



## FOOTBALL TERMINOLOGY

Australian Football sometimes seems like a complicated game with a lot of rules and a lot of different words and terminologies with different meanings. Below are some commonly used words or phrases used by coaches.

**Stoppage** a stoppage is either a boundary throw-in or a ball-up. It's an opportunity for our midfielders to set up effectively and find their man. When we win the ball from the stoppage it means we get the clearance.

**Feed back** this means we feed a handball backwards before we go forwards. We 'feed back' to clear congestion and give us more time to make the correct decision going forward. For this to work effectively you have to have a player backwards of the stoppage or contest.

**Switch** to switch means to 'switch the play'. Basically it means going backwards or sideways across the ground to open up the space on the ground in order to counter-attack. We commonly switch the ball in the defensive half. We can switch into the corridor or switch to use the 'fat side.'

**Fat side** the 'fat side' is the side of the oval that the play isn't. So if the play is on the right wing then the fat side is the left wing. To get to the 'fat side' we need to switch the play across the ground.

**Contested possession** a contested possession is when you win the ball at a contest. Usually contested possessions are quick kicks forward out of a pack or quick handballs to a teammate running past the contest. It means going into a pack of players and getting the ball or 'winning your own ball' (*AFL players to watch include Joel Selwood, Matt Priddis or Tom Liberatore*)

**Uncontested possession** an uncontested possession is when you are all on your own and have space from your opponent. Usually quick players who are good runners win a lot of uncontested possessions. It could be gathering a loose ball under no pressure or receiving a quick handball from a teammate in a contest (*AFL players to watch include Stephen Hill or Lewis Jetta*)

**Good on the inside** being 'good on the inside' means being able to consistently win contested possessions.

**Breaking the lines** to 'break the lines' means being able to carry the ball over one or more lines. This is most commonly used for defenders. So if you are playing in a back pocket and can run and carry the ball out of the backline and past the centre line, you have broken two lines. You have run through the half-back line and past the centre line.

**Don't go short to a 50/50 contest** a 50/50 contest is when you have a teammate and their opponent one on one. It's ok to kick to a 50/50 contest if it's a long kick into the forward line. We should never kick to a 50/50 contest in our backline or in the corridor and shouldn't kick it short to a 50/50 contest.

**Front and centre / Front and square** this means being at the front and centre of a marking contest. If you are a midfielder or a small forward you should be aiming to get to and be front and square of as many marking contests as possible. If your teammate tries to mark the ball and gets spoiled, 9 times out of 10 the ball will come to the front of the contest.

**Spoil wide** in the defensive half you should always be looking to spoil wide to the boundaries. We spoil wide so that it's easier to get the ball towards the boundary if we are under pressure. If we spoil towards the middle of the ground, it gives the opposition a better chance to kick a goal. If possible we should never spoil into the corridor or towards the middle of the ground.

**Take first option** taking the first option means if you have a teammate free or in a better position you should handball or kick it to them without even thinking.

**Use the corridor** if we draw an imaginary line from the point posts at one end of the ground to the point posts at the other end of the ground the area in the middle is called the corridor. Using the corridor is usually the best way to score but we should only kick it to a teammate in the corridor if they are completely free with no opposition around them. Teams are dangerous when they use the corridor so we want to use it effectively but want to stop the opposition from using it.



**Numbers at the contest** this means out numbering the opposition at a contest. We want teammates around to shepherd, tackle and especially talk! This gives us the best chance to win the ball at contests.

**Push back into defence** this is for midfielders and ruckman. We want our ruck and midfielders to work as hard as possible to run in to our defensive area to help out the defenders. We want to fill the space in our backline so it makes it really hard for the opposition to score. This will also help us get numbers to the contest in the backline.

**Be proactive** this means that we want to make a move before our opponent. E.g. if we are playing in the forward line we want to always be in front and be the first to move. In the midfield it means we want to be the player first to the ball.

**Don't be reactive** being reactive means that we let our opponent make the first move e.g. if our forwards are behind at a contest it means they have been reactive. At a ball up or boundary throw in, if you're a midfielder and your opponent is the player on the move and gets to the ball first, that's being reactive. Be proactive and be the first one to move.

**Kick long down the line** if we are under pressure in the backline we should always kick it long down the boundary line. We should only switch the play if we have time and have a free man. If we don't have that time or don't have a free man, we need to kick it as long down the boundary line as possible. If we can't mark the ball, then every effort should be made to get the ball over the boundary and then re-group.

**Team sacrifice** these are the little things that make it easier for your teammates. Things such as shepherding for your teammate, blocking in the forward line or picking up your teammates opponent because he is in a dangerous spot. These are the things that will help us be successful as a team. These things represent 'WE' not 'ME'.



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**Work hard both ways** for midfielders this means working back into defence to help the backline but then working hard to run forward and get possession to kick into our forward line. We don't want to see midfielders just standing in the middle of the ground. They need to work really hard to run back and forward.

**Blocking in the forward line** this is a 'team sacrifice'. It means that when the ball is coming into our forward line you stand in front of one of your teammate's opponents and try to block him so that your teammate can lead at the ball and mark it under less pressure. It shows a great team ethic and unselfishness. It's not whether you kick a goal, it's whether the team kicks a goal.

**Repeat efforts** this means 2nd, 3rd and 4th efforts. It shows great leadership and mental strength to never give up. It might mean being tackled then getting up and tackling someone else then getting up and smothering the ball. It means never being beaten!

**Cover the most dangerous player** this means you go and pick up an opponent, even if he is not the man you are playing on. Usually the most dangerous player is the player closest to goal. This needs a lot of talk to make sure you and your teammates know who to pick up. For example if you are on your man and you are both 60 metres from their goal and there is a loose opposition player 40 metres from goal, you should go to that man and talk to one of your teammates to pick up your man.

**At different times throughout the program, and especially during games, you may hear coaches use some of the sayings above. Try to understand them as best as possible so that you don't get confused. All of the above sayings will be used more as you go through your football journey, so having a good knowledge of them will help you in the long run.**

*Remember to ask questions if you are not sure!*

