian **Chris Donahoe**, who has never seen a live game of Australian Football. As coaches, we sometimes forget about the backgrounds of players in our teams. In this series of articles it is hoped that some of the issues confronting newcomers to our game can be uncovered and hopefully provide us with the knowledge and patience required to address these issues.

My first Australian Football experience came as a child watching the international sports-bloopers reel on our national sports channel. Every Saturday afternoon, Canadians would be introduced to the zany antics of obscure sports from around the world, complete with over-dubbed circus music. Australian Football could be found just after the segment on lawn-mower racing and before the segment on Indian elephant polo. It was commonly (and comically) referred to as 'No-Rules Football'. We saw shocking clips of brutality, unbelievable kicks and thin men in white outfits running onto the field, only to stop suddenly and point stiffly with both index fingers as if shooting imaginary guns from their hips.

My second experience of footy came during my final years of public school. Our school was proud to host an Australian exchange student who introduced the game to our physical education class. I distinctly remember the strange little red ball and the awe of watching him bounce the oblong object like a basketball. Running top-speed down the field, he punch-passed and kicked the ball to pretend teammates. The class then proceeded to imitate him clumsily with American footballs and a resounding frustration. Needless to say, that was the first and final day exercising our Aussie-Rules skills.

My third, and most recent, experience came after I met a true-blue Victorian girl with a passion for the game. We spent the last few months in Canada engaged in an unfair comparison between ice hockey and footy. I showed her the best hockey has to offer with the NHL's Stanley Cup playoffs, while she could only show me some AFL highlight tapes on YouTube. Despite having never been to a footy game, or Australia for that matter, our discussions revealed some striking parallels that I believe make the games very similar in the way they are played and coached.

Late in the second period of game five in the Stanley Cup finals this year, Pittsburgh Penguins power-forward Ryan Malone took a puck to the face, breaking his nose (for the second time in the series!) and creating a slice along his cheek that required many stitches. He skated off the ice with a face full of blood, but returned for the start of the third period and played the rest of the game (which included three sudden-death overtime periods and ended in a win to force another game in the best-of-seven series). This level of physical dedication to the team, the game and to their role as an athlete is something that does not exist in all sports. When these values are instilled in players, they become greater individuals both on and off the field.

Even with my limited experience, it is obvious that Australian Football's best and fairest players exemplify the fundamentals of fair-play, good sportsmanship and pride in the game and their contribution to it. While the Australian experience of ice hockey is probably quite similar to my initial experiences with footy – toothless hooligans scarring and maiming each other under the pretence of organised sport – it's clear that there's more to both games than meets the eye. Although I will miss hockey, it has only taken a few short clips on the internet to convince me that the transition to watching footy will be almost seamless and thoroughly enjoyable. **CE**

2009 AFL coaching resources

The Coach: The Official AFL Level 1 Coaching Manual



Players are often asked "Who is your coach, and what is he/she like?" The Coach sets out standards and guidelines that give clear answers to all involved about how coaches should conduct their teams and themselves.

You will gain a greater understanding of tactics and their implementation, injury prevention and how to plan and adapt training sessions specifically to the needs of your squad. Following this easy to read book will help you become a better planner and organiser and ultimately a better coach. This is the standard text provided for the AFL Level 1 Senior coaching course
RRP: \$13.75 (GST incl.)

AFL Youth Coaching Manual



The AFL Youth Coaching Manual is a must have resource for anyone coach of footballers in the 13 – 17 years age group. The manual provides teaching information for the main skills and tactics of the game and advises coaches

on the important social and interpersonal skills that are critical in effective interaction with footballers of this age. Other issues related to youth welfare in football are also presented in this very informative manual.
RRP: \$27.50 (GST incl.)

AFL Junior Coaching Manual



The AFL Junior Coaching Manual is for coaches, coordinators, participants and parents in the NAB AFL Auskick Program. It is an essential text for all coaches working with primary school aged

children in AFL Auskick Centres, Primary schools and junior clubs. It is a resource that people will find invaluable when setting out to coach children in our great game. It provides a sequential model for the development of Australian Football skills and includes lesson cards for the various age groups and skill levels and hundreds of practice activities. It also provides skill games and easy to follow hints on all aspects of children's participation in the game.
RRP: \$27.50 (GST incl.)

Drills & Skills DAVID WHEADON



The most common question we are asked by coaches is "Do you have any drills you can send?" or "What are the latest drills used in the AFL?" While there are many sources of drills and practice activities, in this third edition of Drills &

Skills in Australian Football, David Wheadon has presented a comprehensive selection of drills and practices related to the key aspects of the modern game. The book contains 163 specific drills, ranging from very simple to quite complex practices which will challenge the highest level players, categorised in different areas of the game.

RRP: \$25.00 (GST incl.)

Skills Of Australian Football

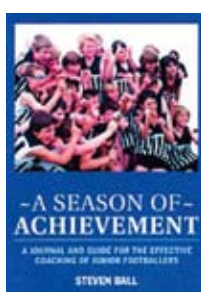


Every week over the football season we marvel at how today's AFL stars have become so proficient in the execution of their skills. These are gifted athletes but their breath-taking skill hasn't happened by accident – this is the

result of years of toil and sweat on the training track. This book analyses the skills of the game individually as the stars show how it is done and explain how they become so good. Some of the best in the business strut their stuff including Gary Ablett, Matthew Richardson, Jonathan Brown, Cameron Ling, Dean Cox, Brent Harvey, Lenny Hayes and many others.

RRP: \$22.00 (GST incl.)

A Season of Achievement



All footballers start their journey in community clubs, usually moving from AFL Auskick to playing under age football and often being coached by a parent of someone in the team. Steven Ball has written about part of the journey, through coaching Moonee

Valley under 12s. The story, which follows the progress of the team throughout the season, contains valuable reflections and lessons for all coaches and parents of young players and is a good read for players themselves. It contains a series of recommendations about aspects of coaching, including managing parental expectations, player development, team culture, addressing players and issues to discuss with junior teams.

RRP: \$19.80 (GST incl.)

Great Skills Great Players [DVD]



The fundamentals of Australian Football are performed by some of the greats of the game in a step by step visual presentation demonstrating all the basic skills. This includes kicking,

marking handballing, bouncing, ruckwork, evasion, tackling, bumping, etc. It is presented by leading AFL players with an introduction and some handy tips from Robert "Dipper" Dipierdomenico. It presents high quality models of all the main skills of game as performed by some of the best exponents playing today. Vision during games and skill development demonstrations emphasis the key teaching points for each skill.

RRP: \$10.00 (GST incl.)

AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct



The AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct booklet outlines the accepted behaviour of coaches in regards to safety, legal and behavioural aspects of football. By accepting this Code, coaches are displaying a commitment to support minimum

standards of good coaching and the concepts of responsibility, competence and propriety within coaching. Coaches are increasingly becoming aware of the Code of Conduct and how to act accordingly. This booklet also outlines the administrative procedures which have been put in place to work through breaches of the code. **FREE**

AFL Auskick Interactive Coaching CD ROM

The AFL Auskick Interactive Coaching CD ROM is an ideal teaching tool for coaches, teachers and parents of primary school-aged children. The CD ROM provides a range of skill games and activities for younger children in their formative years. It also provides excellent vision of AFL players demonstrating the skills while emphasising key coaching points. It includes a broad range of skill drills to assist in planning effective practice sessions for children.

RRP: \$5.50 (GST incl.)



Ruck Work [DVD]

Simon Madden is recognised as one of the greatest ruckmen of all time following his record of 378 games for Essendon including two premierships. In this video he outlines how to play this position at, around the ground and during boundary throw-ins. Using Kangaroos and Carlton champion Corey McKernan, Madden explains ruckwork in terms that relate to all ages and ability levels.

RRP: \$10.00 (GST incl.)

Kick Left, Kick Right [DVD]

Kicking is the predominant skill in Australian Football ("Kicking is King") and therefore good instruction is vital to develop it. This video, hosted by Gary Lyon, outlines the key teaching points, error detection methods and remedial activities to develop kicking skills, particularly in young players. Exciting AFL highlights are used to reinforce the importance of this skill. It features AFL greats Matthew Lloyd, Leigh Colbert, Shannon Grant and Ben Graham

RRP: \$10.00 (GST incl.)

Laws of Australian Football [DVD]

The Laws of the Game are fully explained and illustrated with video examples of the major decisions made by field umpires. There is also a focus on the rule changes and new interpretations of existing rules to be applied in 2009. This resource, which is used to coach umpires and educate AFL clubs and the media, is a valuable resource for all coaches and clubs. It will assist coaches to reduce errors made by players not knowing or understanding the rules.

RRP: \$5.50 (GST incl.)

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Kick Left, Kick Right (1998) 20 mins	9.09	.91	\$10.00				
Great Skills Great Players DVD	9.09	.91	\$10.00				
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MANUALS/CD ROM							
Skills of Australian Football (NEW)	20.00	2.00	\$22.00				
AFL Level 1 Coaches Manual "The Coach"	12.50	1.25	\$13.75				
AFL Junior Coaching Manual	25.00	2.50	\$27.50				
AFL Youth Coaching Manual	25.00	2.50	\$27.50				
A Season of Achievement	18.00	1.80	\$19.80				
Drills & Skills – David Wheadon	22.73	2.27	\$25.00				
2009 National Coaching Conference Manual	30.00	3.00	\$33.00				
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