



# HOW TO PLAY

## CLEAN WITH THE HANDS

Renowned Brisbane Lions ball handler Luke Power has some tips on picking up the footy. **By Howard Kotton.**

**T**wo hands for beginners – that's Brisbane Lions co-captain Luke Power's simple advice when picking up the footy.

But there are times in a game when the sure ball handler prefers the one-handed pick-up.

"If the ball is lying still, it's probably quicker to pick it up with one hand," Power said. "But if the ball is rolling at pace, it's difficult to pick it up with one hand, so you've probably got to go with two hands.

"It depends if it's rolling towards you or away from you. If it's rolling away, you generally would pick it up with two hands.

"Basically, you've got to keep your eyes on the ball and keep your head as close to it as possible. If your head is further away, it is difficult to take the ball at one-touch."

Power estimated he would spend about two hours a week practising his ground-ball skills.

"I'm small, so I'm not going to be getting too much of my footy in the air," the 179cm midfielder said.

The triple premiership player said players worked on their one-handed and two-handed pick-ups at training.

"I think players are so skilful now that they're able to do more things," he said. "I think players practise different skills now because the game is a lot quicker."

Power said young players should handle the ball as often as they can.

### PART 11 – ONE-HANDED PICK-UP

A one-handed pick-up is normally used only when the ball is still or moving slowly. A two-handed pick-up is always safest in ensuring clean possession and is critical if the ball is moving, which is usually the case during a game.

"As a kid, I think you should be practising everything," he said. "When you're a kid, it's not even practice, it's just fun. You'll be kicking the ball along the ground and picking it up as much as possible."

Playing on pristine surfaces such as the MCG, Telstra Dome and the Gabba makes it easier to pick up the ball.

"We don't play on a bad surface now, all the surfaces are really, really good," he said. "It means the bounce of the ball is very honest."

Power has played alongside some of the best ball handlers in the competition, including Brownlow medallists Michael Voss, Simon Black and Jason Akermanis.

One player who has caught his eye with his elite ball-handling skills is Adelaide forward Jason Porplyzia. Power rates the star Crow the best one-touch player in the AFL.

"It's a pretty big wrap on a young bloke," the classy left-footer said. "He never fumbles and is very good below his knees." ■



#### 1 APPROACH

Power is focused on the ball as he runs towards it. He approaches the ball to one side to allow him to reach for it comfortably with his right hand. He is about to plant his right foot close to the ball and is beginning to lower his body to initiate the pick-up.

#### 2 CROUCH

He plants his right foot slightly behind and to the side of the ball, bends his right knee and lowers his right arm. His palm is open with his fingers pointing down and slightly spread ready to go under the ball. He keeps his body close to the ball and his head over it.

#### 3 SCOOP

The crouched Power scoops his right hand underneath the ball. While his right foot remains planted, his left leg continues to move forward. As his right hand reaches for the ball, his left arm extends up and outwards to help his balance.

#### 4 COMING UP

Staying focused on the ball and coming up from his crouched position, Power brings the ball up with his right hand while bringing his left hand across to ensure a strong hold.

#### 5 POSSESSION

Power grabs the football with both hands and is now able to lift his head and look for options. He carries the ball, ready to deliver by hand or foot.