



THE ULTIMATE UMPIRING GUIDE

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THE ROLE OF THE UMPIRE



The role of the umpire is to apply the Laws of the Game and ensure the game is played in a safe and fair manner.

The Laws of the Game give you, the umpire, the responsibility to manage the game both on and off the ground.

Umpiring also presents you with an exciting challenge and can be incredibly rewarding. Taking on a demanding task and succeeding is a great feeling – and this is the feeling you will get from umpiring a game of football well.

∟WHAT THE GAME EXPECTS OF UMPIRES

The game expects the following of its umpires:

- Placing the safety and welfare of the participants above all else
- Accepting responsibility for all actions taken.
- Being courteous and respectful and open to discussion and interaction.
- Valuing the individual in sport.
- Seeking continual self improvement.
- Being a positive role model in behaviour and personal appearance.

∟WHAT PEOPLE EXPECT OF UMPIRES

They expect them to be:

- Trustworthy – honest and impartial.
- Responsible – appreciate the importance of the role of the umpire.



- Fit – physically prepared for the task.
- Knowledgeable – know the rules.
- Punctual – arrive at the ground with plenty of time to spare before the game.
- AFL Auskick Variations.

In AFL Auskick Rules matches when rewarding free kicks and with general communication, umpires should always encourage good behaviour. The umpire can give immediate rewards to players through encouraging words and by basing their decisions on things like courage, effort, determination, not just on the rules.

In aiming to fulfil those expectations, umpires should be aware that first impressions are often lasting impressions. Behaviour and appearance are important factors.

∨ MATCH-DAY ROLE OF THE FIELD UMPIRE

- Apply the laws and their interpretations according to the spirit of the laws.
- Attend to the administrative requirements necessary for the successful staging of the game.

∨ MATCH-DAY ROLE OF THE BOUNDARY UMPIRE

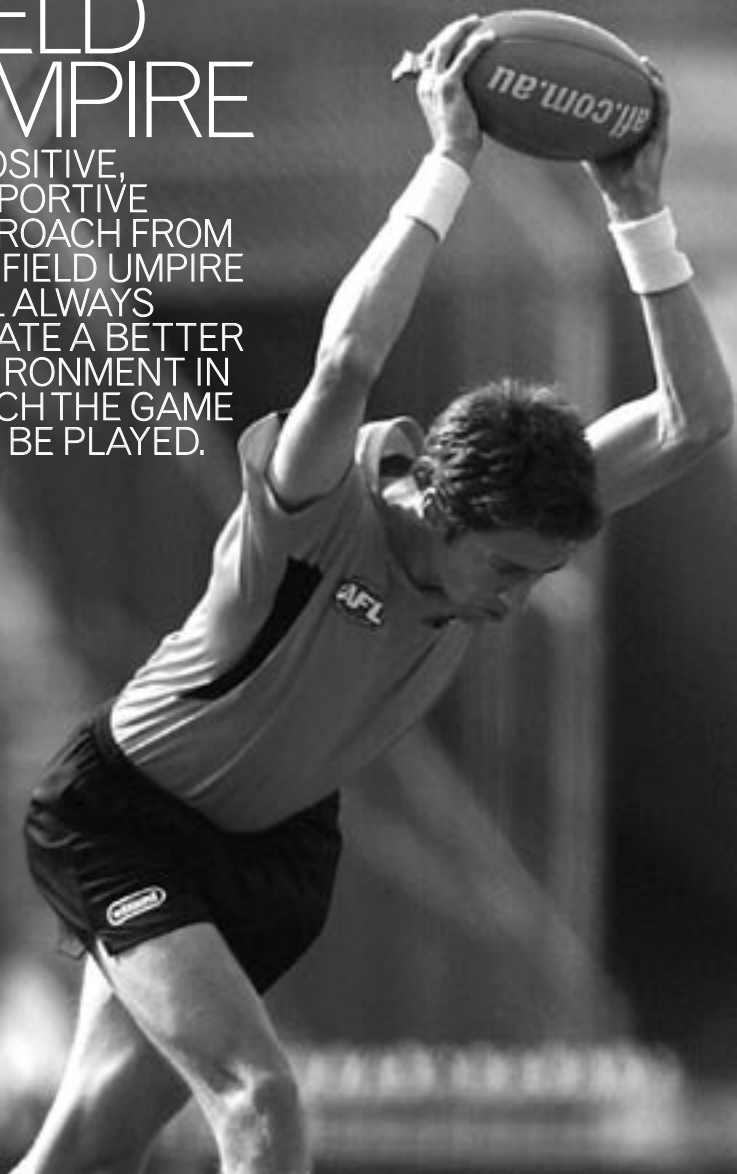
- Apply the laws relating to boundary umpiring and their interpretations with common sense and in accordance with the spirit of the game.
- Be the final judge of when the ball is out of bounds or out of bounds on the full.

∨ MATCH-DAY ROLE OF THE GOAL UMPIRE

- Apply the laws relating to goal umpiring and their interpretations with common sense and in accordance with the spirit of the game.
- Be the final judge of the scores.

THE FIELD UMPIRE

A POSITIVE,
SUPPORTIVE
APPROACH FROM
THE FIELD UMPIRE
WILL ALWAYS
CREATE A BETTER
ENVIRONMENT IN
WHICH THE GAME
MAY BE PLAYED.



THE UMPIRING ENVIRONMENT

PROACTIVE APPROACH

Most of the players on the ground look for guidance and direction from the umpire in regard to what they are required to do. The umpire should consider this when they give their instructions. As the umpire, they have a leadership role to play on the ground.

All actions need to be positive. The umpire needs to be enthusiastic about what they do and encourage players to play the game and enjoy themselves. If the umpire appears disinterested or negative in their actions and the manner in which they deal with players, then this feeling can affect the way the players respond to all umpires.

A positive, supportive approach from the field umpire will always create a better environment in which the game may be played.

PRE-MATCH (MEETING PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS)

1. Project yourself in a positive, firm and confident manner – it shows you are in control.
2. Meet as many players as possible, especially the captain and coach from both teams.
3. Never discuss how you will umpire (may be different if umpiring under-age players. For example: "I will pay the free kicks to the player in front who is playing the ball.")
4. Avoid reference to, or comments on, last week's umpires.

DURING THE MATCH

1. Always try to get along with the players.
2. Do not accept abuse from players/officials – check with your local league or umpiring group for appropriate use of the send-off rule.
3. Try to block comments out that come from over the boundary line – think up some simple coping strategies, such as repeating a positive comment to yourself – "I am umpiring well, I pay all the free kicks I see."
4. Supporters can get emotional – remember verbal attacks are not usually personal, and are expressions of frustration by supporters.

POST-MATCH

1. Avoid arguments about incidents from the match.
2. Enter into sensible discussions of the match.
3. Take the opportunity to get to know the club coaches, officials and players better.
4. If the atmosphere is tense after the game, collect all your gear, politely excuse yourself and leave.

FIELD UMPIRE'S CHECKLIST

AFL Grand Final field umpire Shane McInerney recommends the following items go into the kit bag of any well-prepared umpire:

- The law book
- Administration/booklet
- Correct umpiring uniform, including clean shoes or runners and official socks
- Sweat-bands
- Two whistles
- A pencil (ink pens sometimes don't work)
- A drink bottle
- A piece of card to write on (with your pencil) – paper gets damp
- Electrical tape to keep your socks up
- Reporting book/note-pad – for writing out your reports
- Relevant paperwork for your competition
- Towel

THE BOUNCE



The grip



Initial stance



Preparation



Bounce

POSITIONING

INTRODUCTION

While a knowledge of the rules and interpretations is essential, the ability to make correct decisions is more difficult unless the right position is achieved from which to view each incident.

The ability to be in the best position is without doubt the most important skill in umpiring.

Two major skills that enable a field umpire to adjust his positioning continuously are:

- Anticipation – being able to think ahead and guess accurately where the play will head next.
- Identifying the intent of players – being able to correctly predict what players will endeavour to do with the football once they gain possession, i.e. kick or handball.

An umpire needs to be aware of where and when to run.

∨ POSITIONING IN GENERAL PLAY

DISTANCE FROM PLAY

The most suitable distance to be from general play is between 20-25m. This distance allows a clear view of the contest and surrounding players, which helps to judge the contest and get ready to run to the next act of play.

SIDE ON

The ideal position to view any contest is side on to the contest. From a side-on view, it is unlikely that the umpire will have his view interrupted.

If the umpire finds himself front on, that is, looking at the front of the players contesting, he may be unaware of any incidents of holding or interference that are occurring in the contest.

Similarly, when the umpire is behind the contest, it becomes more difficult to determine what, if any interference has occurred and to what extent. By maintaining the correct side-on position and appropriate control distance, the umpire allows himself more time to watch the contest and consequently more time to judge the contest.

DEVIATION

With the modern style of play, the umpire may be in the ideal position one moment, but because of a sudden shift in direction of play, may then find himself behind or front on to the contest. When this occurs, the umpire should endeavour to immediately sprint to the side of the contest. He needs to move away from the line of the contest, so that he can achieve a side-on position.

EXAMPLES OF WHEN THIS MAY OCCUR

- The ball and play heads to the boundary line.
- The ball is kicked over the umpire's head.
- A quick kick into the forward line from the boundary line.

The umpire needs to develop an understanding of the angle to run at and also to ensure he sprints to his position.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Control distance – 20-25m from general play.
- Side on to contest.
- Deviation – trigger to side of contest when caught front on or behind.
- Be ready to call play on.

∟ CONTROLLING SET KICKS

A set kick occurs when the umpire has awarded a mark or a free kick to a player.

In order for the umpire to have good control at set-kick situations, they need to ensure they are close enough to communicate effectively.

It is recommended the umpire is adjacent to the player on the mark, at a distance of 15m.

When moving in to control a set-play situation, the umpire must watch a number of areas:

- The umpire must tell the player on the mark where to stand.
- The umpire must ensure there is a protected area of five metres surrounding the player about to take his kick.

Once the umpire calls "play on" in these circumstances, the player loses the right of the protected area and can be tackled from any direction.

- He must observe the player with the ball and be ready to call “play on” quickly if that player deviates from his line of kick.
- His instructions must be clear and precise, so that players will comply.

It is important to remember:

A player awarded a free kick or mark must go back to the spot where the free kick occurred or mark was taken before being allowed to kick or play the ball. The exception to this is if advantage has been called by an umpire after a free kick has been paid.

If a player kicks or plays the ball without complying with this law, the field umpire must stop the play and ensure that the player with the ball goes back to the spot where the free kick occurred or mark was taken. A player is not permitted to kick or play the ball from a position to the side of the spot, or to the side of a line directly behind the spot, without first having gone back to or behind the spot.

However, common sense must prevail in circumstances where the player taking the kick may be slightly off line.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER IN RELATION TO POSITIONING

- 15 metres from the man on the mark.
- Observe player with the ball.
- Clear area around the player with the ball.
- Be alert to the player with the ball playing on.

CONTROL DISTANCE

During general play situations, the umpire should endeavour to be about 20-25 metres side on to the contest at all times.

This distance allows him a good view of the immediate contest and of the players on the fringe of the contest.

By maintaining this control distance, the umpire can move quickly towards the next act of play as the contest moves on.

If the umpire is too close to play, his focus often narrows on the players contesting the ball and awareness of the fringe players is lost.



FREE KICK

The umpire lines a player up along an imaginary line between the centre of the goals and the spot where the player took the mark or was awarded the free kick.



▶ AT SET PLAYS

The previous section on positioning discussed the umpire's position in general play while play is in motion. This segment discusses the umpire's position for certain events when play stops during the course of the match. On the occasions when the play stops, the umpire needs to be in the correct position to maintain effective control.

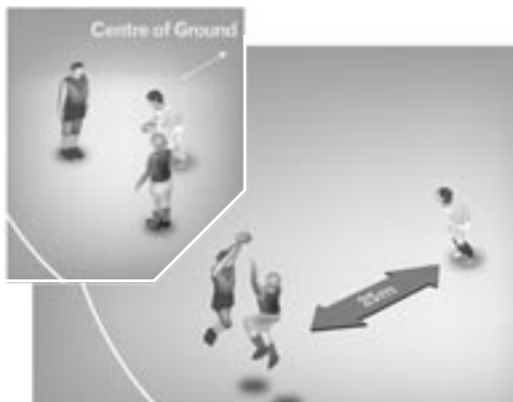
CENTRE BOUNCE OR THROW-UP

The umpire should begin the bounce or throw-up by coming in with their back to the wing area. After bouncing the ball, they should back away quickly, attempting to obtain a side-on position 20-25m away.



FIELD BOUNCE OR THROW-UP

The umpire should always have their back to the centre of the ground. After bouncing the ball, the umpire should back quickly away, attempting to obtain a side-on position 20-25m away.



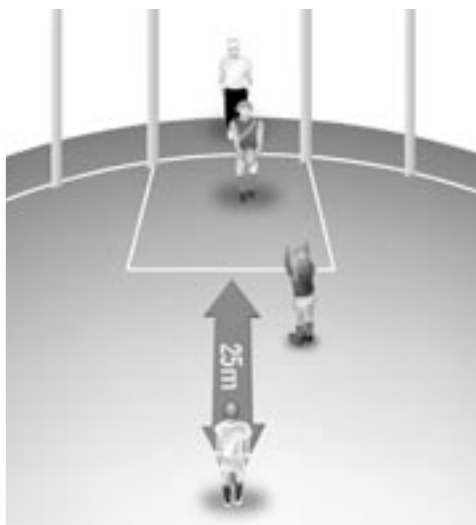


BOUNDARY THROW-INS

① The initial position at the boundary throw in should be 15m from the boundary umpire and 7m from the ruckman, between the play and the furthest goal (the long side of the ground).

② When the boundary umpire throws the ball in, the umpire should be moving and be side on to the ruck players as they contest the ball.

③ From here, the umpire should move quickly back inside of play.



KICK-IN AFTER A BEHIND

After a behind has been scored, the umpire should be positioned in the middle of the ground, 25 metres from the kick-off line.

This allows the umpire good verbal and visual control to clear the area of any players who are closer than five metres to the goalsquare. As the player brings the ball back into play, the umpire sprints to a position side on to the contest.

DECISION-MAKING

INTRODUCTION

The major responsibility of a field umpire in a match is to make decisions.

Not all of these decisions involve infringements by a player, and could include where the ball goes, what the score is or to let the play flow and not blow the whistle at all.

This section looks at the important factors that prepare umpires to be able to make decisions correctly and confidently.

Football is an extremely fast game and the umpire often has only a split second to make a decision. It is a skill to be able to evaluate the situations that arise in match in a calm and focused manner.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAWS

An important factor in decision-making is having a thorough knowledge of the laws of the game.

In order to make accurate decisions, the umpire must be able to identify incidents that are against the laws of the game.

During the hectic pace of a match, the umpire is called upon to judge an incident instantly, which requires them to call on their knowledge of the laws without delay.

Like anything we learn, a great deal of confidence can be gained if we are able to recall things quickly and correctly.

Gaining the confidence of the players, coaches, and spectators can be influenced by how quickly the umpire reacts to an infringement of the rules.

When an umpire makes a decision in a positive and decisive manner, they appear confident and in control.

When an umpire responds quickly to an incident and makes a correct decision, it removes any doubt that the umpire has been influenced by anything other than what they have just observed.

OBSERVATION

As a field umpire, your observation of what happens on the ground is vital to getting decisions right. The following simple guide will help you get it right when it comes to observing the action. Sometimes this calls for ignoring our natural instinct to watch the ball!

▾ WHERE TO LOOK



1. START OF THE GAME

- Key players.
- Scan the whole ground.

2. AFTER A DISPOSAL

- Player who has just disposed of the ball. (You may naturally want to follow the ball.) This is called 'holding your gaze'.
- Next, look to the players about to take possession.
- Players in the immediate vicinity (be aware of shepherds).

3. GENERAL PLAY

- Players contesting the ball.
- Awareness of players off the ball.

4. SET KICKS/PLAY

- The player with the ball.
- Awareness of the player on the mark.
- Awareness of the players in the vicinity. Remember to ensure the protected 10-metre zone is enforced.
- Forward of the play.

5. AFTER A SCORE

- Goal umpire for 'all clear'.
- Players involved in the last act of play, including on return to the centre of the ground after a goal.
- Awareness of players in a huddle after a behind.

6. FIELD BOUNCES OR THROW-UPS

Your natural instinct may be to watch the ball or to look behind yourself as you back out. Remember, it is your job to watch the ruck contest and make sure there is no illegal interference from any players.

Always remember that good observation will allow you to make the right decisions on the ground. By getting into the right position, you will always be in the best place to observe play and see the frees that should be paid.

SPIRIT OF THE LAWS

In an effort to achieve consistency in decision-making, there is an emphasis placed on understanding the spirit of the laws (i.e. the philosophies underlying the laws) and officiating according to the spirit of the laws.

FAIRNESS AND SAFETY

It is the spirit and intention of the laws to ensure that a match is played in a fair manner and to protect players from sustaining injury. All breaches of the laws shall be penalised. Seven main areas (spirit of the laws) have been identified:

- CONTEST FOR THE BALL – General play.
- DIVING ON THE BALL.
- RUCK CONTESTS.
- MARKING CONTESTS.
- TACKLING (player in possession of the ball – no prior opportunity and prior opportunity).
- ADVANTAGE PLAYS.
- 50-METRE PENALTY.

CONTEST FOR THE BALL

GENERAL PLAY

“The player whose sole objective is to contest the ball, shall be permitted to do so.”

- A player may be fairly met by use of the hip, shoulder, chest, arms and open hand or be pushed or bumped in the chest or side or be shepherded.
- Solid but legal bumps are permitted.

DIVING ON THE BALL

“The ball shall be kept in motion.”

- Where a player elects to dive on the ball, or when on the ground elects to drag the ball underneath his or her body and is correctly tackled, the player is to be penalised for holding the ball if he or she fails to immediately knock the ball clear or correctly dispose of it.

MARKING CONTESTS

“The player whose sole objective is to contest a mark, shall be permitted to do so.”

- Where there is incidental contact in a marking contest when the ball is the sole objective (eyes on the ball) – play on will result.
- When a player leaps early, the attempt must be realistic (i.e. able to touch the ball).

RUCK CONTESTS

“The player whose sole objective is to contest the ruck, shall be permitted to do so.”

- Where there is incidental contact in a ruck contest when the ball is the sole objective (eyes on the ball) – play on will result.

TACKLING

“A player in possession of the ball and tackled illegally will be awarded a free kick.”

NO PRIOR OPPORTUNITY – REASONABLE TIME

“The player who has possession of the ball and is tackled correctly by an opponent shall be given a reasonable time to kick or handball the ball or attempt to kick or handball the ball.”

- If the tackle pins the ball – a field bounce will result.
- If a correct tackle or bump causes the player with the ball to lose possession – play on will result.

PRIOR OPPORTUNITY – IMMEDIATE DISPOSAL

“The player who has possession of the ball and has had an opportunity to dispose of it and is then tackled correctly by an opponent, must immediately kick or handball the ball.”

- If a correct tackle pins the ball or causes the player with the ball to lose possession – a free kick will result.
- If a bump or knock to the arm causes the player with the ball to lose possession – play on will result.

ADVANTAGE PLAYS

“The ball shall be kept in motion by permitting the team offended against to take advantage, provided play is continuous.”

Advantage can only apply to a free kick. It cannot apply to a mark.

A guide as to whether play is continuous is that the outcome of the play would have been the same had the whistle not been blown.

To implement this well, umpires need to be alert for possible advantage plays in the following circumstances:

- When the ball is loose.
- When the team offended against has possession of the ball.

50-METRE PENALTY

“After a mark or free kick has been awarded, a 50-metre penalty will be awarded against the opposing team if a player unduly delays the play or abuses an umpire.”

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is a highly important skill that umpires need to develop to enhance their umpiring performance and make the game enjoyable for all players. Good communication starts from the moment an umpire goes through the gate of a ground, extends to polite and appropriate interaction with players and officials before the game and, of course, is mainly seen during the conduct of a match, and concludes with proper and appropriate action and exchanges with officials and maybe even spectators after a match.

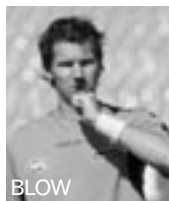
Blow your whistle strongly; use strong/firm verbal and visual communication to players (BLOW, SHOW and GO). Verbal communication of the decision – “Push in the back, your free kick No. 7” – should be delivered in a strong, firm manner and voice. Don't screech or shout at players; rather project your voice with strength and firmness. Visual signals should be performed in the correct manner on every occasion. You should then move promptly to take up position for the next act of play. Don't hang around waiting to see what happens next, but have a couple of glances behind as you move off in case there is a late bump or tackle.

We are all required to communicate with others every day. Although we believe we have expressed ourselves well, it is quite amazing how much information is not relayed effectively.

During matches, the umpire needs to communicate his decisions and directions to players and have them respond correctly to his requirements. Therefore, it is crucial that the umpire communicates all his messages effectively.

This section explains the ways in which an umpire communicates with players and the techniques he uses to have players follow instructions.

Successful umpires contribute most of their success to being good, effective communicators. When the umpire controls the match, as he should, it is also important to encourage an understanding and mutual respect himself and the players. The umpire must endeavour to create an environment where the players will follow directions respectfully.



∩ VERBAL/NON-VERBAL

Not only does the umpire verbally instruct players, he also communicates to them with whistle, indications and body language.

Players appreciate an umpire who communicates his decisions well. They have much more faith and confidence in the umpire when they understand what he is doing.

STEPS IN GOOD COMMUNICATIONS ARE:

1. Blowing the whistle loudly gets the attention of everyone.
2. Communicating with players in the immediate vicinity of the incident is done verbally.
3. Communicating decisions to surrounding players and spectators is done with strong and clear indications.

STRONG WHISTLE:

Successful umpires communicate their decisions effectively by:

- Blowing the whistle strongly.
- Verbally describing their decisions clearly and concisely.
- Providing an indication signal correctly and positively.

∩ BODY LANGUAGE

The use of appropriate body language enhances effective communication. The umpire must be seen by players and officials as non-threatening and non-intimidating.

Positive forms of body language which achieve this are: smiling and nodding, being non-invasive, eye to eye contact and appropriate presence.

The umpire needs to be aware of not intruding into the player's personal space. When speaking to players, remain at least an arm's length distance away.

Another strong feature of an umpire's body language is eye to eye contact with players. Whenever an umpire speaks to or listens to a player, he should maintain eye contact. This displays to the player the umpire's strong self confidence and that he is not afraid to look at and talk to the players.

The other feature of body language the umpire needs to be aware of is his 'presence'. This means the umpire needs to position himself at the appropriate distance from the players he is communicating with. He may need to be close enough to restrict or prevent unruly behaviour, or he may need to remain at a distance and just observe proceedings.

∩ MUTUAL RESPECT

Respect cannot just simply be expected, it must be earned. Umpires earn respect with what they 'say and do' and how they 'say and do it'.

The key to earning respect from players is to treat them the same way you would like to be treated. Treat the players as equals. You may consider speaking with them on a first name basis.

It is important the umpire uses words like 'please' and 'thank you' when issuing directions to players. Provided this is not overdone, it has a big impact on earning respect from players.

RESOLVING CONFLICT

Since Australian Football is a very emotional and exciting game, there are moments when a player may lose focus and become aggressive and/or abusive towards an umpire. One of the golden rules in dealing with conflict is to always remain clam.

While others may be emotional and have lost focus, it is important that the umpire has a calming influence and does not 'add fuel to the fire' by retaliating in the same manner. When you remain calm, you are able to think more clearly, take stock of the situation better and respond in the appropriate manner.

When speaking to players who are emotional, there are some proven guidelines to be followed:

1. Keep calm.
2. Treat players with respect.
3. Use positive and appropriate body language.
4. Be a good listener.
5. Avoid sarcasm when speaking to players.

FIELD UMPIRE SIGNALS



Start game



Holding the ball



High tackle



Trip



Push in the back



Run too far



All clear goal



All clear behind



End of game

FIELD UMPIRE SIGNALS



Illegal shepherd/block



Holding the man



Kicking in danger



Advantage



Abuse



Field bounce/throw up



Deliberate out of bounds



Blood rule



STARTING THE GAME CHECKLIST

Starting the game is an important skill for a field umpire. The checklist below will help you get your head around the beginning of a match and your responsibilities.

- ❑ Enter the ground at least five minutes before the match is set to start – this will allow you to warm up and inspect the ground conditions.
- ❑ Get the captains together for the toss of the coin.
- ❑ The umpire shall toss the coin and the visiting captain shall make the call – if umpiring younger players, let the home captain toss the coin if they enjoy it.
- ❑ Get both teams into position as quickly as possible.
- ❑ Before the bounce, ask each captain if they and their team are ready to start.
- ❑ Hold the ball in the air and wait for the timekeeper to sound the siren, then blow your whistle loudly.
- ❑ Move in and bounce/throw up the ball. The timekeeper should start timing when the whistle is blown.
- ❑ Once the ball is bounced/thrown up, run backwards to a position 20-25 metres from the contest – a little closer for the younger age groups.

NEVER WATCH THE BALL GO UP.

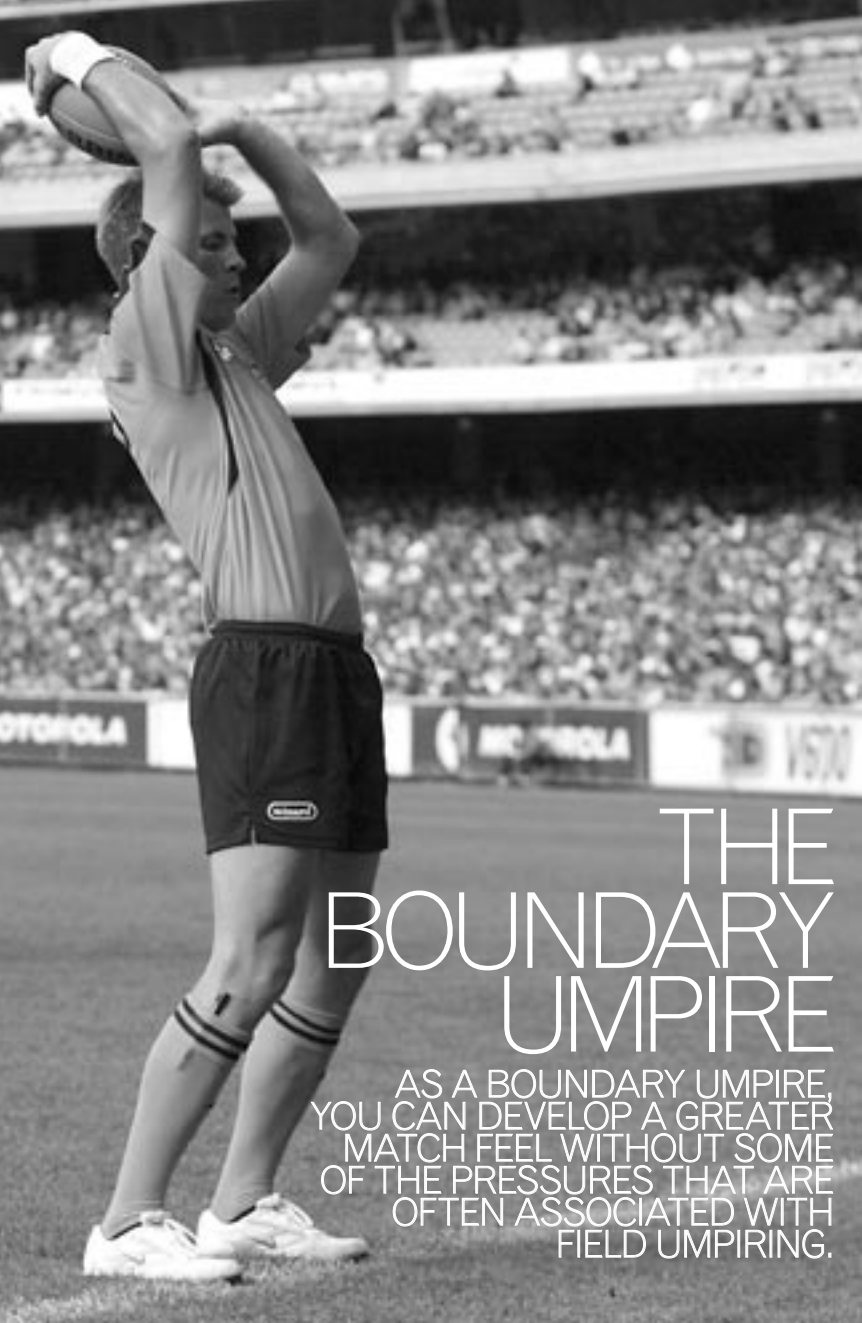
WATCH THE PLAYERS AT THE CONTEST.

∨ ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FIELD UMPIRE

A SIMPLE CHECKLIST

As the field umpire, it is your job to do each of the following:

- Collect team sheet before the start of the match.
- Complete any reports and distribute copies to the appropriate people at the completion of the match.
- Complete best and fairest votes if applicable.
- Collect the goal umpires' score cards.
- Collect the timekeepers' cards if applicable.



THE BOUNDARY UMPIRE

AS A BOUNDARY UMPIRE,
YOU CAN DEVELOP A GREATER
MATCH FEEL WITHOUT SOME
OF THE PRESSURES THAT ARE
OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH
FIELD UMPIRING.

↳ BOUNDARY UMPIRING

Boundary umpiring is a common way many people start their involvement in umpiring. It provides an opportunity to have a support role, while allowing you to experience what an umpiring career can offer. It is also a common entry level for those aspiring to become field umpires. As a boundary umpire, you can increase your awareness of aspects of the game and develop a greater match feel without some of the pressures that are often associated with field umpiring.

THE BOUNDARY UMPIRE'S ROLE AND MAIN DUTIES

It is the boundary umpire's responsibility to:

- Be the sole judge of when the ball is out of bounds.
- Apply the laws relating to boundary umpiring in accordance with the spirit of the laws.
- Adjudicate when the ball has fully crossed the boundary line:
 - Out of bounds.
 - On the full.
- Throw the ball back into play when out of bounds.
- Return the ball to the field umpire after a goal is scored.
- Monitor the centre square for players entering or leaving during a centre bounce.

↳ A BOUNDARY UMPIRE'S CHECKLIST

- The law book
- Booklet
- Correct umpiring uniform, including clean shoes or runners and official socks
- Sweat-bands
- Two whistles
- A pencil (ink pens sometimes don't work)
- A piece of card to write on (with your pencil) – paper gets damp
- Electrical tape or velcro garters to keep your socks up
- Reporting book/note-pad – for writing out your reports
- Relevant paperwork for your competition
- Towel
- A drink bottle

∇ THE BOUNDARY THROW IN.



The grip



Initial stance



Preparation



Release

∇ INDICATIONS FOR BOUNDARY UMPIRES

When the ball has passed fully over the boundary line, the umpire blows his whistle loudly and signals to the field umpire with the appropriate signal.

INDICATING OUT OF BOUNDS

When the ball bounces completely over the boundary line, the boundary umpire blows his whistle loudly and extends one arm straight up above his head with his hand open. The boundary umpire looks to the field umpire until the field umpire indicates he can throw the ball in.

Once the field umpire signals for the ball to be thrown in, the boundary umpire retrieves the ball and throws it in where it first crossed the boundary line.

INDICATING OUT OF BOUNDS ON THE FULL

When the ball goes completely over the boundary line on the full after being kicked and without having been touched, the boundary umpire indicates out of bounds on the full.

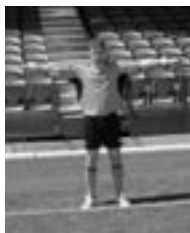
KICK IN BY FULL-BACK

If the full-back, when kicking off after a behind, kicks the ball over the boundary line without it being touched, the boundary umpire shall give the out of bounds on the full indication.

When the ball has passed fully over the boundary line, the umpire blows his whistle loudly and signals the field umpire with the appropriate signal.



Out of bounds



Out of bounds
on the full



Free kick mark for
out on the full



Ball hit post-
on the full

POSITIONING FOR BOUNDARY UMPIRES



Boundary umpires decide before the match which side of the ground they wish to begin. Sides are then changed each quarter.

DURING GENERAL PLAY

The boundary umpire follows play from goal to goal. He needs to position himself where he can have a good view of the boundary line but ensure he does not interfere with the players contesting the ball

When the play is on the other side of the ground, the boundary umpire moves inside the playing area, but no further than his side of the centre square.

Boundary umpires should never place themselves between the players and the ball.

AT SET KICK GOAL

When a player is taking a set shot at goal after a mark or free kick, the boundary umpire runs and stands behind the behind post. This allows the boundary umpire to assist the goal umpire. The goal umpire is the sole judge of a score and can overrule the decision of a boundary umpire where necessary.

AT THE CENTRE SQUARE

At the beginning of each quarter and after a goal has been scored, the boundary umpires position themselves on diagonally opposite corners of the centre square. They must supervise the square lines that meet at their corners. Once the ball has been bounced or thrown in the air, the boundary umpire moves off towards the boundary line.



GENERAL PLAY



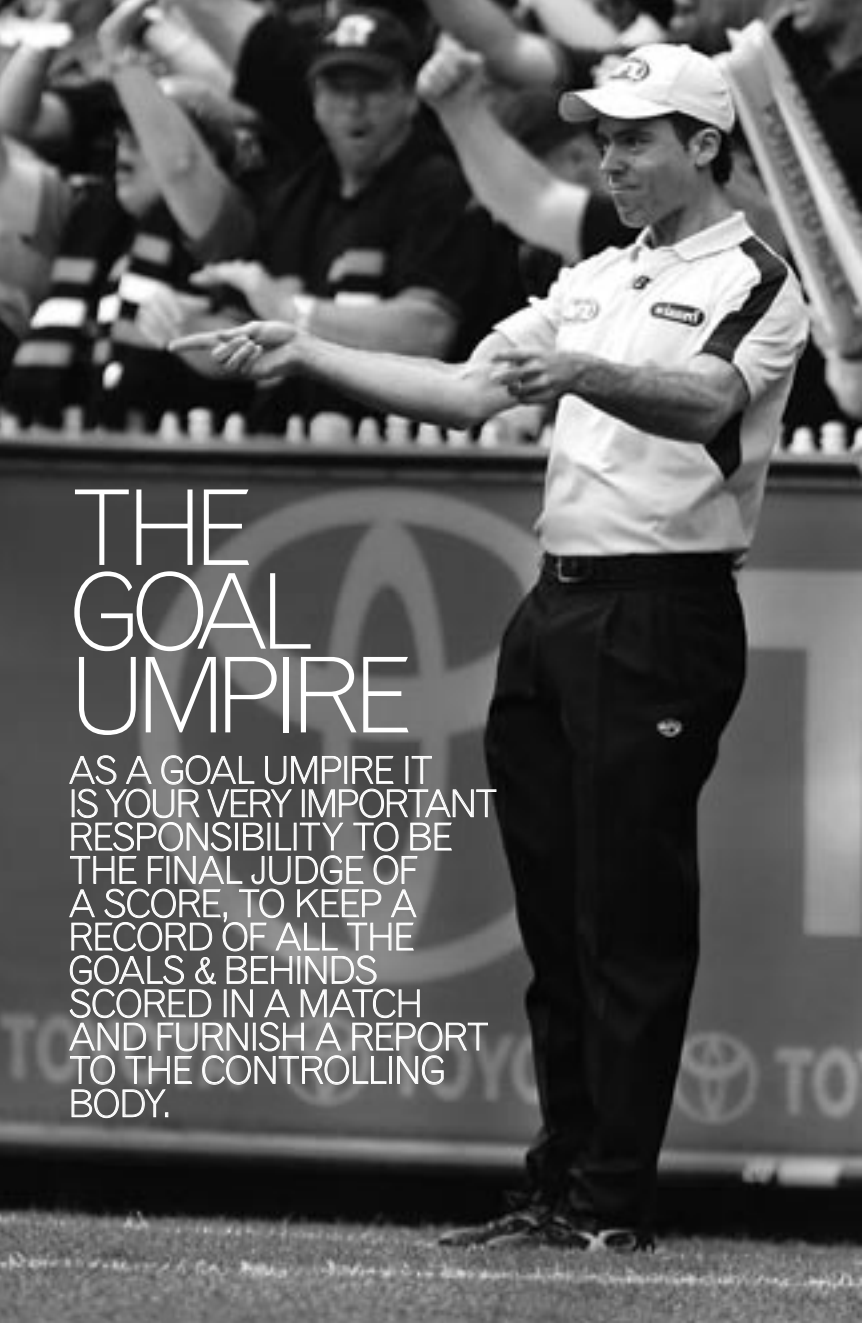
If the boundary umpire is still running towards the goal when the behind is scored, he shall move quickly to the boundary line and position himself about 50 metres from the goals. Boundary umpires need to position themselves where they have a good view of the boundary line but do not interfere with players contesting the ball. Boundary umpires should never place themselves between the players and the ball.

AFTER A BEHIND IS SCORED



FROM SET KICK

The boundary umpire is positioned behind the behind post for the set shot. When the goal umpire signals a point, the boundary umpire runs backwards along the boundary line for about 50 metres.



THE GOAL UMPIRE

AS A GOAL UMPIRE IT IS YOUR VERY IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY TO BE THE FINAL JUDGE OF A SCORE, TO KEEP A RECORD OF ALL THE GOALS & BEHINDS SCORED IN A MATCH AND FURNISH A REPORT TO THE CONTROLLING BODY.

∨ A GOAL UMPIRE'S ROLE

It is the very important responsibility of the goal umpire to:

- Be the final judge of a score.
- Keep a record of all the goals and behinds scored in a match.
- Furnish a report to the controlling body.

JUDGING THE SCORE

In order for a score to be registered, the football must be completely over the behind or goal lines or have hit the goal post.

A GOAL IS SCORED

- When the ball completely crosses the goal line after being kicked by a player on the attacking team without touching a player or goal post.
- The team will score 6 points.

A BEHIND IS SCORED

- If the ball hits the goal post or travels over the goal post.
- Crosses the behind line.
- Is touched by a player, before crossing the goal line.
- If the ball is taken over the goal or behind line by a player.
- The team will score 1 point.

OUT OF BOUNDS

If the ball touches or passes over the behind post, then the ball is considered out of bounds.

RECORDING THE SCORE

Having identified the score, the second most important duty of the goal umpire is to properly record the score.

This completed score is forwarded to the controlling body as the official score and result of a match.

A GOAL UMPIRE'S CHECKLIST

- The law book
- Correct, clean uniform (coat, hat, pants, shirt)
- Flags (four of these) and flag holders
- Boots or shoes (depending on conditions, boots may be more appropriate in wet conditions)
- Appropriate paperwork and a couple of pens/pencils (pencil may be better for wet conditions as a pen may run or not work)
- Scorecards
- Sunglasses for bright conditions
- Food and drinks (some snacks for half-time and after the game).
- A towel for a shower after the game

GOAL UMPIRE INDICATIONS

Whether for a goal or a behind, your indications with your hands and arms should be clear and precise.

This reflects the confidence you have with the decision you have made.

This type of indicating gives the players and officials confidence in your decisions.

SIGNALLING A SCORE

This style should also be reflected in your flag-waving. Your flag-waving completes your indication process and must be of a high standard.

The following pages demonstrate the appropriate signals given by a goal umpire.

INDICATIONS TO THE FIELD UMPIRES



Behind touched goal post, follow this way with point signal.



Ball touch leg above knee, follow this with a point signal.



Behind has been scored.



Goal has been scored.



Ball has been touched, follow this with point signal.

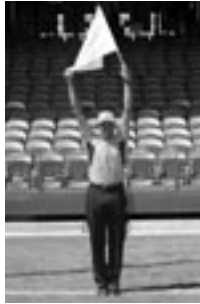


Blood rule.

SIGNALS TO THE OTHER GOAL UMPIRE & SPECTATORS



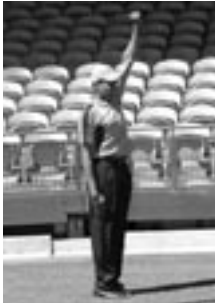
Goal – from here flags come across once, back once and then back down.



Point – from here flag comes across, back and then down.



Score has been annulled.



Out of bounds – to boundary umpire.



Behind has been scored – to boundary umpire.



On the full – to boundary umpire.



Ball hits point post on the full – tap 3 times and signal on the full.

POSITIONING FOR GOAL UMPIRES

Any form of adjudication requires the umpire to be in the best possible position from which to correctly judge an outcome. Goal umpiring, without doubt, requires the umpire to be in the best possible position from which to determine the correct score. The standard positioning of a goal umpire comes under two categories:

- Under the flight of the ball.
- Astride the score line.

UNDER THE FLIGHT OF THE BALL

For the goal umpire to correctly determine whether the football in flight has gone through the goals, over a goal post, or through the behinds, he needs to position himself under the flight of the ball. When the ball is within scoring distance, the goal umpire's initial position should be in line with the ball and the centre of the goal line.

While the ball is in flight, the goal umpire should run to get underneath the line of the ball as it crosses the score line.



ASTRIDE THE LINE

There are some occasions that require the goal umpire to straddle (or stand astride) the score line and out of the way of the players.

They are:

- Ball dropping in flight.
- Ball bouncing along the ground towards goal.
- Player running for close kick.
- Contest on goal/behind line.



RECORDING OF SCORES BY GOAL UMPIRES

RECORD PROGRESSIVELY

Record the scores progressively, that is, 1, 2, 3, rather than 1 1 1.

CONFER EACH QUARTER

At the end of each quarter, the goal umpires confer to check each has the same score.

If the scores are not the same, the goal umpires discuss the situation during the break and try to resolve the matter.

As a guide, there are three general rules for resolving different scores:

1. It is often the goal umpire at the non-scoring end who has the accurate score as he has not been under pressure to make decisions.
2. It is easier to 'forget' to record a score than it is to add a score in error. Therefore, the umpire with the extra score is usually correct.
3. If there is a scoreboard, check the scoreboard. The goal umpire with the same score as the scoreboard is usually correct as the other umpire may have made a mistake.

TOTAL AT END OF MATCH

Add up the goals and behinds scored by each team at the end of the match, and record the total scores.

A sample scorecard that has been completed in the correct manner follows.

SAMPLE SCORING CARD				
Club Adelaide		Club Kangaroo		
	GOALS	BEHINDS	GOALS	BEHINDS
1st Quarter	3 3 5 4	3 3 5	3 3 5 5	3 3 5 5
2nd Quarter	3 3 5 5 6	3 2	3 2	3 2
3rd Quarter	3 3 5	3 3 5 5	3 3 5 5 6	3 3 5 5
4th Quarter	3 3 5 4	3 3 5 4	3 3 5	3 3 5
Total	29	25	26	25
Total Points	127		111	

▾ INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF AFL AUSKICK RULES

INTRODUCTION

The AFL Auskick rules are designed to ensure that participation in the game falls within the developmental philosophy of the program. The AFL Auskick policy, designed by the best experts available to the AFL, is for the game of Australian Football for primary school-aged children to:

- Be fun and safe.
- Be designed specifically to maximise participation, skill learning and development.
- Be based upon rules and procedures appropriate to the children involved.
- Involve appropriately accredited coaches.
- Provide a logical, sequential transition from introductory level through to competitions at club and/or school.
- Be managed by the community.

ROLES OF AFL AUSKICK COACHES AND UMPIRES

AFL Auskick coaches and umpires have key roles in ensuring the success of games played in the program. The competence with which they go about the task will determine how well the objectives of fun, safety, participation, learning and development are achieved. Coaches have a primary role in teaching players the skills of the game and how to play to the rules, and umpires have a primary role in administering and teaching the rules. They also have other key elements of their roles referred to regularly throughout the AFL Auskick rules, with particular reference to the team, marking, positional play, order-off and distance penalties and the spirit of the game. The competency with which they carry out these aspects of their roles will be crucial in determining program success.

PLAYING GROUND, TIME AND EQUIPMENT

The AFL Auskick policy is committed to a reduced playing area, playing time and suitably modified equipment to take the emphasis away from endurance and allow for greater skill development. With smaller

grounds, the players are encouraged to concentrate on the game, because the ball is never far away. Field sizes recommended are the optimum size and flexibility may be required to make best use of specific circumstances such as space available. In some cases, smaller fields may be more appropriate.

TEAM COMPOSITION

Smaller teams are also used in AFL Auskick rules. This allows individual players to have more frequent and longer contact with the ball. It also allows for grading and matching of opponents and teams. With fewer players, play is more open, even when played on a reduced-size oval. Because of the openness of the game, and the fact that fewer players are contesting the ball at once, marking and picking up skills can be better developed. The spirit of the game is to give **all available players a game of football.**

Therefore:

- Where difficulty occurs fielding full numbers, both coaches must agree to equate player numbers.
- Excess players should be given to the opposition team if they are unable to field the required numbers.
- Coaches should consider modifying the numbers per side to ensure all players participate (for instance, if planning nine-a-side, but only 12 players in total are available, play six-a-side. Or if 30 players are available, simultaneously play one nine-a-side game with one six-a-side game).

ONE-SIDED GAMES

In the interest of their players' learning and development, coaches should make changes in one-sided games to create a reasonable contest. Usually one-sided games result in little learning or enjoyment for either team, or their individual members, and they do not achieve AFL Auskick objectives. Recommended changes include ensuring good matching of players, different rotations, etc. Both coaches should work together to manage the game in this respect.

USE OF ZONES

Zones restrict pairs of players to an area and thereby prevents ball-chasing and subsequent congestion where all players congregate around the ball. The zones start the players thinking about their positioning on the ground before being allowed the freedom to move wherever they wish, as will be the case later. Zones also enable groupings of players of similar size and ability to play within a zone. In general play, zones are not intended to lose continuity of the game. Common sense should prevail when deciding if players run into a different zone.

ROTATION OF PLAYERS

Children will experience playing in a variety of positions. The rotation of players through different positions and the interchange bench enables the development of a solid foundation to all skills and adds variety and interest to a game. Rotation through the zones applies to all games played by the 5-8 and 9-10 age groups. It is critical that coaches know positions and basic elements of positional play and be able to teach them to the children as they develop. With larger-sized teams (12 and 15-a-side), teaching positional play within zones is a learning outcome which will help children with the rules applying to ball-ups and start to prepare them for unrestricted positional play in the 11-to-12 age group games. It will also make the umpires' job easier in instructing players to stay in their correct positions. (AFL Auskick coach education programs will ensure that coaches are appropriately prepared to do this effectively).

OUT OF BOUNDS

The fact there are no boundary throw-ins means the number of opportunities to kick the ball is increased, congestion is reduced and the ball is kept in motion.

TACKLING

The AFL Auskick rules aim to provide players with the best possible conditions to learn, develop and improve their kicking and hand-balling by reducing the congestion and pressure on the player in possession. Tackling skills are introduced sequentially towards the end (11-12 age group) of the AFL Auskick rules program. Players will develop evasive skills and be less

likely to incur injury. Children will have increased confidence to attempt to gain possession. In responsibility to the safety of the tackler, players are not allowed to barge or chop past an opposition player at any level. Fending off with an open hand to the body (not above the shoulders or in the back), while generally not taught in the AFL Auskick program, is allowed for the 11-12 age group.

GAINING POSSESSION

At the appropriate time, the AFL Auskick policy allows for the skills of knocking and stealing the ball from the possession of an opponent. Contests to gain possession of the ball are part of the game.

MARKING

The AFL Auskick policy of marks being awarded over any distance is designed to reduce congestion and to encourage players to attempt to catch the ball. It also recognises that many youngsters cannot kick the ball over 10 metres.

BOUNCING

The AFL Auskick policy allows a player to have one (for the higher age group – two) bounce when in possession of the football to prevent players running excessive distances with the ball. This encourages disposal skills and team play.

KICKING OFF THE GROUND

Although it might be argued that this is a skill in itself, the AFL Auskick policy disallows it, to enhance the development of possession and disposal skills by making players gain control of the ball. This will assist players to go for the ball confidently without a worry about injury to immature bones in the hands.

THE COACH ON THE GROUND

AFL Auskick rules allow the coach on to the ground to provide praise of all children when warranted or explain errors immediately when they occur. It is the intent of the AFL Auskick policy to enable teaching and feedback to occur as the game continues. In the older age group (11-12) the coach is to remain on the sidelines and to use a runner to deliver the teaching point or message.

ORDER-OFF AND DISTANCE PENALTIES

Order-off rules and distance penalties are normally used to reinforce the spirit of the game. They are generally invoked for such things as bad language, poor sportsmanship, disputing umpires' decisions (order off) and hindering opposing players who have been awarded a mark or free kick (distance penalties).

Bad language, poor sportsmanship and disputing umpires' decisions is unacceptable and should be actively discouraged by those responsible for teaching the game (coaches and umpires). In line with accepted teaching principles, and if coaches are doing the job of an AFL Auskick coach appropriately, it should be possible to deal with issues which arise in this area without resorting to the order off rule. This is particularly so in the 5-8 age group.

The process of ordering off a child in this age group and the level of attention it creates is a severe punishment for a young child. It is likely to alienate the child and should be avoided. It should be possible to deal effectively with issues which may arise in this area immediately through counselling by the umpire and the coach on the field.

Overstepping the mark is a coaching matter and should be dealt with on the spot by the umpire and coach. In the case of bad language, abusive language or behaviour, time wasting, etc., the umpire should attempt to deal with it on the spot and if necessary refer it to the coach, who should then counsel the player regarding appropriate behaviour. If it continues or worsens (i.e. a player is deliberately testing the umpire), the player could be substituted to another zone (including the bench) for counselling by a coach's assistant and to have 'think time'. An apology to the umpire may be appropriate before returning.

Distance penalties can be applied for breaches in the 9-10 and 11-12 age-group games, but are not mandatory. The emphasis should still be on the process and, while the penalty can be used as a deterrent, the ability of the coach and umpire to teach during the game should be a priority.

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