

# CoachingEdge

Incorporating Coaching Update | VOLUME 23, No 2 December 2009

TESTING  
TIMES FOR  
KICKING



**Adam Simpson**  
Playing as  
a defensive  
midfielder

## Coaching young players

Fostering an environment in  
which youngsters can thrive



# CoachingEdge

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**COVER:** Geelong premiership coach Mark Thompson guided his side to its second premiership in three seasons in 2009, and in Media Watch on page 5 Travis Varcoe pays tribute to the role Thompson played in building his self-belief.

**RIGHT:** Recently retired North Melbourne star Adam Simpson explains the role he played as well as anyone in the AFL, the defensive midfield position, on page 12.



## Give yourself the Coaching Edge

**>** I hope you enjoyed the rebirth of our coaching magazine, which has attracted positive feedback. We hope you will continue to find the material interesting, thought-provoking and relevant.

Our second issue looks at junior coaching, cutting-edge football strategy and sports science and how to find the right head coach.

We interview Gary Brown, who has passionately coached at junior level for many years. Obviously, junior coaching does not require the elite professional approach espoused by Jeff Gieschen in our previous edition, but it still involves the considerable task of helping young players produce top performances, while giving each the opportunity to play and enjoy the game – a juggling act Gary has managed time and time again.

Regular features include 'From the ivory tower & beyond', which explores sports research emanating from higher learning institutes. In 'Mind Games', the mental challenge of goalkicking is investigated; wouldn't it be great if your team could put the ball through the sticks as routinely as Tiger Woods sinks putts? In this edition we also introduce a new section where articles in the media are examined and any underlying lessons for coaches explored.

Our Canadian import Chris Donahoe continues his journey to footy addiction with a humorous reflection on his first game of AFL football at Subiaco. There are also articles from contemporary football personalities, including recently retired North Melbourne great Adam Simpson outlining how to play as a midfield defender, Melbourne assistant coach Josh Mahoney discussing ways coaches can teach players to make structural on-field adjustments themselves during games, and AIS-AFL Academy High Performance Coach Jason McCartney explaining modern forward structures.

It is vital clubs get the process of selecting a head coach right. Wayne Goldsmith provides detailed guidelines to assist clubs in finding the coach that best fits their needs.

Many coaches at some stage or another have been daunted by the task of catering for a person with a disability. Andrew Hughes presents some ideas to enhance the inclusiveness of your programs.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and encourage you to send any feedback or suggestions on topics for future editions to [kdxlsports@bigpond.com](mailto:kdxlsports@bigpond.com).

**Ken Davis**  
Editor

### Coaching Edge

#### CREDITS

##### Publisher

Australian Football League  
GPO Box 1449  
Melbourne Vic 3001

##### Correspondence to:

Peter Romaniw  
Peter.Romaniw  
@afl.com.au

##### Managing Editor

Lawrie Woodman

##### Editor

Ken Davis

##### Assistant Editor

Brooke Davis

##### Contributors

Gary Brown  
Chris Donahoe  
Wayne Goldsmith  
Andrew Hughes  
Michael Lovett  
Josh Mahoney  
Jason McCartney  
Peter Ryan  
Adam Simpson  
John Turnbull

##### Design & Editorial

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**COACHING COURSE:** Newly appointed Greater Western Sydney coach Kevin Sheedy, pictured here receiving an honorary doctorate from Australian Catholic University (ACU), recently launched the ACU's undergraduate degree for coaches.



# University degree for football coaches

Coaches at all levels now have another avenue to fast-track their professional development.

BY **MICHAEL LOVETT**

**▶** In 2010, coaches at AFL clubs, state league clubs and those in the AFL talent pathway will be able to enrol in a university degree established to enhance their ability to work with elite athletes.

The undergraduate degree for coaches was recently launched by the Vice Chancellor of the Australian Catholic University (ACU) National, Professor Greg Craven, together with AFL Coaches' Association (AFLCA) president Kevin Sheedy and AFL Commission chairman Mike Fitzpatrick.

Professor Craven said the degree was innovative and he was pleased that ACU National could develop the course in partnership with the AFL and the AFLCA.

He said the partnership would enhance the AFL's and Australia's leadership role in the national and international professional development of coaches.

The course builds on the AFL Level 3 coaching course and coaches will progress from a diploma through an associate degree to a bachelor degree. Most of the course will be completed online over three or four years.

Sheedy – the former Essendon coach who was recently appointed the inaugural coach of the new Greater Western Sydney club – supported the professional development of coaches and said he believed the course would become an integral part of a coach's education program.

The AFLCA will financially assist coaches to undertake the course. Coaches will not only develop

their management skills and technical and tactical expertise to help them advance their football career, but these skills will also be transferable to other industries.

Leadership and ethics, talent development, organisational management, financial management, sport psychology, strategic planning and performance analyses are all covered in the degree.

The coach will 'major' in areas of management and performance – two key areas for coaching elite athletes.

ACU National has developed the course, working closely with the AFLCA and the AFL.

Danny Frawley and Paul Armstrong from the AFLCA and Lawrie Woodman from the AFL, four-time AFL premiership coach David Parkin, Hawthorn assistant coach Chris Fagan and education consultant Neil Barras assisted ACU National School of Exercise Science staff and former St Kilda players, Paul Callery and Ross Smith, in the development of the course.

Professor Pauline Nugent, dean of the school's health science faculty, says the School of Exercise Science has first-class facilities and qualified staff to conduct the course.

Fitzpatrick, who, as a Rhodes Scholar, is no stranger to university education, welcomed the ACU National initiative. He said current research on coaching effectiveness at the AFL level highlighted the need for top-level coaching skills and first-class management skills and competencies. **CE**





**TEAM TALK:**  
Adelaide Crows coach Neil Craig encourages his players to give on-field feedback to each other, even if the message is critical and delivered forcefully.

# From the ivory tower & beyond

In this regular section, **Ken Davis** looks at relevant articles, research and pearls of wisdom in sports science and coaching.

## Developing a self-reliant athlete

Consider the following scenario painted by Catherine Sellers from the US Olympic Committee Coaching Group:

*Here you are, at the biggest event of your athlete's career and you can't even get close enough to talk! You are always right there for your athlete. Every problem the athlete has they look to you for the correction. Your athlete looks frightened and almost confused. You see them searching for you and you are yelling out to them, so much that everyone that hears you stares...*

Sellers then outlines five tips that can be used before competition to develop a self-reliant athlete:

- Don't become too analytical – if they can remember three things that you tell them to do, that is amazing.
- Have them describe what happened, instead of you telling them what happened. If they didn't like what happened, ask them what they would do differently – don't accept, "I dunno."
- Design practices so you don't repeat the same skill over and over again. Make it random. If you are working on three plays, mix it up – do one twice, then the third one, then the second one. The variation makes the athlete think like they would in a game.
- Stop workouts and ask them questions. "How did it feel? I noticed this happened, why do you think that is?"
- Don't give constant feedback – tell them what the purpose of the workout is, then let them work on it. Let them experiment and give constructive feedback after five, 10 or 15 tries.

**Editor's note:** Obviously, it is desirable to develop self-reliant athletes. Coaches need to give players the opportunity to make mistakes and make their own adjustments. Such an approach does rely on coaches stepping back a little.

## Drinking alcohol after competition

The author of a new study on alcohol and performance, Matt Barnes, puts it simply: "If you're there to perform, you shouldn't be drinking alcohol."

Barnes, a BSc Honours candidate at New Zealand's Massey University, tested recreational sportsmen's muscle performance after a strenuous resistance-training session, followed by either:

(a) a moderate amount of alcohol in juice, or (b) juice alone. Using specialist equipment at the Institute of Food, Nutrition and Human Health, the athletes' performances were measured 36 hours and 60 hours later.

"With the alcohol, the loss of muscle performance was far greater – nearly twice as much. Normally you would expect to see weakness or loss in performance after strenuous exercise but the alcohol really exacerbated that," Barnes said.

"This shows that if you drink even moderate levels of alcohol after you use your muscles strenuously, you are impairing your ability to recover, and I would say if you are serious about your sport, you shouldn't be drinking alcohol in the post-match or recovery period."

**Editor's note:** The 'train hard and play hard' philosophy that is embedded in our sporting culture suggests that as long as a player prepares well and looks after their body during the week it is OK to let their hair down after a game. But the message is clear – if they drink alcohol after a game it will impede their recovery. If they are serious about their performance, they should steer clear of alcohol.

## Pearls from some top guns

In a recent speech, former Australian cricket coach **John Buchanan** observed, "Great coaches 'redefine the game'." (Former English captain Douglas) Jardine did it with Bodyline, (former West Indies captain Clive) Lloyd did by using four fast bowlers."

**Editor's note:** Who has redefined football? Graham 'Polly' Farmer with his creative use of handball? Robert Walls with his 'huddle' at kick-ins? John Kennedy by isolating Peter Hudson in the forward line? Who will redefine it in the future?

Adelaide coach **Neil Craig**, when interviewed on television about Nathan Bassett giving his teammate Nathan Bock a big spray during a game, explained, "I encourage players to give feedback to each other especially when the game is slipping away."

Former Essendon coach **Kevin Sheedy's** 'Keys to Success', as outlined in his recent presentation at the Sports Medicine Conference in Bendigo, Victoria, comprise:

- If you don't change, your employer will change you.
- Chase knowledge – chase the edge.
- Attack your deficiencies – seek help.
- Achieving success is sometimes about what you don't see yet.
- Debate and challenge others.
- Young people can be successful – look at the Olympic Games.
- Always believe you can win – smother your group with positives. **CE**



# Media Watch

In this regular section **Ken Davis** reviews recent media reports, drawing relevant lessons for coaches from each.

## “Hot Pies provide crusty coach with fresh flavour”

**Greg Baum, *The Age*, September 21, 2007:**

In this article, Baum analyses Collingwood coach Mick Malthouse's transformation from a “dour, conservative coach (to) almost a risk-taking coach”.

Baum says Malthouse's new-look team had forced him to adopt a new style of play, similar to the attacking game plan, based on quick ball movement, that had been adopted by the Western Bulldogs, Geelong and North Melbourne.

Magpie president Eddie McGuire says he is not surprised by Malthouse's adaptability.

“Far from being the tyrant that people think, he is one of the most progressive, open and inclusive people you could work with ... but ultimately he has the courage of his convictions to be the boss of his department,” McGuire says.

**Editor's note:** The key lesson from this article is it's important to adapt to changes in the game and modify your game plans accordingly. It is also prudent to consult others when gathering information for all the decisions that have to be made in coaching.

## “The great listener”

**Michelangelo Rucci, *Herald Sun*, May 16, 2008:**

Melbourne coach Dean Bailey has had a tough initiation in AFL coaching that would test anyone's beliefs. However, Rucci says Bailey is a great listener who lives by the philosophy it is best to think before you speak.

Bailey says in this era of multiple assistant coaches listening is the key to his progress as a senior coach. “Listening is a great skill to have. I'll listen to what each assistant has to say... before I question them,” he says.

**Editor's note:** We are taught from an early age how to communicate our views on issues. Although we are told to listen, it is clear a lot of communication breaks down because the receiver of the information doesn't listen effectively. Often we are just waiting for our turn to talk, rather than actively listening. Coaches need to listen to their players, assistants, umpire's advisor and even supporters before formulating an informed opinion on key issues.

## “Media analysis needs to be informed”

**Mark Williams, *afl.com.au*, May 27, 2008:**

In this very persuasive article, Port Adelaide coach Mark Williams argues how important it is to keep up to date with the way the game is developing and implores the media, including past players, to continue to educate themselves about the latest trends.



**THOMPSON'S FAITH:** Geelong's Travis Varcoe (far left) says the support of coach Mark Thompson (centre) early in his career helped convince him he belonged in the AFL.

Williams says many ex-players quickly lose touch with the game and poses the following questions: “Do they really know what is happening at or being coached at training? Do they ever go to training? How would they cope within the scientific labs and computer-dominated learning environments that surround our players today?”

Williams advises anyone coaching outside the AFL who is contemplating a role as a football analyst to:

- Complete a Level 2 or 3 coaching course.
- Experience what it's like making on-the-spot decisions and dealing with a variety of players' needs.
- Continually seek out specialists in other sports or fields that are now vital in today's game; for example, experts in sports science, decision-making, fitness, GPS data and interchange rotations.

At Port Adelaide, Williams invites a number of past AFL coaches and coaches from other sports to talk to his assistants. He concludes football commentators would gain more respect if they committed to a continuous coaching education as part of their role.

**Editor's note:** As well as providing insights for those working in the media, Williams' message is also relevant for coaches. Like anyone wanting to be successful, coaches need to work to improve, constantly seeking new resources that can keep them abreast of the latest developments.

## “King of Elizabeth”

**Mike Sheahan, *Herald Sun*, May 9, 2009:**

In this feature on Travis Varcoe, Sheahan explores the development of the young Geelong forward from a shaky start to his AFL career to his impressive 2009 form. Varcoe says, “‘Bomber’ (Cats coach Mark Thompson) has put a lot of effort into me. He always used to tell me, ‘You belong in this team and you've got to get past this self-doubt.’ ... Sometimes I'd think that I didn't want to get in anyone's way ... When your confidence is up you feel like you can do anything.”

**Editor's note:** Many young players are thrown to the wolves early in their careers because some struggling clubs want to give their supporters hope by showcasing their ‘future’ – their most recent draft picks. But many 18-year-old draftees need time to develop and if their coaches don't appreciate this and give them the support they need, their confidence can be eroded to the point they never recover. **CE**

**SETTING THE TEST:**

New Collingwood assistant coach Nathan Buckley, an excellent kick during his celebrated playing career, devised a test to measure the kicking skills of this year's draft hopefuls.

A new test devised by Collingwood great **Nathan Buckley** to measure the kicking skills of the nation's elite juniors was successfully unveiled at this year's NAB AFL Draft Camp.

At this year's NAB AFL Draft Camp, held in October, players were tested for kicking accuracy for the first time. A new kicking skill test was included at the request of AFL coaches – led by Port Adelaide's Mark Williams – and recruiters, seeking more information about a player's ability to kick accurately on both sides of the body.

The test was developed by outgoing AIS-AFL Academy assistant coach and new Collingwood assistant Nathan Buckley after consultation with the 16 AFL clubs to ascertain what changes they wanted to the draft camp format.

"The feedback from the clubs and the research the AFL has done over the past 24 months has highlighted the need for trying to measure the kicking in some way; to add to what recruiters see in games, decision-making aspects, etcetera. This is a good measure of technique and result as much as anything," Buckley said.

"The kicking drill test provides analysis from a series of six kicks of varying distances for technique, speed of delivery, trajectory and accuracy. For the first time, AFL recruiters will leave the draft camp with more information about what is probably the most important skill in our game," he said.

Until this year, evaluations of kicking efficiency have been based on analysing players' performances in both state league and NAB AFL Under-18 Championships matches, with reference to statistics on the percentage of their kicks that were effective.

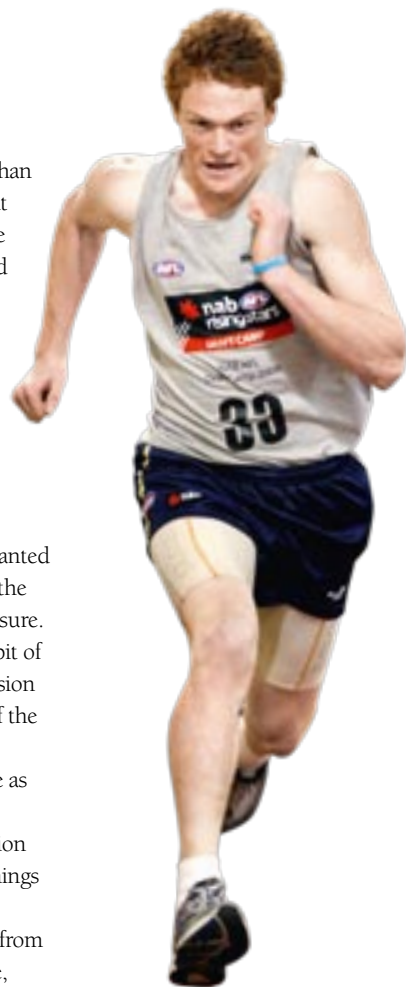
AFL Talent and International Manager Kevin Sheehan said the NAB AFL Draft Camp has been an important final element in identifying future AFL players for the past 15 years. "Traditionally, camp testing has focused on players' athletic prowess, including scores for speed over five, 10 and 20 metres, endurance with the shuttle run and 3km time trial, and vertical leap among the most highly regarded. The kicking test will add another element to the information the clubs receive in the weeks leading into the NAB AFL Draft," Sheehan said.

Buckley, who was widely regarded as one of the game's best kicks, said when devising the test he wanted to measure a player's speed, skills on both sides of the body and ability to make quick choices under pressure.

"For the kick test itself, we wanted to add a little bit of decision-making. Basically having to make that decision in your mind and that adjustment to know which of the six kicks you're going to do," Buckley said.

"We're trying to hold that information back as late as we can so there is an element of decision-making. There's an element of intensity with the time restriction (three seconds), and left and right-foot skills were things that needed to be considered.

"We film each of the footballers from behind and from the side so that clubs will get vision of the technique, their footwork around the cones, which is becoming even more important in the game today, and their ability to execute the skill under a deal of pressure and with people watching them as well."



**KICKING KING:** Gary Rohan (far right) this year topped the inaugural NAB AFL Draft Camp kicking test.



Buckley said the feedback he received from clubs was that they would like to see more resources put into kicking skills, defensive skills and managing the volume of football a junior plays.

“Kicking was highlighted first and foremost. To have a kick tested at draft camp is going to be crucial because it will send a message to a 12 or 13-year-old kid coming through that your kicking is going to be measured.”

The test was conducted at the AIS in Canberra on day three of this year's NAB AFL Draft Camp, in blustery conditions before a large crowd including Buckley, who was in Canberra as a 2009 AFL High Performance Coaching Course participant.

In an interview with *afl.com.au*, Buckley said he was happy with how the test worked despite the blustery conditions.

“Dealing with the conditions is part of being a good kick,” Buckley said.

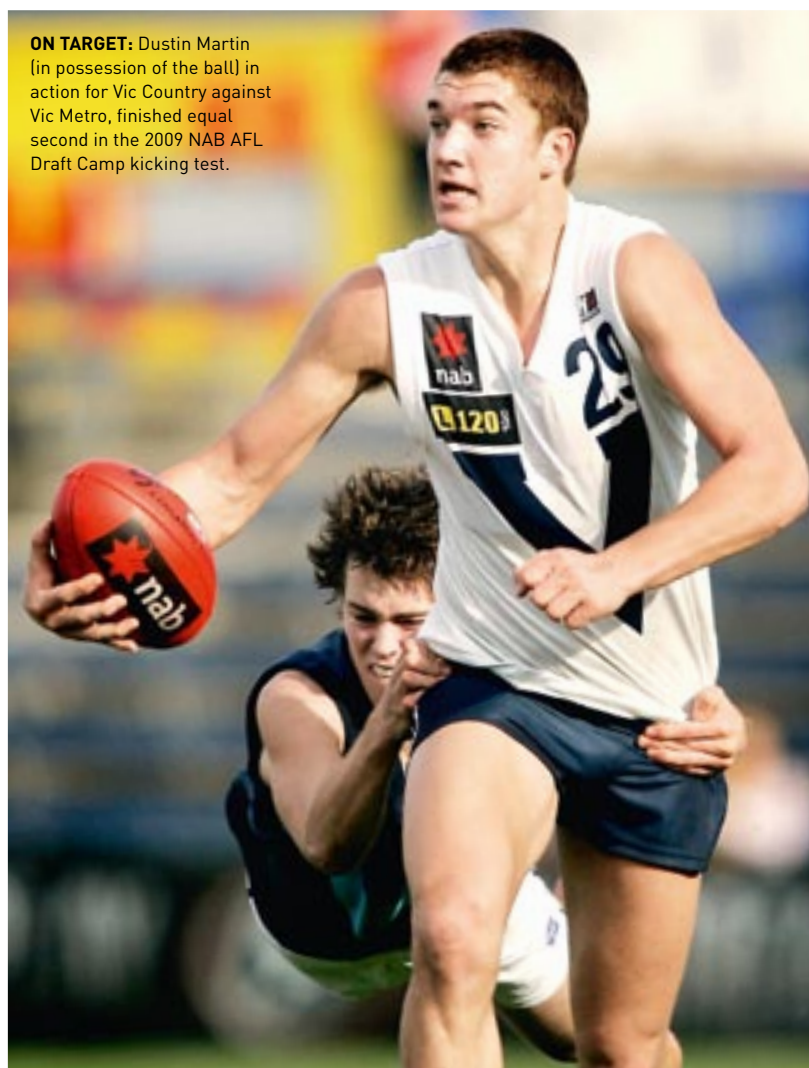
“The test is in its infancy and it was a good start.”

Buckley believes the test's major benefit will be seen in future years.

“The real benefit for me is for a 13 or 14-year-old who is thinking about an AFL career and wants to be the best he can be,” he said. “He knows now that in three or four years time he's going to be measured on his kicking and that's important. If I'm that kid, I know that I'm going to have to work on my kicking because its going to be judged when the recruiters have a look and decide whether I've got an AFL (future) or not.”

The AFL will review the effectiveness of the test and continue to improve on it over time.

The top 10 scorers in the test (overall percentage efficiency) at the camp are shown in the following table.



**ON TARGET:** Dustin Martin (in possession of the ball) in action for Vic Country against Vic Metro, finished equal second in the 2009 NAB AFL Draft Camp kicking test.

## 2009 Draft Camp Kicking Test - top 10 kicking efficiency

Name	Preferred foot	Score (out of 30)	% Efficiency
Gary Rohan (Geelong Falcons)	Right	23	77%
Justin Bollenhagen (South Adelaide)	Left	22	73%
Dustin Martin (Bendigo Pioneers)	Right	22	73%
Jordan Gysberts (Eastern Ranges)	Right	27	73%
Ryan Harwood (Tassie Mariners)	Right	22	73%
Simon Potts (North Adelaide)	Right	22	73%
Aaron Black (Peel Thunder)	Right	22	73%
Matthew Panos (Norwood)	Right	22	73%
Nicholas Winmar (Claremont)	Right	22	73%
Tom Harms (Sturt)	Right	21	70%
David Astbury (North Ballarat Rebels)	Right	21	70%

## THE AFL'S KICKING TEST

### Setting up the test

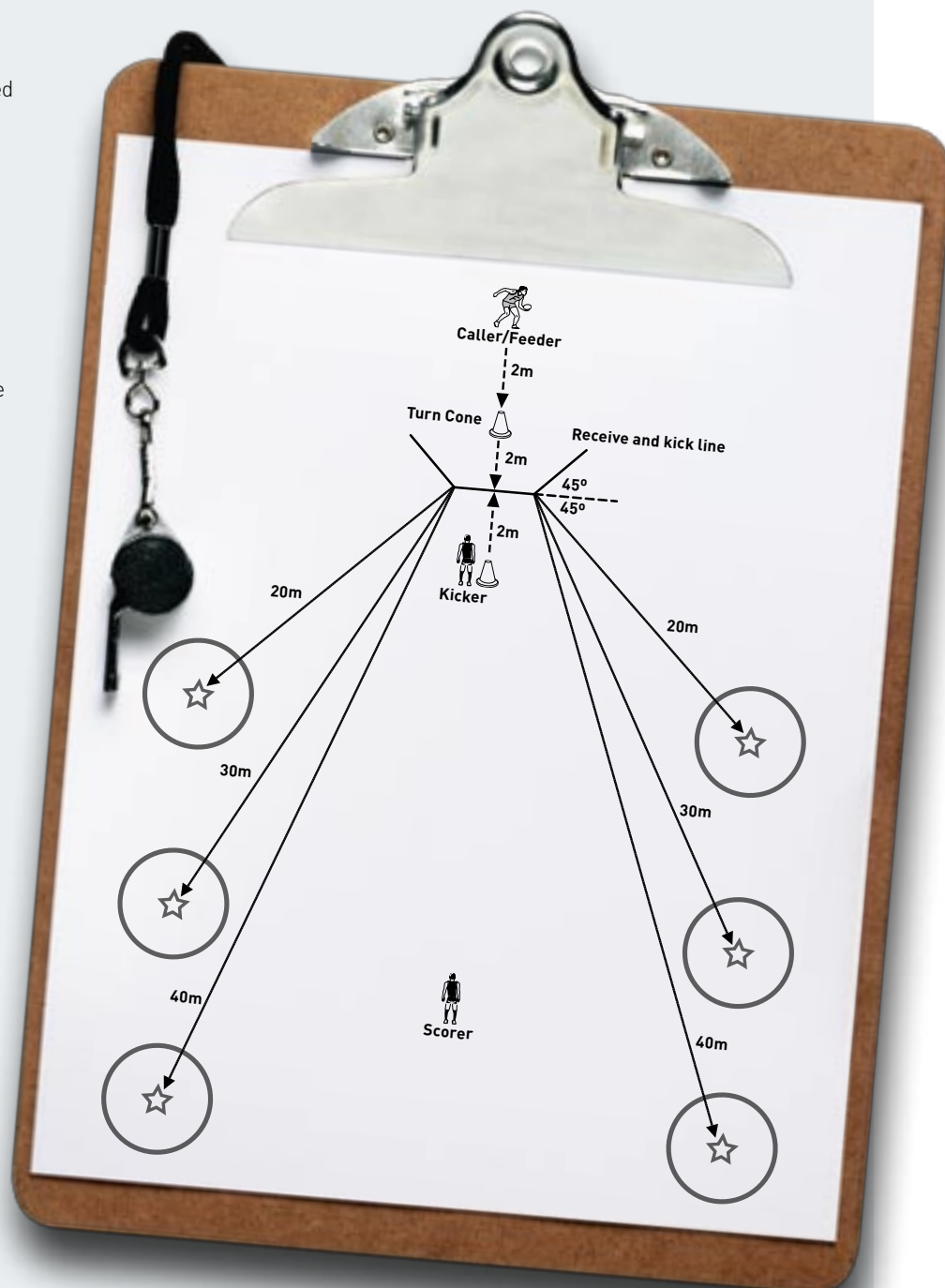
- The test should be conducted on a grassed oval and in boots.
- The receive and kick line is two metres across the front and two lines extend a further two metres at 45 degrees (as shown right).
- The kicker starts at a cone two metres from the kick line.
- The turn cone is two metres from the kick line.
- The caller/feeder, who calls and feeds the kicks, is a further two metres from the turn cone.
- The distances should be measured from the corner of the kick line:
  - 20m is measured at a 45-degree angle from corner to cone.
  - 30m is measured from corner to cone.
  - 40m is measured from corner to cone.
  - The 30m and 40m cones should line up as shown in the diagram.
- The target circles are four metres in diameter.
- The scorer should stand 35m from the kick line to best assess the result of each kick.

### Running the test

- The test comprises six kicks per player.
- Each player kicks to each of the respective targets to complete the test.
- The caller feeds the ball with the aim of the player receiving the ball on the kick line.
- The six calls made are short left, short right (20m), middle left, middle right (30m) and long left, long right (40m).
- Each kick is called randomly as the kicker receives the football.
- The kicker must receive the ball, hear the call, circle the turn cone and kick to the appropriate target.
- Each kick is timed from the moment the player leaves the starting cone to the point of contact for the kick. Each kick to be executed in under three seconds.
- There is little need for rest – each test should take around 90 seconds.

### Scoring the Test

- A target player stands in the centre of each of the target areas.
- Each kick will be judged on the following criteria:
  - Five points (excellent) – target didn't move, ball travelled quickly with low trajectory and perfect spin.



- Four points (very good) – target receives within one step of the cone, low trajectory and good spin.
- Three points (effective) – target receives with a foot inside circle, good trajectory and spin.
- Two points (ineffective) – target had to leave circle to mark ball, good trajectory and spin.
- One point (poor) – target unable to mark football, poor trajectory and spin.

- Any kick executed beyond the three-second timeframe will incur a one-point penalty.
- A 'floater' that hits the mark should be docked one point.
- The scorer will be the sole judge of each kick's ranking.
- The score recorder will assist the caller as the test takes place. **CE**



# SO YOU THINK YOU COULD BE A RECRUITER?

## EYE FOR TALENT:

Recruiting managers such as Melbourne's Barry Prendergast have an extensive check-list when they are assessing a prospective draftee.

The identifying and recruiting of the game's next big things has become an industry in itself.  
BY **JOHN TURNBULL**

 Daryl Jackson has made a significant contribution to Australian Football. Jackson, an Essendon supporter and the club's deputy chairman, captained the Dons' under-19s and played at reserves level. But he is better known as one of Australia's most respected architects.

Jackson's company designed and built the MCG's Great Southern Stand, described by an architecture critic as "a monumental piece of transformative architecture in itself", and was also behind the recent refurbishment of the Northern Stand.

In between these two projects, it designed and completed work on Docklands Stadium, and also worked on projects at Subiaco and the Gabba. That's a fair contribution!

In discussing his architectural approach, Jackson says: "Still the most important aspect in sports architecture is to give the majority of spectators the feeling that they are literally on the ground; that it is a mistake that they are not there, that they could have played, and it was just a terrible shame that their talent wasn't recognised early enough."

Jackson follows his statement with a knowing, self-deprecating chuckle. He may be drawing a long bow, but a related line of thinking can be applied to the way some fans reckon they can pick a genuine AFL player.

They believe that if they weren't doing their present line of work – as lawyers, plumbers, accountants,

## THESE WOULD-BE SCOUTS OFTEN END RECRUITING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LINE: "WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?"

teachers or nurses, for example – they could easily slot into the role of AFL club recruiting manager. They'd make sure not to draft some of the players picked for their team recently.

And they wouldn't have passed over Simon Black, who fell through to No. 31 in the 1997 draft. These would-be scouts often end recruiting discussions with the line: "What were they thinking?"

What makes a good recruiter? What do they look for?

The diagram on page 11 outlines potential predictors of talent for AFL level, and many of these traits can be measured during a season or at the post-season NAB AFL Draft Camp.

However, by far the most important aspect of talent assessment is the evaluation of match performances. Who makes the evaluations? The concept of intuition has recently emerged as a legitimate subject of scientific inquiry.

This study of intuition has important ramifications for educational, personal, medical and managerial decision-making and is acquired through experience and learning and relies on pattern recognition processes, 'gut feel' and 'hunches'.

It is proposed that knowledge is developed and acquired – at AFL recruiting and talent identification level – through the following:

- Playing football – at a high level (AFL or state league at least).
- Coaching (not just assisting) at senior youth or adult level, not the local under-12s.
- Dealing extensively with draft-age players – those who would qualify include secondary school teachers or tertiary instructors or educators, police or social workers and, of course, coaches.
- 'Street smarts'.

A proposed list of four criteria for potential recruiters appears left. How many spectators sitting in Jackson's MCG stands and other grounds around the country meet at least three of these four criteria? How many club recruiting managers would qualify?

In 2004, I carried out a survey of AFL recruiting managers and their roles and responsibilities. Then, as now, more than half the managers had not fulfilled the playing criteria.

Additionally, at least half had not coached and dealt with the vagaries of player performance, personality and contribution. As an aside, my view is that AFL clubs, in conjunction with the AFL Players' Association, should identify AFL players on the verge of retirement who they consider to be potential recruiters and plan an educational, coaching and training program to encourage and develop prospective recruiters.

Each AFL club has a recruiting network ranging from four to 25 staff. In 1998, clubs averaged about 19 staff (practically all part-time).

In 2000, this number dropped to 15 and by 2004 it was 10. In 2004, only three AFL clubs had a full-time assistant to the recruiting manager but all clubs had a staff member who could assist with video analysis. Five years on, every club has at least two full-time recruiting staff.

The Western Bulldogs, at the instigation of their general manager of football, James Fantasia (who helped develop the current Adelaide list), poached Adrian Caruso from Champion Data and so led the way working through the enormous volume of data and match vision now available to all clubs.

His counterpart at Melbourne, Darren Farrugia, outlines how Champion Data provides match vision on hard-drive systems for more than 300 matches involving draft-age players each season.

Every player in each match is "coded" for match involvements, with the system able to quickly retrieve up to 50 match "transactions" per player per match for assessment. As David Parkin has acknowledged: "The system of football recruitment is much more sophisticated than scouts and recruiting managers – more sophisticated even than recruiting methods of slick corporations."

But there is a huge discrepancy in the resources available and the recruiting budgets between, say, Collingwood and clubs unable to spend as freely.

In 2006, the Magpies spent \$787,000 on recruiting, while Carlton, Melbourne, St Kilda and Richmond each spent less than \$232,000. Collingwood spent \$1.23 million on recruiting and list management last year; the Western Bulldogs outlaid \$381,000.

Mark Stewart from RMIT University (and former coach of Olympic and world champion pole-vaulter Steve Hooker) recently completed an extensive study titled 'AFL Recruitment Prospectus' in collaboration with Champion Data.

Among a myriad of findings, Stewart and Champion concluded teams that spend the most money on their football department (excluding player payments) do better than they should, given the quality of their lists.

This includes not only money spent on recruiting but also on development coaches, welfare, fitness staff and medical issues.



**YOUNG AND TALENTED:** Club recruiters were quick to recognise Bryce Gibbs' many attributes, with Carlton picking him at No. 1 in 2006.

In recent years, Collingwood, for example, has spent 10 times more than a poorer Melbourne-based club.

From a recruiting point of view, this allows a club to employ more full-time staff, have a greater travel and accommodation budget, spend more on evaluating NSW and international scholarship prospects and conduct psychological and personal profiling.

The recent suggestion (outlined by AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou in an interview in the *AFL Record* in September and reported in *The Australian* on August 21) of a "revolutionary financing scheme" from the AFL to equalise costs is significant.

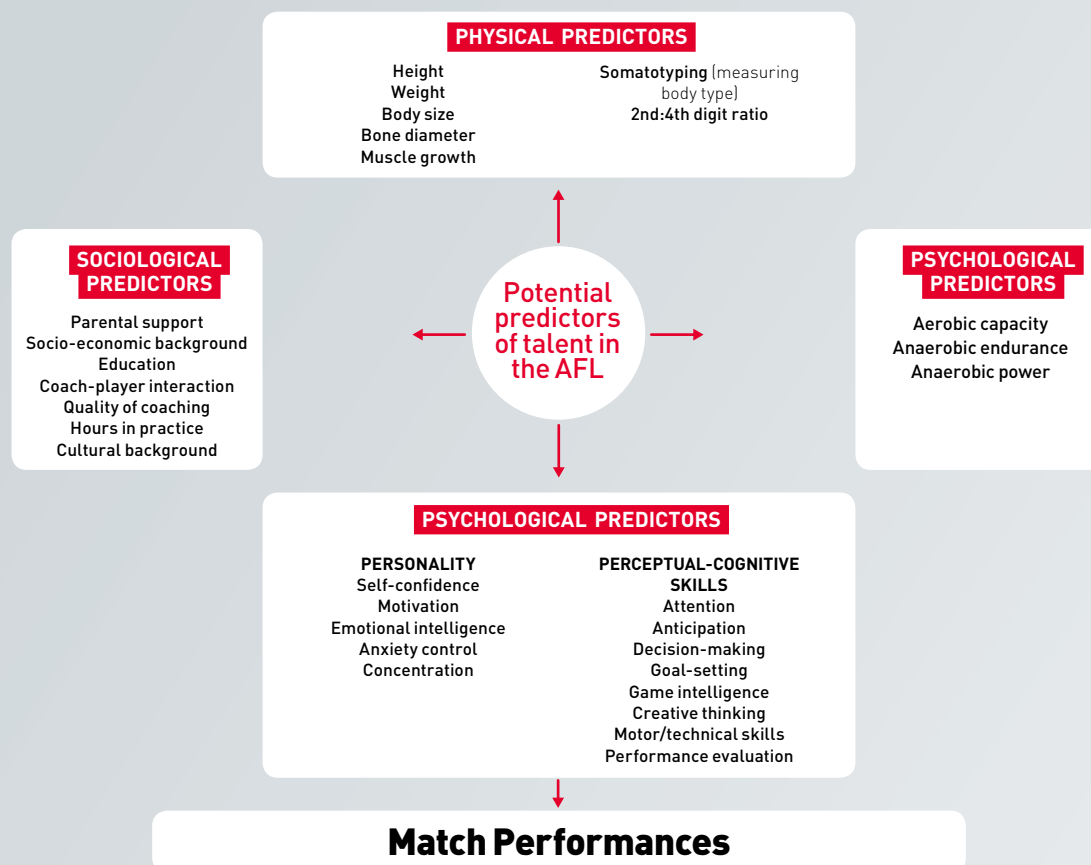
Why have some AFL clubs' recruiting budgets been so low?

It is accepted that each draft selection is a \$200,000 decision for each club (taking into account player salaries).

Many clubs are now realising that it is preferable to have full-time staff supported by technological staff, rather than enthusiastic part-time retirees or young fans who specialise in "blogging" about the game and who can provide dubious statistically driven information based on our version of the 'Moneyball' concept (a statistical system of analysis explained in Michael Lewis' book of the same name), but can't tell when a player short-steps to avoid a contest.



## IDENTIFYING TALENT IS A MULTI-FACETED ISSUE



### TO BORROW FROM DENIS PAGAN (WHEN DISCUSSING COACHING), "IF IT WAS THAT EASY, EVERYONE WOULD BE DOING IT" 9

Have clubs considered closely where their resources and money are allocated when planning to improve their lists?

Back to the original point – evaluation of the match performances of prospective draftees is the most important issue. Match vision supports but does not supplant watching live action.

Experienced observers are required. As a recruitment specialist stated, "It's discipline, it's hard work, it's conscientiousness. It's not rocket science." But it's partly based on intuition, and to borrow from Denis Pagan (when discussing coaching), "If it was that easy, everyone would be doing it."

AFL recruiting is a tremendous profession. You get to deal with committed young blokes (and their families) from the full range of society. These guys are selected on their merit after stringent scrutiny; the old school tie or influential contacts don't come into play.

And then to observe the draftees' progress and ultimately see them perform at the highest level – from Daryl Jackson's MCG stands – is most rewarding. **CE**

In 2007, John Turnbull was commissioned by the AFL to present a report titled "Analysis of the Research and Literature into the Methods of Successfully Identifying and Developing Talent in Sport from a Global Perspective". This article was first published in the AFL Record's 2009 semi-finals edition.



**LATE BLOOMER:** West Coast ruckman Dean Cox, pictured here at a stoppage battling Western Bulldog Ben Hudson, developed after a stint on the rookie list.

# Playing as a **midfield defender**

In this role, a player is required to win the ball at clearances but mostly must have a strong defensive focus.

BY **ADAM SIMPSON**

## Position description

The main role I played was what we call a mid-defender. This position works directly with ruckmen, mid-forwards, wingers and some running backs.

## The main roles of a mid-defender

- Compete aggressively at the coalface. Often mid-defenders are the main clearance and first-possession players.
  - Play predominately behind centre, helping out the defenders and providing support on the way out of the defensive 50.
  - Always go to defensive stoppages.
  - Set up a 'wall' across the half-forward line when the ball goes inside their forward 50. Mid-defenders generally do not go to forward 50 stoppages.
- Essentially, mid-defenders should not get forward of the play, always leaning towards staying goal-side of their opponent.

## Expectations of the position

- Mid-defenders must have a full understanding of set plays at centre bounces, around-the-ground stoppages, zones and kick-ins.
- They need to work hard on transition. This involves competing in stoppages then picking the right line in which to spread. This requires working hard while going through the right process. Firstly, the task is to get goal-side of your man, then get back to help the defence.
- When the ball goes into their forward line, the mid-defender normally gravitates toward the centre of the ground, then tries to establish how opposition defenders are trying to bring the ball out.
- The expectation is to cut off or slow down play as close to your goal as you possibly can.

## Characteristics of successful mid-defenders

- Mid-defenders must be good readers of the play, i.e. have the ability to think two to three possessions ahead of where the ball actually is.
- They need to have a healthy balance between winning their own ball (contested possessions) and winning the ball outside contests.
- The most successful ones probably have a slightly more defensive mentality and would lean towards safety rather than risk.

## Specific training for the position

There are some critical aspects of training required by successful mid-defenders. They need to:

- Be involved in all set-play work with coaches.

- Work on hard running. Use GPS stats to make sure training is at the right intensity.
- Work on spreading from stoppages, both in attack and defence. Coaches should have drills for this.
- Work one-on-one with other midfielders. Make it competitive. Always hate getting beaten.
- Work one-on-one with the team's ruckmen. Mid-defenders are often target players so they must be in tune with their ruck's capabilities and hit zones.

## Specific pre-match preparation

### During the week

- Opposition analysis on opponents and how they spread is critical. This includes opposition ball-movement patterns and stoppage set-ups.
- Work with ruckmen regarding their thoughts on opposition hit zones.

### Game day

- Although all the preparation should be covered by game day, I liked to run a few 'what if' situations past some of the coaches. This allows me to make quick changes out on the field without waiting two or three minutes for the coaches to relay the message from the box.
- The mid-defenders should always keep an eye out for the opposition's centre-bounce activities in the warm-up, which can provide a good gauge on who will start in the middle and how they plan to set up.
- Get in a 'team-first' mindset. Be prepared to help out your teammates behind centre.

## Key hints to becoming a better mid-defender

- Don't be afraid to talk footy with coaches. Pick their brains; give them some of your thoughts.
- If you're a young developing player, pick the senior players' brains. Always strive to improve and continue learning about your role.
- Review your game/role with another mid-defender and your midfield coach by going through vision of your performances.
- Be honest with yourself. Just remember someone is always watching. You can't hide from anything. Most of all, you know yourself what you're doing right or wrong. Either way, acknowledge your performance, accept feedback and move on – continue to improve. **CE**

**Adam Simpson played 306 games with North Melbourne from 1994-2009. This article was written as an AFL/AFLPA Level 2 Coaching Course requirement.**



**LING'S LEASH:** While Gary Ablett and Joel Selwood provide much of Geelong's midfield drive, Cameron Ling adds defensive balance.



# Forward structures



Introduce new structures slowly to allow players to learn them gradually until they become second nature during games. BY JASON MCCARTNEY

Under-16 elite-talent squads are an ideal age group with which you can start implementing some structures in the forward line, at stoppages and kick-ins.

Don't give too much information too early as very few, if any, players will remember it. Slowly introduce structures, one or two at a time on a whiteboard. Revision sessions at training where players can be questioned by the coach on starting positions are beneficial, especially before the implementation of the structures into full-ground, ball-movement drills.

Put some responsibility on the players to call the different set-ups during these drills. During games it may be as simple as implementing one forward structure for the first half and a different structure for the second. Once the players are comfortable with this, a different structure may be introduced every quarter, with the players eventually calling the structures themselves during games.

The same principles apply for midfield stoppages and defending the opposition kick-ins. The use of video footage is also a very effective coaching mechanism for teaching these structures.

Until this stage the focus should be on the fundamentals and the skill execution of the game. It is also very important all participants are enjoying being involved in the game.

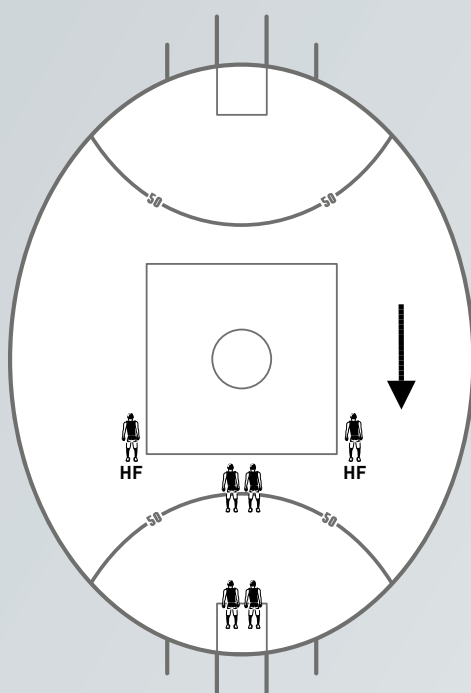


**LION KING:** Brisbane Lions skipper Jonathan Brown has long been the focal point of his side's forward line.

## BASIC FORWARD STRUCTURES

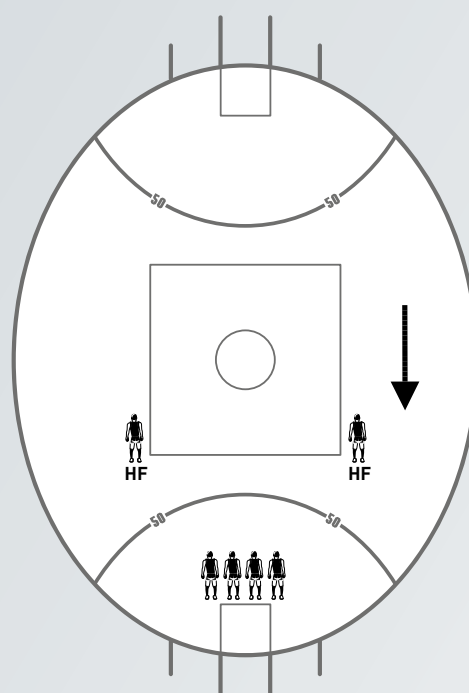
### PAIRS

- Two players positioned together on the full-forward line.
- Two players positioned just inside 50.
- Half-forward's (HF) starting points are high.



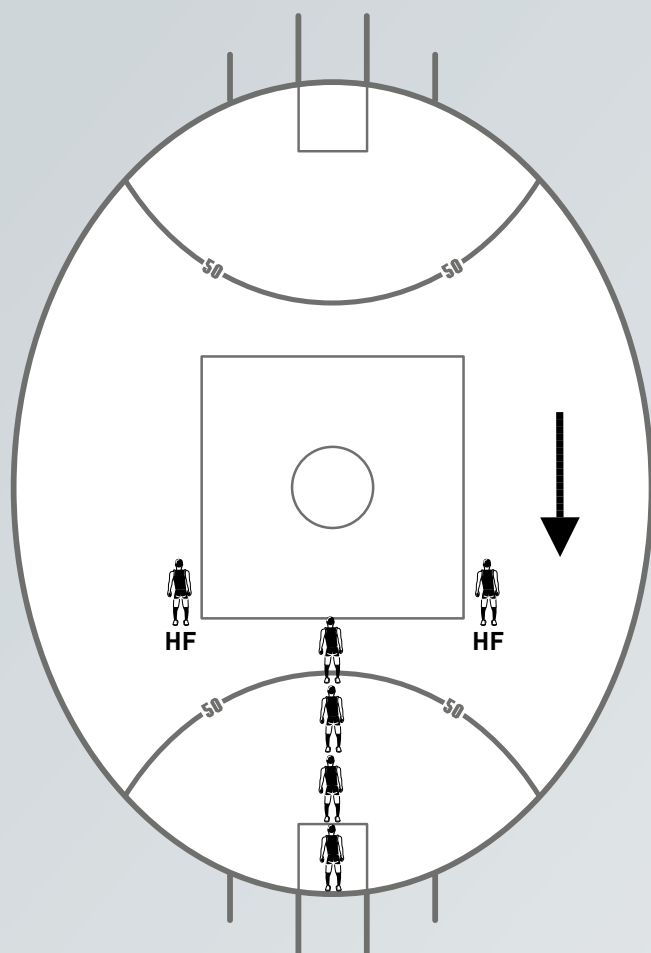
### DEEP HUDDLE

- Four players positioned together at the top of the goal square.
- HF's starting points are high.

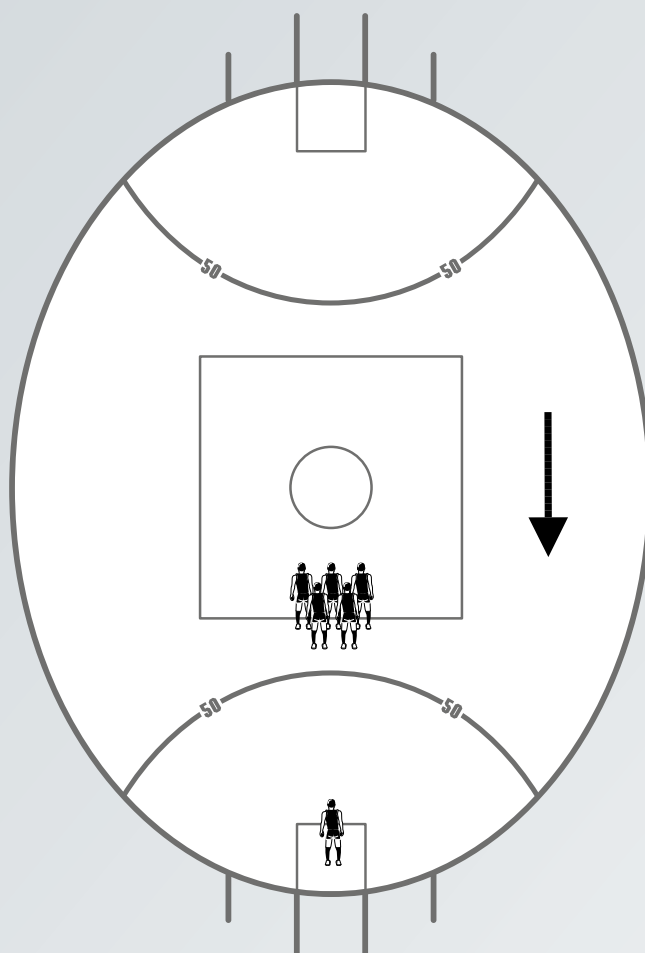


**LINE OUT**

- Four players positioned in a straight line from the goalsquare to just inside 50.
- Alternate starting positions – right side, left side, right, left.
- HF's starting points are high.

**HIGH HUDDLE**

- One player out of the goalsquare.
- Five players huddle at the front of the centre square.

**Aims**

Essentially, what you are trying to achieve is space for the forwards to work in. This will amount to nothing unless the midfield group can win their fair share of clearances. (In 2006, 35 per cent of scores in the AFL were initiated from stoppages).

The first three structures shown have the half-forwards (HF) starting high to open up the front of the centre square for a quick clearance. If their direct opponent goes to that space, the HF must try to engage that player and lure them out.

With all structures, if opposition players try to fill this free space, a 'two-on-one round-up rule' will override the structure. If the opposition send extra numbers behind the ball, as a coach you must decide whether to round up or play one-on-one.

In general play, all forwards should be encouraged to be on the move and come up and meet the ball.



**COACHABLE:** By under-17 level, elite youngsters – like those at the AIS-AFL Academy (this is the 2006 squad) – are learning on-field structures.



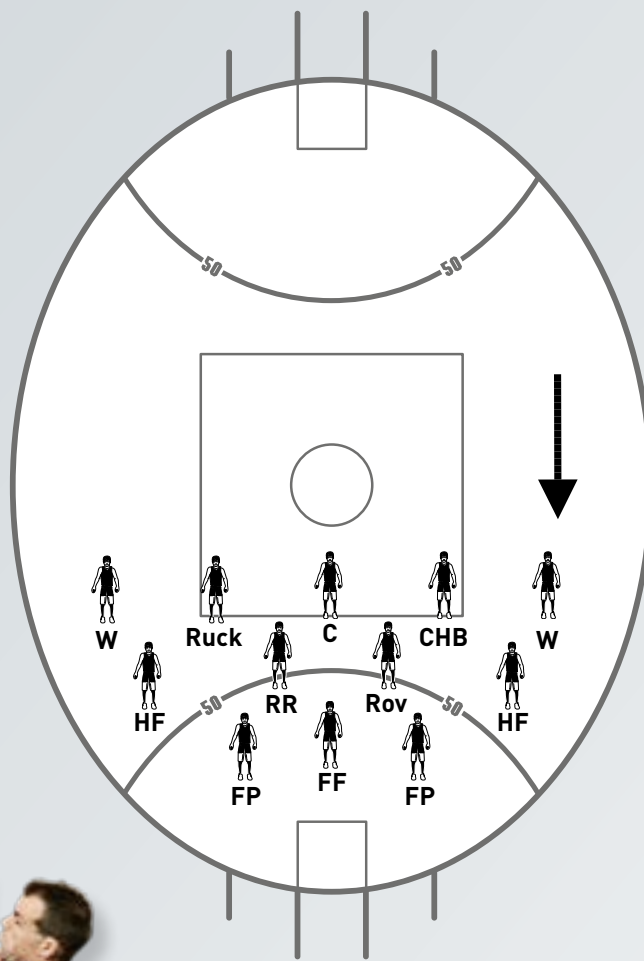
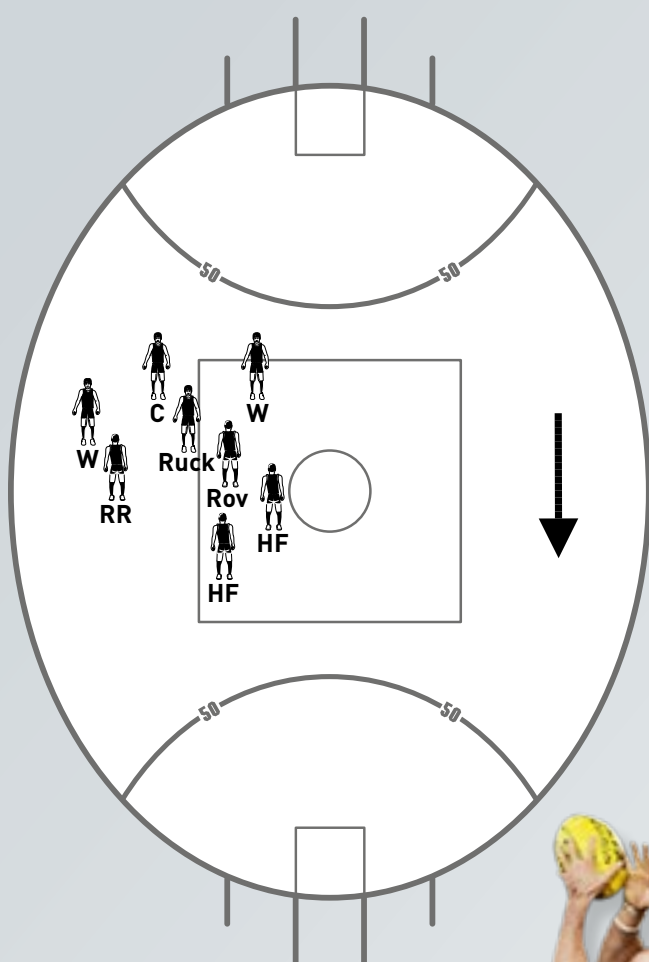
## MIDFIELD AND KICK-IN STRUCTURES

### MIDFIELD STOPPAGE

- Coverage around stoppage by midfielders.
- HF's engage in stoppage.
- Four forwards set up in any of the first three structures.

### ZONE 3-4-5

- Hands up guarding an area.
- On the move/anticipate.
- Aggressive spoiling from behind.



### Measurements

- Tackles, forward pressure (forward third of ground).
- Marks versus opposition (forward third of ground).

Both of these statistics measure forwards' ability to provide multiple leading options, mark the ball and alertness in reacting to a transition when the ball turns over (ie. finding their direct opponent).

- Inside 50s.
- First possession inside 50.

Aim to win first possession inside 50 at least 50 per cent of the time – doing so generally results in a scoring opportunity and tests the forwards' ability to beat their direct opponent.

- Conversion.
- You can set up your own game or quarter-by-quarter stats sheet to collect this information.

### Focus

- In front, first to move.
- Make multiple leads while respecting teammates' space.
- Create a contest at all times, ball to front.
- Forward pressure.
- Make the most of your opportunities.

Jason McCartney is the AIS-AFL Academy High Performance Coach and an accredited AFL High Performance Coach. This article was written in 2007 as part of the requirements for completing the AFL High Performance (Level 3) accreditation. **CE**



**WORKING LIKE A DOG:** Brad Johnson (marking above) works incredibly hard as a lead-up forward for the Western Bulldogs.

**GO-TO MAN:** Western Bulldogs veteran Jason Akermanis is one of the game's most reliable shots at goal.

# MIND GAMES

Mindset is as important as technique when it comes to helping a player to improve their kicking for goal.

BY KEN DAVIS



Whenever people are asked about the progress that has been made in our great game, most agree field kicking and handball skills on both sides of the body have improved significantly as the game has become more professional. Ball handling under pressure has reached the stage where fumbles at ground level are highlighted because of their rarity, while defensive skills like tackling, spoiling and smothering have become refined arts of our game. The speed at which these skills are executed is amazing and a credit to the preparation of players and their coaches.

It is quite staggering then to consider the number of set shots for goal that miss their target under match pressure. I would back any AFL player not to miss a target in general play by three metres, yet when players line up for goal they often miss by that much or more.

Clearly the pressure of the moment gets to players. They often look unsure of themselves as they're about to take their kick. Their eyes may be moving around, indicating they either want to give off the ball or are distracted. Extra tension in their hands may affect their ball drop. They may try to steer the ball rather than kicking normally. They're probably also thinking more than they do when they kick to a teammate. In short, they get the 'yips'.

Players often respond to such pressure in two ways – they either get tighter or in trying to relax get careless. I believe Geelong forward Cameron Mooney suffered this problem in 2009. There's little doubt he felt the pressure of a series of missed goals. Sometimes he appeared casual and kicked in a sloppy manner. At other times, he seemed to rush his kick, tugging it left of the goal posts like a golfer hitting an errant drive.

Typically, such errors occur not purely because of poor technique, but rather because the mind plays games with the kicker and then their technique deteriorates. So how do we go about helping a player who is experiencing a mental block in their goalkicking? The following outlines steps that might help:

→ If there are some technical issues, it is wise to strip the action back to its simplest form. Observe a successful goalkicker like Jason

Akermanis and look at his reliable technique. From close quarters, say from 30 metres, he doesn't try to kick the cover off the ball. He runs straight and importantly guides the ball down with his hand release very close to the boot and his head and shoulders over the ball. He drives through the ball with only enough power to cross the line comfortably. It is debatable if you alter your technique for longer kicks. My view is that when kicking for distance a player probably needs to take a slightly curved approach to generate more rotational power into the kick. But they need to make sure that in the kicking zone their leg and foot move in the direction of the target and do not swing across the body.

- The kicker needs positive reinforcement that the fundamentals of their action are sound. Look at their ability to hit targets in general play and say, "You hardly ever miss a target from within 50 metres, so you are a good kick."
- Their goalkicking has to be analysed under pressure to see what technical flaws occur in that situation. For example, they may stutter in their approach and be too tense.
- Remind the player to retain the feel of the movement when they perform it well at practice. It is that feel they want to replicate under pressure.
- It is essential to practise with players guarding the mark, with their arms raised. Too often players don't do this.
- Everyone needs a goalkicking routine that can be completed in less than 30 seconds. This routine should be geared towards getting the player into the ideal performance state. The coach needs to tell a player that once they've decided a shot for goal is the best option, they need to control their eye movement, relax and execute as if they were kicking to a player, pick out a target behind the goals and take into account the wind direction and the normal path of their kicks.
- The player may benefit from having a single thought in mind as they run up to kick, such as 'smooth', 'through the ball' or 'straight'.
- Just like a golfer wants to make a positive putting stroke, make sure the kick is decisive. **CE**



# Inclusive coaching strategies

Good coaches adapt their coaching sessions so people of all physical capabilities and ability levels can participate to their fullest. BY **ANDREW HUGHES**

You have completed your AFL Auskick Level 1 coaching accreditation. You are looking forward to your first opportunity to run the kids through some planned activities. You arrive early for your first session and set up some cones to mark out the activities. The kids start arriving and you are becoming genuinely excited. Then along comes a child with cerebral palsy who is also excited about their first NAB AFL Auskick session. You notice that the child uses a walker. What happens next?

Is your first reaction one of trepidation? Do you wonder if you can handle this situation? Do you continue to introduce yourself to all the children and their families, confident you can include all participants regardless of their ability? Do you subconsciously start considering your activities and what you will need to modify to include the child with cerebral palsy and, if so, what the **TREE** acronym stands for?

Throughout this article we will consider why people should, and can, be inclusive. Attitude is the most important factor in being inclusive. While it is natural to feel some anxiety in these situations, it is important your first thought is, 'How can I modify my activities to include everyone?' Remember inclusive coaching is good coaching.

## Why be inclusive?

Including children from a range of backgrounds is important in creating a welcoming environment at any club or NAB AFL Auskick centre. The important thing to keep in mind is every person, regardless of their gender, disability, cultural or religious background, has the right to be involved in sport, especially Australian Football.

## Some of the benefits of inclusion:

- More members add a richness and diversity to the environment.
- Greater connection to the local community.
- An increase in volunteers, from either the new person or their family and friends.
- Increased use of council facilities and grounds.
- 'New blood' is invigorating – it comes with fresh ideas, and opens up new possibilities.

## How can I be inclusive?

Including children with disabilities is not hard; it just requires enthusiasm and understanding.

Here are a few suggestions to encourage inclusion when working with people from a variety of backgrounds with differing levels of ability:

- Think **ability**, not disability, race or gender. **Work with what the person can do.** Everyone has their own unique skills and abilities – find out what they are and focus on them. If appropriate, encourage parents of any child experiencing difficulty to assist.
- Simple adaptations or modifications of activities will allow greater participation by all. Keep the activities as true to form as possible, with any changes viewed as temporary and a stepping stone towards, where possible, the original activity. If changes do not work, try something else.



- Provide activities where people can succeed and develop their self-esteem.
- Any activity or skill drill can be modified to better cater for *all* participants. Using the **TREE** acronym helps people remember ways to do this, to allow all participants to improve their skill level and enjoyment.
  - **Teaching/coaching style**
  - **Rules**
  - **Equipment**
  - **Environment** (such as playing surface)

If you are unsure how to modify an activity, consider asking the children or their parents what modifications could be made.

For example, consider this practical example of how the **TREE** acronym could be used. Karen has limited mobility, poor balance and cannot run for any considerable distance, so you may consider the following modifications:

- **Teaching/coaching style**  
Use a questioning style or let the children set their own goals for activities to allow all to participate and improve.
- **Rules**  
Implement a rule whereby the ball must be passed to Karen before a goal can be scored.
- **Equipment**  
Use cones to limit the amount of running Karen has to do in skills and relays.
- **Environment**  
Restrict the size of the playing area and the numbers in a team. Consider playing a three-versus-five match, where players are placed in ability-based teams.

Above all, coaching and including people with different abilities and backgrounds is simply good coaching practice. Coaching **individuals** within the team environment is also good coaching – at any level. Remember, *all* players must be encouraged to participate in *all* activities. **ce**

**Andrew Hughes is AFL Community Resource and Communications Coordinator and plays for Croydon in the Eastern Football League (Vic Metropolitan)**

# COACHING THE KIDS & LOVING IT

Like a lot of parents, **Gary Brown** got involved in coaching when his children started playing junior sport. In the 11 years since, he has honed his approach to training, strategy and match-day to get the best from his junior players.  
**BY KEN DAVIS**

## FATHER FIGURE:

AFL Victoria Community Development Manager – Inner Southern Region (Melbourne) Gary Brown (below) has great experience coaching youngsters.

 In the previous edition of *Coaching Edge*, we explored the profile of an elite professional coach, Jeff Gieschen. In this issue we interview a coach who has directed his energies to developing young players at football's grassroots. Gary Brown is a passionate, sports-loving person who has coached junior football and cricket for more than 10 years. He was a leader in consolidating and developing the successful MILO Have a Go cricket program for Cricket Victoria and recently took on the position of AFL Victoria Community Development Manager – Inner Southern Region (Melbourne). Gary's son Mitchell Brown (who Gary coached as a junior) was drafted by Geelong last year.

Here, Gary outlines the philosophies and strategies he has adopted in his quest for coaching excellence.

## Beginnings

**Gary Brown:** I started coaching when my kids were involved in both [AFL] Auskick and Have a Go in cricket.

I went along and was not all that impressed with what I saw from a coaching viewpoint so I decided to get involved rather than whinge about it.

I then did Level 1 coaching courses in both cricket and football and have been coaching now for 11 years at Cheltenham Junior Football Club. I love it.

## Aspirations

I would like to coach at a higher level. My strengths are my ability to motivate and manage players and I would like to work with older kids at some stage.

I think I have a bit to offer in terms of managing players.

## Keys to managing players

It is a difficult process with 16-year-olds as they have a lot on their plate. They are really boys in men's bodies. Coaching under-14s was easier. A lot of kids are not getting direction at home so I have to adopt a fatherly role at times, instilling strong discipline. Hopefully they can become good footballers and also good citizens – at that age they can go in many directions. I really try to treat everyone as an individual and try to understand their world as much as I can.

## Coaching my own children

They enjoy my coaching and I don't treat them any differently. I don't give them any favours, nor am I harder on them.

## Source of training drills

My coaching has evolved. Initially I stuck by the manuals, but in the past three years I have moved away from that approach as I have become more confident and aware of player needs. I'm very much into game-sense activities and focus on practising positioning at stoppages at any given point in a game. I believe this approach enhances a player's creativity as I try to get them to think their way through situations. In the past two seasons, the teams I have coached with this approach have gone from bottom of the ladder in second division to win the premiership in division two and, in the following season, division one.

I watch elite teams train regularly and notice how they work in groups; for example, the back six, midfielders, etc. The kids I coach love the fact that I have been to watch AFL teams train. I also go to a lot of huddles at the grassroots level and listen and observe. Usually this reinforces that I won't do certain things or say things in a particular way.

## Game-day – thinking on the field

I have encouraged players to coach themselves on the field – they make changes on their own. I just have a back six and they choose appropriate match-ups. Of course, there are times when I might direct a player to oppose a certain player for a challenge. I have eight midfielders and let them organise their own rotations.

The runner's role is to rotate bench players so that they get time on the field. I also use him to reinforce



such things as unrewarded running or team-oriented things – key areas of our game plan. I never take a player off the field for making a mistake – we all make mistakes.

### Interaction with players

I talk to players individually and never berate them publicly; I'm always positive in front of parents. I might speak more firmly to them when I have to, but do it privately.

I have been told by parents that when they go into our huddle at breaks they can never tell whether the team is 10 goals up or down.

### Coaching role models

- Michael Malthouse – I've watched a lot of his practice sessions and am impressed with his ability to develop players. He uses his support staff well and seems to explain things well to his players.
- Denis Pagan – he was tough, hard, uncompromising and heavy on discipline. He quickly turned North Melbourne's fortunes around and they became the team of the '90s. In two months he turned them into a finals side. His people-management skills appear strong.
- John Wooden – the enduring and famous college basketball coach of UCLA. I've read a lot about his

philosophies, and his approach with team discipline aligns with my thinking. I use his pyramid of success in my own life and find it most beneficial. He measured his success not so much on results, but on the quality of person he develops.

### Coaching a new team – the first steps

Let's say this is an under-19 team, the key point is to develop a strong relationship with all stakeholders:

- Make contact with the players first.
- Bring the parents together and outline expectations.
- Lead by example – show them that you are passionate and have integrity.
- Build relationships first before football – get to know the kids and encourage them to keep an interest in school and other pastimes.

### Coaching resources

I have found the following books most beneficial:

- John Wooden's book on coaching basketball;
- *Tactics in Modern Footy* by David Wheadon, in which he interviewed prominent coaches and players;
- *When Pride Mattered*, the story of Vince Lombardi. Here was a man who paid his dues through the system and was given a job at the elite level at a relatively old age.

**HARD TASKMASTER:**  
Gary Brown admires the uncompromising coaching approach of former North Melbourne and Carlton coach Denis Pagan.







**COACHING LEGEND:**  
Former UCLA basketball coach John Wooden (above) measured his success not on results but on whether he had helped his players develop into better people, a philosophy Gary Brown shares.

### Age and coaching

When you look at it, people aged 50-plus have the best record because of their experience. Contrast the prevailing attitude of clubs here with clubs in America – they seem to embrace older coaches more. We tend to go for younger coaches who have just finished their playing careers.

In American football, the head coaches are often veterans and are sought and revered because they have life skills. A lot of the AFL's behavioural issues may be linked to the fact players haven't been guided by an experienced person.

### Most difficult aspect of coaching

Parental expectations – “You don't give my son a fair go,” etc. I try to be honest with parents and give my assessment on their child. I keep a record of all players' time on the field so I have data to present to parents.

I bring players and parents together to go through their expectations on and off the field and, as a result, seem to have developed great relationships with parents. Honest communication has been the key to this.

### Coping with kids' off-field behaviour

I focus on the notion that errant behaviour invariably involves letting teammates down. If I smell alcohol on a player's breath, they won't be playing. I haven't had to do it since an incident a few years back. It was the last game of the year and everyone in the team was invited to an 18th birthday party the night before a game. I went to the party with my son, went home at

a respectable time and expected the same from the players. I arrived at the ground to see a player vomiting and three others turned up 10 minutes before the start. We lost the game and the opportunity to play finals.

I try to encourage personal responsibility – “I can't see you on the field all the time, nor can I see you all the time off field. But don't take shortcuts and don't abuse your body when preparing for a game. Take responsibility for your behaviour.”

I heard Grant Thomas say something that has impacted greatly on my approach to coaching. He basically said footy has nothing to do with football. Footy is kick to kick in the yard. Football is much more. Football is an extension of yourself.

### Skill development

Executing your skills under pressure in a game-like environment is the key. Clearly all kids at a young age need to work on the basics. AFL players rarely miss targets at training, but they can miss them more often in games, in which case their skills under pressure are not good enough. So you must practice more under match pressure.

### Goalkicking

Isn't it amazing that Matthew Richardson can hit targets when playing on the wing but has only a fair record in front of goals? Does his technique alter when nervous in front of goal? The answer is probably yes.

### Fitness in junior football

I used to do a lot of fitness work with running laps, yet I found my teams were not playing games out even with two nights of training. I was torn between giving more intense and regular training or looking at other options.

I gave the under-15 players a questionnaire and was astounded at their workload during a typical week in football season. Ninety-five per cent were doing another sport – basketball, school footy, hockey, indoor cricket, etc. – so they were getting a lot of activity. I concluded they were running out of puff because of this physical load.

I now don't do any running at training – Indian file and so on. We now train only once a week. I just do a basic warm-up to get the players' hands on the footy, then get them running hard in bursts during skill drills. This builds core fitness specific to football.

In the past 18 games, our team has not been beaten in last quarters, having outscored our opposition 110 goals to 22 in final terms. The players are fresh and excited about playing because they are not being run into the ground during the week. This has come about because of my change in approach – I have matured as a coach and become more contemporary.

### Development of mental skills

I am an avid reader and try to focus on motivation and discipline. I have used Allan Jeans and Andrew Collins to provide a different voice for the players and to explain the commitment and approach needed to be successful.

I talk a lot about life skills and their link to football – being prepared, dependable, of good character and representing your family well, etc.

I continually have to work on building players' confidence. For example, one of our better players appeared to have gone backwards after playing in the TAC Cup. The elite junior program with hard and fast rules seemed to have stifled his creative play. He had been selected in the TAC Cup club's squad because of his creative instincts, but now appeared to be thinking too much about the team rules he had to follow. He had lost confidence. When he had the opportunity to play at a local level again, I approached him and said, "I want to see you smile again, run free and attack the game." He had 33 possessions in a match-winning performance that restored his confidence.

### Lessons learned

Early on as a coach, I worried about what parents thought of me and tried to do what they wanted. It

took a while to make myself a good coach, rather than trying to please everybody.

I also used to over-coach. My pre-match addresses were great for parents and I, but my detailed game plans often left the kids confused. My enthusiasm hasn't waned but I do all the game-plan strategy on Thursday nights now.

Most of my talks revolve around reinforcing good play, not only goals but effort and team play too.

### Coaching accreditation

It is very important. When I did my Level 1 course it was built around technical expertise and the basic skills. There was not much time spent on learning through game sense. The Level 2 cricket course I did changed my thinking and I am now much more creative in my coaching.

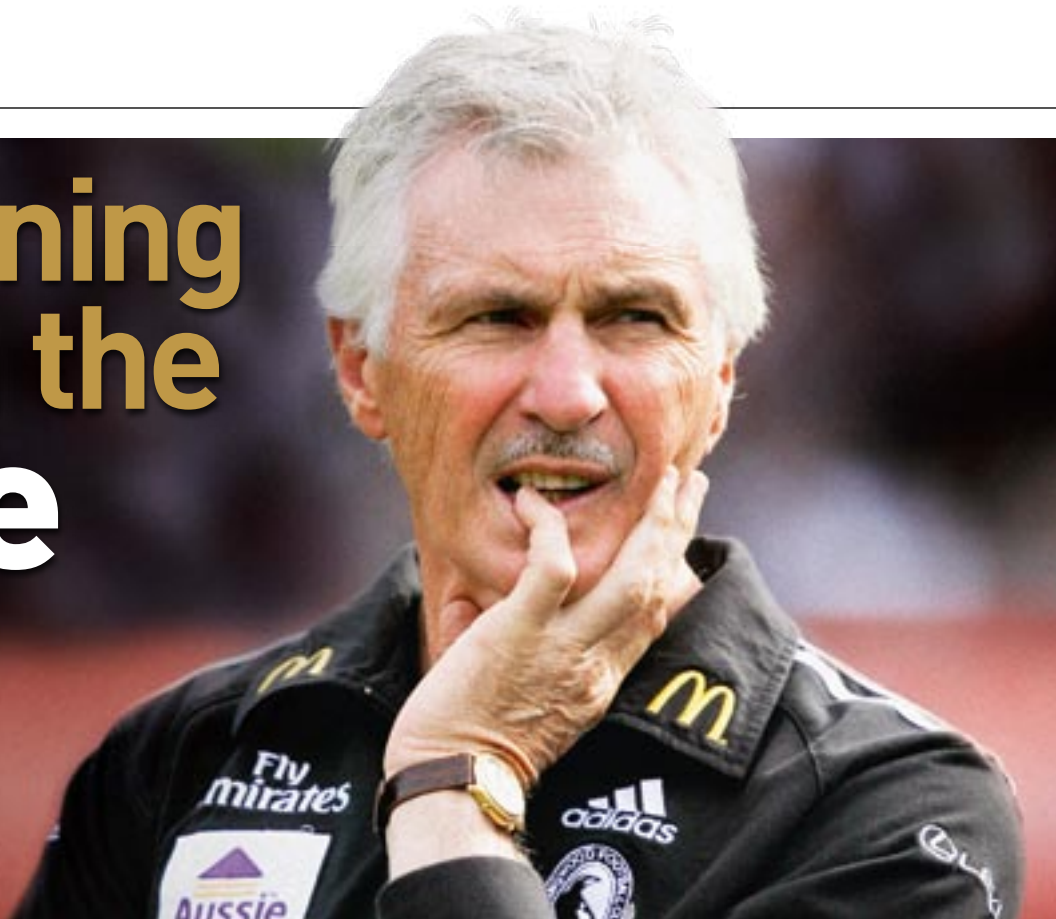
Accreditation courses should focus on learning in game-like environments. A lot of accredited coaches are not good coaches because they lack support after they attain their qualifications. **CE**



**ROLE MODEL:** Brown has watched Collingwood coach Mick Malthouse (centre) closely and tries to adopt some of his methods.

# Learning from the elite

**MICK MALTHOUSE:**  
A marvellous orator, a great strategist and listener, capable of making rapid quality decisions to meet the need of the moment.



The new book *Side By Side: A Year with Collingwood* reveals that behind Collingwood's vast resources and cutting-edge technology, coach Mick Malthouse and his assistants rely on basic values, systems and teaching methods that are relevant to coaches at all levels.

BY PETER RYAN

It quickly became apparent as I spent a year underneath the Collingwood football department's feet writing the book *Side By Side: A Year with Collingwood* I was receiving an informal education in modern coaching.

That sense was underlined in the coach's box during the last, frantic minute of the first semi-final, won with Jack Anthony's goal kicked moments before the siren. As the forward lined up for goal, chief of football Geoff Walsh, realising that a point would tie scores, yelled from the front of the box: "If it's a point, it's six minutes' rest and then five minutes either way."

His comment sparked others into action:

"Who can go down? Anyone?" asked Mark Neeld.

Blake Caracella then showed his poise in the big moment.

"Mick, if it's a goal what are we doing? Mick, how many are we sending back if it is a goal?"

He did not have to wait for an answer from the senior coach.

"Three wings, two forwards, all the rest behind the ball."

In the moment of extreme pressure Collingwood's system had stood up. The 'know your role, play your role' motto that anchors the football department had sprung into action at the most emotion-charged moment of an emotional season.

At AFL level the senior coach is the CEO for the way the team plays. At Collingwood that means everyone from the assistant coaches to the conditioning staff to the medical team to the information technology specialists to the welfare staff to the players (and most particularly the leadership group) understand and align their work to the senior coach's objectives.

Being a member of the match committee is akin to holding a cabinet portfolio. The 'know your role, play

your role' motto is a very simple saying that focuses each person connected to the football department – whether in a professional or volunteering sense – on their task, while also ensuring that team is the mantra. It also serves as a reminder that the decision-making authority rests with the senior coach.

Malthouse has earned the authority a senior coach must command with smart leadership rather than his title. Good coaches have the right mix of compassion and hardness that any leader needs. Malthouse is exceptionally well weighted in these areas. He gradually allocates responsibility and trust to those working with him as they demonstrate to him their capacity and understanding of their role. He gives those under him opportunities to flourish (Collingwood's assistants each coached a game in their own right in the pre-season series in 2009 is just one example).

This willingness to delegate with care, teaching the coaches as well as the players, keeps everyone operating with enthusiasm. He trusts and gives opportunities for others to thrive. It is up to individuals to make the most of that chance. It also is part of the reason Malthouse can remain fresh enough to assess the value of detailed information provided to him by his assistants in a heartbeat and keep ahead of trends himself as the game changes at such rapid pace.

Importantly Malthouse knows he is not perfect or the font of all wisdom. He will demand his coaches throw ideas into the ring or test him or question him or inform him. That he (and his assistants) have an expert understanding of the game tactically and an appreciation of its physical and mental demands is a given. But trends emerge, situations change and it is the team of coaches that need to come up with solutions. Malthouse expects logic and evidence to



back up opinion and he will make final calls but he never closes his mind to possibility. This approach means Malthouse is respected, admired and, critically, approachable. The players also have an input, the leadership group meeting the coach weekly to ensure a shared understanding of the approach to be taken into each game.

Such open dialogue is essential, even when it is difficult.

When Collingwood was under pressure with three wins after eight games in 2009 and coaching speculation at fever pitch these elements came to the fore. The football department stuck tight, their personal values, belief in each other and the system they had spent the pre-season refining and reaffirming standing them in good stead when the pressure was at its fiercest. A great line from high performance manager Simon Lloyd at that time, included in the book, sums up what successful clubs do in such moments: "It's not a time for people to be speaking in corners about what is going wrong," said Lloyd. "You have to keep the information flowing."

One reason the senior coach has remained at the top of the game for so long and not buckled under pressure is his ability to switch on and off, not that he ever switches off completely during the season. Any assistant coach will learn how to manage pressure from Malthouse by observing his approach. He expects total commitment to the job from those around him combined with the maturity to balance their lives, giving time to family and friends and exercise even when the pressure is on. Any person, in any walk of life, can learn from that.

Humour permeates the football club and is essential for relieving the pressure or ensuring perspective is maintained. Malthouse is a master of the one-liner or self-deprecating touch when speaking to the players. His comment to Leon Davis midway through last season is an example of banter with an

edge that keeps smiles on the faces but minds on the job. "Maj, we need more tackles. I think the last time you tackled was (his son) Levi in the backyard." The coach can say this to Davis in front of the group because he has built a relationship with the player based on mutual respect. Within a professional football club players learn to accept negative feedback. It is constant as improvement is sought. But the communication of such feedback remains critical. Collingwood's coaches spend a lot of time with players and as relationships build they understand that each player requires a different approach to bring out their best. Heath Shaw is a classic example at Collingwood. He has a brilliant football brain but he does not take the standard approach. Mark Neeld respected that every player had a different way of preparing and Shaw appreciated this. The young defender finished third in Collingwood's best and fairest despite missing four games in 2009.

It all sounds good in theory but it is much harder in practice. It takes courage to say things and stoicism and maturity to hear them. Any off-field system of communication needs to be considered even if it appears to be effortless or informal. The off-season is a good time to agree to systems because when the pressure is on they might be all you have to fall back on. Local football clubs do not have to have the regularity or time demands of a professional AFL club to succeed but they need to share the same characteristics: trust, teamwork, honesty, humour and, importantly, at some stage, reward (or recognition).

At Collingwood it became obvious that understanding these implied values is more critical for success than understanding the team's kick-in strategy. That, it is presumed, will come with time. **CE**

**Peter Ryan is a journalist at The Slattery Media Group, the publisher of *Side by Side: A Season with Collingwood*. Ryan spent the 2009 season ensconced in Collingwood's inner sanctum.**

**TEAM PLAYER:** Former Collingwood assistant coach Blake Caracella (standing) reviews game footage with Scott Pendlebury. Caracella was a key member of Mick Malthouse's coaching team in 2009, showing an ability to think clearly under pressure.





**THE BEST FIT:** North Melbourne appointed Brad Scott as its senior coach in August convinced the 33-year-old was the best man to develop its young list.

# FINDING THE **RIGHT** HEAD COACH

By asking themselves some fundamental questions at the outset, clubs can increase their chances of finding the coach who best suits their needs.

BY **WAYNE GOLDSMITH**

➤ With all the movements and changes in the head coaching ranks in the major football codes across Australia in recent times, it is worth having a closer look at how to hire the right coach.

The most important first step for any club is to clearly understand what it wants from a head coach. Do they want:

- ➔ An inspirational head coach?
- ➔ An expert in change management, someone who can make hard decisions and radical changes to the club's culture and environment?

- ➔ A technical expert – someone with great skills in one element of the game, eg. attack?
- ➔ A coach skilled in dealing with the media?
- ➔ A hard-nosed, disciplinarian with a strong work ethic and uncompromising nature?
- ➔ Someone who can build effective teams and get people working together towards a common goal?
- ➔ An expert in sports science and performance enhancement?
- ➔ Someone who has played the game at the highest level and has empathy for the playing group?



- Someone who can create leaders in the player group and a player-driven culture?
- An innovator – someone who can accelerate change and implement new ideas?

The answer most clubs will give is, “All of the above”. Most clubs will seek one person who can meet all of these expectations and more – and they are very, very, very hard to find.

However, most clubs **DO NOT NEED** a coach with all of these attributes. The coaching needs of a club will vary over time depending on a range of factors.

A young club may want an experienced coach who can establish a winning culture, systems and structures to help the club get started. An older club with a more established culture may want the injection of new ideas and energy to revitalise the players and program, and recruit someone with a new, fresh approach to winning.

Regardless of the club’s needs, there are some common principles it can follow to increase the likelihood of recruiting the right coach.

## Five essentials for recruiting the right head coach

### 1 Clearly determine what your club needs right now

Don’t go on the coach’s reputation alone or what the coach has done for another team. Think about the *unique* needs of your club right now. A coach who has been successful at one club may not be able to replicate that success in a new environment because of differences in the player group, club culture, resources, management structure, location etc. The key question you should ask is, “Can this coach deliver the outcomes we want at this club now and in the future?”

### 2 Think about the total coaching skills you want

Instead of looking for one man to deliver the world, look to employ a coaching team that can deliver high-quality, consistent coaching to the club. For example:

- A strong, inspirational head coach and methodical, systematic assistant coaches with attention to detail.
- A younger head coach with a strong background as a player plus an older assistant coach with a long coaching background to act as a mentor.
- A head coach with outstanding defensive knowledge and assistant coaches with outstanding attacking knowledge.

Think about the balance of skills, knowledge, character, personality and experience of the coaching team, rather than trying to find one person to do it all.

If you have a very skilful player, but then ask them to be captain, do the kick-ins, play in the ruck, do all the media and sponsor commitments, it is highly likely their playing performance will suffer.

Head coaches are the same. Expecting them to be all things to all people at all times will eventually result in a compromised coaching performance.

### 3 Establish the appropriate interview/recruitment process

Match the interview and recruitment process to the outcome you want. If you were recruiting a key forward, you would ask them to kick a few goals before signing them. It’s the same principle with coaches.

So if you are looking for a coach with a strong technical background, have the candidates present detailed technical plans and programs at interview and have someone on the interview panel who can ask challenging technical questions.

If you are looking for someone with a new direction for the club, ask them to present a detailed vision for the future that covers critical areas such as recruitment, player development and playing styles.

### 4 The six Cs :

**Clarity** – Are they clear in their thinking, decision-making, vision and direction?

**Composure** – Can they handle pressure? Can they provide leadership in tough times?

**Confidence** – Do they believe in themselves and what they say?

**Credibility** – Can they get players, assistant coaches, staff, management, sponsors and fans to buy in to what they are trying to do?

**Character** – Do they as a person enrich the club? Are their values (honesty, integrity, sincerity, humility, work ethic, etc.) consistent with what you want from the head coach?

**Communication** – Does the coach communicate well? Can they communicate effectively with players, assistant coaches, staff, management, media, fans and sponsors? Do they communicate well in groups and one-on-one? As in most organisations, poor communication causes the majority of problems at footy clubs.

### 5 Establish clear expectations and time frames .

It is vital the head coach, board, administration, staff and players fully understand the club’s vision, the time frame established to achieve the vision and the specific goals and objectives for everyone involved in the program.

From the outset, establish clear policies, principles and rules so everyone understands their roles and responsibilities, the standards they are expected to maintain and the time frame in which they are expected to achieve them.

The role of head coach is an important one for any club. They are often the public face of the organisation and the person held responsible for winning or losing, and dealing with the implications of both.

It takes a special person to do it well – and an intelligent, thoughtful organisation to find that special person. **CE**

**Wayne Goldsmith is managing director of Moregold Performance Consulting and has worked with many of the world’s leading sporting organisations and elite Australian sporting clubs.**



# On-field 'coaches'

Developing smart players who can make the right decisions without direction can vastly improve your side.

BY JOSH MAHONEY

As important as it is to have players with the physical attributes and skills to play AFL football, it is becoming equally or even more crucial that players' football smarts or decision-making is at a high level.

Decision-making is a hot topic in AFL circles. Players who can read situations on the ground, or the state of the game, and make appropriate decisions are valuable players. Why then, as coaches, do we spend hour upon hour working with players on perfecting their skills and next to no time actually educating them about the game and match-day tactics?

The days of the coach being the master, making all the decisions, and the players just following instructions are coming to an end. Players want to be involved in the decision-making, they want to have their say on match-ups, and this thirst for knowledge should be encouraged.

In an ideal world, we would have 22 *smart* players in our team, but generally this is not the case. However, if the majority of our players made logical decisions on the ground, without a coach's involvement, and we had smart players on each line, game-day would run much more smoothly.

You could see it in the way Brendon Lade and Adam Simpson organised their team's stoppages, or how Tom Harley and Luke Hodge controlled their backlines. This saves time and alleviates confusion, as we know response time can sometimes be the difference between winning and losing.

The more comfortable players become adjusting to changes and making appropriate decisions on the ground, the better it is for coaches. Coaches can focus on other tactics and free up runners for rotations or other specific positional changes.

## Scenarios where educated players can assist coaches in games

**Backline match-ups:** The opposition try to create a mismatch by replacing a small player with a tall to: a) force a positional change, and b) gain an advantage.

If players know their own strengths and weaknesses, and those of their opponents, they can adjust to this change on the ground and at least get the best match-up until an interchange could be made.

**Stoppages:** Your team has just lost the past three stoppages. An educated player could make the appropriate structural changes to at least nullify the opposition's influence at stoppages, allowing the coaches time to make a personnel change if required.

**Forward Line:** A forward has a good match-up. An educated player can set up the best structure to get the most out of that match-up without a coach's input.

**FIELD MARSAL:** Hawthorn vice-captain Luke Hodge often directs play in the Hawks' backline.

All these scenarios can and would be implemented by the coaches. We are, however, in the game to win and get any advantage we can over our opponents, so making the correct decision on the ground without having to use the runner or waste any time is a big advantage. Saving time in the backline could mean saving a goal; saving the runner having to go to the midfield could allow a positional change to be made; saving time in the forward line could enable a favourable match-up to have an effect on the game.

## Learning styles

How then do we educate players to get to the level of independent decision-making we want? First, we have to remember that different players are suited to different learning styles, and the way you present the information has to recognise these differences. Learning styles can be categorised into four groups:

**Visual** – watching the act being performed.

**Auditory** – listening to information.

**Read and Write** – reading and taking notes on the information.

**Kinaesthetic** – physically performing the act being taught.

There are some simple tests you can do to discover a player's preferred learning style. By knowing their preference, you can use your time efficiently and get the best results from your players.

Keeping the different learning styles in mind, teaching the game can be done in a number of ways, depending on your club's access to vision, facilities and time, and could include:

- Using a whiteboard and moving magnets into different positions, asking what players would do in various match situations.
- Walking through different scenarios on the oval or on a smaller oval inside the rooms.
- Using vision from previous games showing the scenarios you want to highlight.
- Introducing game-like scenarios into the drills you use at training.
- Going to games and observing and discussing different situations.

Coaches play a huge role in teaching the game, however players also have to take responsibility for their own learning. By providing players with relevant statistics or vision, encouraging them to watch games and then challenging them to present the information they have found, you can sort out:

- a) Who is really into learning about the game.
- b) The smart players you can target.
- c) Who needs extra attention.

Like anything, learning is a habit, and the earlier a player develops good habits and makes them part of their individual preparation the better the results.

When players and coaches are on the same page, you get the best results. We can't all have the most talented players on the ground, but we can develop the smartest. If we make an effort to invest the time into educating our players about independent decision-making, it will be worth it. **CE**

**Josh Mahoney is an assistant coach at the Melbourne Football Club and an accredited AFL High Performance Coach. This article was written as part of the requirements of the AFL High Performance Coaching Course.**



# From the ice rink to the **footy field**

Ex-pat Canadian **Chris Donahoe** brings a newcomer's untainted perspective to our great game. In this installment, he shares the joy he experienced at his first live game of AFL football.



**THE ENEMY:** Cameron Mooney may be a cult figure among Geelong fans, but Chris Donahoe could not help jeering the big Cat – lightheartedly – when he attended his first AFL match recently.

While looking out over the Indian Ocean from my flat in balmy Perth, it's hard to believe it has been a year since I wrote my first article from the chilly east coast of Canada. Since that time I've found myself abandoning doughnuts for Tim Tams, beanies for board shorts and, of course, ice hockey for Australian Football.

Already I've witnessed the heartbreak of Geelong fans everywhere after last year's Grand Final, laughed myself sore watching the Irish punters during one of the International Rules games at Subiaco and joined my first Dream Team league – in which I spent most of the season at the bottom of the ladder ("C'mon Buddy Franklin, I needed more from you!") None of this, however, compares to watching my first game live in round 11 this year.

'Subi' was absolutely buzzing for the sunny Sunday afternoon game that pitted West Coast against an undefeated Geelong. There didn't seem to be much hope for the Eagles, but everyone was excited to see the Cats machine in action.

I refused to believe people when they told me an eagle would fly around the stadium before the bounce, but ate my words as a regal wedgetail soared in grand circles while the West Coast club song blared. I have seen many sports gimmicks and traditions in my life, but watching that great bird swoop down from the bleachers to the centre of the ground was by far the most impressive.

When the game got underway, the Cats jumped out to an early 30-point lead, but the Eagles fought back and managed to stay within 15 points of the Cats for most of the game. I marvelled at the sheer speed of the game and the skill of the players, who can attack from any angle.

I barked at the umpires and howled at Geelong's 'big hairy Cat' Cameron Mooney the entire time, and found myself wiping pie and sauce from my shirt at the end of the game. Although my accent drew looks and laughs, I bellowed and barracked with the best of them. As the sun set on the oval, Cats fans left breathing huge sighs of relief after their side's hard-fought 22-point win, and Eagles supporters left holding their heads high. I left hoarse and excited – and wanting more.

At first it was difficult making the transition from rule-laden North American sports to free-flowing 'Aussie Rules'. I found it hard to abandon my need for perfectly accurate umpiring and video replays, but after an epiphany of sorts, I started to see the flow of the game and how it is masterfully maintained by umpires, players and even fans.

Although it seems many foreigners struggle to grasp these intricacies, it is hard for anyone to deny the energy generated either at the ground, around the bar on Friday night or at home on the couch on a lazy weekend afternoon. As I mentally prepare for the next season of Dream Team, it is clear the excitement of this great game is contagious and I, for one, am well and truly hooked. **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 any coach of footballers in the 13-17 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 of 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 breathtaking 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 became 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 that journey, through his experiences 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 the game as performed by some of the best exponents playing today. Vision during games and skill development demonstrations emphasise 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 regard 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 that 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

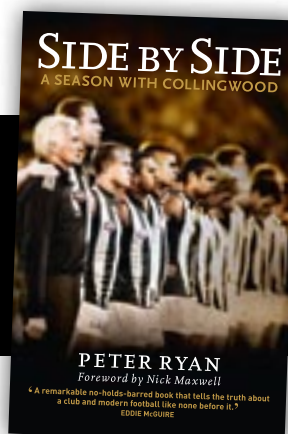
and activities for younger children in their formative years. It also provides excellent vision of AFL players demonstrating the skills while emphasising key coaching points. It includes a broad range of skill drills to assist in planning effective practice sessions for children.

**RRP: \$5.50 (GST incl.)**

## Side by Side: A Season with Collingwood PETER RYAN

Journalist Peter Ryan spent the 2009 season within the inner sanctum of the Collingwood Football Club and witnessed firsthand the reality behind the headlines. Ryan takes readers on a wild ride as Collingwood chases its first premiership since 1990, revealing both the human side and inner workings of Australia's most famous sporting club. This book also provides rare insights into the coaching methods of Mick Malthouse and his team of assistants, revealing basic values and systems that are relevant to coaches at all levels.

**RRP: \$49.95 (GST incl.)**





**Ruck Work [DVD]**

Simon Madden is recognised as one of the greatest ruckmen of all time, following his club record of 378 games for Essendon, a career that included two premierships. In this video, he outlines how to play this position at ruck contests and around the ground. Using Kangaroos and Carlton star Corey McKernan, Madden explains ruckwork in terms understandable for 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 Garry Lyon, outlines 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 main decisions made by field umpires. There is also a focus on the rule changes and new interpretations of existing rules that were 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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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				
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A Season of Achievement	18.00	1.80	\$19.80				
Drills & Skills – David Wheadon	22.73	2.27	\$25.00				
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