

Appropriate Action

Appropriate action is when umpires act accordingly in each situation to ensure that they enforce and interpret the Laws of Australian Football correctly and place the welfare and safety of the participants above all else.

DVD examples:

1. Karmichael Hunt is pushed in the back after kicking a goal. Umpire Andrew Mitchell correctly awards him another kick. (Law 12.4.1)

A few points about the communication: the umpire correctly doesn't get involved in a detailed exchange with Jordan McMahon about the decision. Explain it once and then get on with the job. At the ensuing scuffle after the kick the directive is given, "Jordan, don't get involved." As Jordan McMahon is only one of 7 or 8 players in this scuffle, one could argue that the umpire should not single him out but rather make it a more general directive or rather mention numbers if the umpire doesn't know the other players' names.

2. Umpire Andrew Mitchell mistakenly believes that the Gold Coast ruckman has interfered with the bounce. If this was the case it would be a free kick under Law 15.5 e. The umpire changes his mind, presumably because it wasn't a straight bounce, which he initially thought it was. One could argue the merits of what he has done here but it is an example of a circumstance where the umpire changes his decision, something which would never occur a few years ago.

The most common example of this occurring is when umpires mistakenly believe that a mark has been taken. According to Law 14.6, "where a field umpire is of the opinion that he or she has incorrectly blown the whistle to award a mark that was not subsequently completed, he or she may cancel the decision and call play on."

3. The boundary umpire blows the ball out of bounds because he believes that Essendon player David Myers has played on outside the boundary line. Umpire Shane McInerney consults with the boundary umpire and the mark is reset. One could argue that this should have been done more effectively in the first place and this messy situation would not have arisen.

Law 16.5.1 states that a player may bring the football into play from beyond the boundary line provided that the player moves in one direction. This is a bit of a grey area as this law is intended for kicks relating to out of bounds on the full. In this case the Essendon player chose to start outside the line as the mark was taken just inside the line. In the end I believe the correct call was made as the player didn't change direction but the initial set up could have been handled better.

4. A Hampton Rovers player is charged by his MHSOB opponent. It should have been a 25 metre penalty. Note that charging may be reported but it is also listed under free kicks. See Law 15.4.4. A charge means an act of colliding with an opposition player where the amount of physical force used is unreasonable or unnecessary in the circumstances, irrespective of whether the player is or is not in possession of the football or whether the player is within 5 metres of the football.

5. One umpire correctly calls holding the ball from his angle but the other umpire can see from his angle that the tackle is not legal. It is high and correctly this infringement is paid. These sorts of free kicks must only be paid when the non-controlling umpire is 100% certain of what has just occurred.
6. The VCFL player has his head down about to pick up the ball, sees a VAFA player approaching him and so turns his body to avoid contact. Umpire Dan Lawlor correctly calls play on as there is no high contact. In other words, he didn't guess or over react to what was about to happen, he paid what he saw.
7. The MHSOB player is dispossessed after having no prior opportunity. After the ball spills the player is then slung to the ground. Umpire David Anselmi correctly pays holding the man. This was not a case of the tackle lingering, it was a separate unnecessary action.
8. The St Bernard's player takes a mark. The intent of his Oakleigh opponent (who is only fractionally late) is definitely not the ball. His intent was to take his opponent out. This should have been a 25 metre penalty. Not sure about the exact contact but if most of it had been high (which I don't believe it was), it should have been reported.
9. A ball up is called for. A St Bernard's player slings his Oakleigh opponent, an unnecessary provocative action which is correctly penalized by umpire Luke Holmes. Calls from spectators such as "Report him" and "Where's the 25?" are of course spurious.
10. A St Bede's player takes possession and is tackled by his Scotch opponent as they head over the boundary line. The ball is still in the St Bede's player's possession as he is "half-slung" over the line. If the umpire saw this then some presence was required. I don't believe it should be a free kick as the player is still in possession when the initial tackle occurs. However, if it had been a full blooded sling close to the fence it should have been a free kick and report. The report could come under either "engaging in rough conduct" or "throwing or pushing another player after the player has taken a mark, disposed of the football or after the football is otherwise out of play".
11. At a field ball up, a Bonbeach player punches an Edi-Asp player in the stomach. Great vision by umpire Hayden Gavine to see the reportable incident. Although he took about 15 seconds too long in completing his notes, I love how calm he is in handling the whole procedure. It's so important to get all the details correct and remaining composed can certainly help with this. This confident yet relaxed air can sometimes diffuse potentially volatile situations. (See Luke Holmes' notes on Reporting & Tribunals for more information on this)