



HOW TO PLAY

ACCURACY IS THE GOAL

Daniel Bradshaw is doing something right with his kicking for goal, shooting at just over 72 per cent in 2008. He tells **Howard Kotton** why.

A chat with club psychologist Phil Jauncey about eight years ago has had a positive effect on Daniel Bradshaw's mindset when kicking for goal.

In his early days with the Brisbane Lions, Bradshaw would go back, pull up his socks and think about the shot for a few seconds before walking in to kick. That changed after the chat with Jauncey.

"He said to me that with my personality I'm probably not somebody who should go back and think about it too much," Bradshaw said. "I just try to get back, take a couple of deep breaths, lean forward and pretty much get straight into it."

Bradshaw has a routine which he tries to follow and it is working for him this season, with 55.21 from 14 games.

"I work out where the mark is, so I get back far enough from that," Bradshaw said. "I go back about 15-20 metres, then I count six steps as I'm walking in and get a bit of momentum up."

"I have a bit of a jog in, so I've got my body going forward. I try to look at something through the goal, like someone's hat, and kick towards that."

"I'm probably more relaxed now. When you first start out, you get more nervous if you miss a couple

PART 10 OF A SERIES - GOALKICKING

Kicking for goal is one of the most important skills that a footballer can master. If a player can have a consistent routine, this will help in his ability to kick successfully.

of shots. Goalkicking is a bit fickle. Some weeks you might kick five or six straight, and the next week you might kick 1.5."

Bradshaw uses the drop punt and tries to kick the ball the same way, regardless of whether he is close to goal or a long way out.

"Sometimes when you're close in, you just try to poke it through and don't kick through the ball," he said. "I try to make sure I've got my head over the ball and watch the footy right on to my boot."

Bradshaw said he did not do a lot of goalkicking at training. "I don't overdo it," he said. "I might have five or six shots after training. I try to make sure the shots I do have go through."

Bradshaw was a keen Hawthorn supporter as a youngster and champion spearhead Jason Dunstall was his favourite player. He was influenced by the goalkicking techniques of Dunstall and Geelong legend Gary Ablett.

"They both had relaxed styles," Bradshaw said. "Jason Dunstall had a pretty simple technique." ■

1 PREPARATION

Bradshaw is facing directly towards the goal and has picked out a target through the goals. He starts his approach from well behind the mark, in a relaxed manner. He holds the ball with both hands evenly placed down the side of the ball and fingers comfortably spread.

2 APPROACH

Bradshaw is accelerating his run-up in preparation to kick, continuing in a straight line towards the goals. He stays relaxed and avoids excessive movements of the ball, aligning it over his kicking leg in the last stride. To assist in keeping it still, the ball should be held over the kicking leg.

3 RELEASE

Bradshaw is watching the ball and has taken a typical long last stride before the kick, "leaving his kicking leg behind". His non-guiding (left) hand has come off the front of the ball and is swinging up and back to assist with balance. His right hand has stayed on the ball for as long as possible to control its path and positioning.

4 IMPACT

Bradshaw's head is perfectly positioned over his support leg, which is firmly planted and bracing his body. His body is square to the goals and balanced and is driving forward and up into the kick. His ankle and foot are fully extended and stiff through impact and his toes are pointing towards the target.

5 FOLLOW THROUGH

Bradshaw has watched the ball closely and his head has remained still. He has followed through fully, with his kicking leg continuing to extend towards the target. The follow through reflects what has gone into the kick and a poor one may result in inaccurate kicking, less distance or possibly injury.

● Technical advice in this series courtesy of the AFL Development Department.

