



## **Field Umpires Coaching Session**

### **1. COMMUNICATION WITH SENIOR PLAYERS**

#### **1. Keep calm**

Umpires must remain calm in all circumstances. The ability to remain "cool under fire" communicates to others a sense of control, composure, maturity and skill in handling turbulent situations. By remaining calm, umpires can think clearly thereby avoiding any tendency to "rush things" and become flustered.

Thinking clearly allows the umpire to prioritise the options and to choose the most appropriate course of action.

#### **2. Treat players with respect**

Umpires have to earn respect. Respect is earned by what Umpires "say and do" and how they "say and do it".

Umpires should treat players in a manner that they themselves would like to be treated, as equals – preferably on a first name (nick-name if appropriate) basis.

Umpires should not speak down to players or patronise them. All players know and understand that the umpire makes the final decision so there is no need for the umpire to continually reinforce this fact by making comments such as "I'm the umpire, what I say goes".

#### **3. Use positive and appropriate body language**

Good umpires exhibit self confidence. This can be achieved by using appropriate and positive body language, smiling or nodding at appropriate times.

When speaking to players, don't intrude into their personal space, stand further than an arm's length away, don't point your finger or thrust out your chest.

Wherever possible, if you are listening to a player or talking to him, maintain eye-to-eye contact.

Correct and positive indications for decisions that the umpire makes are other non-verbal actions that demonstrate self confidence.

#### **4. Listen attentively**

Communication is a two way process, talking and listening.

Listening attentively means participating actively in the communication process by acknowledging and responding (where appropriate and possible) to the speaker's words and feelings.

Not all comments directed to umpires during a match could be classified as a complaint. A question or comment made in a rational and mature manner needs a rational and mature response.

## **5. Communicate decisions**

Competent umpires communicate their decisions effectively and strongly.

**We will adopt the AFL form of communicating free kicks with players. A simple formula of:**

**“Name of Infringement”**

**“Which teams Free Kick it is”**

**Example: High Contact, Romsey. - Holding the Ball, Lancefield - In the Back, Melton**

**If there may be some confusion over which player is taking the free kick you can then use a name and number. If you have a follow up situation, you can also use a name.**

Positive communication of a decision reflects self confidence and demonstrates a security in the knowledge that the decision was correct.

Players appreciate umpires who communicate their decisions effectively. They have a lot more confidence in umpires when they know and understand what they are doing.

## **6. Do not embarrass players**

Good umpires do not embarrass or belittle players. Most competent umpires avoid being the centre of attention and work hard at not embarrassing the players.

## **7. Penalise actions, not characters**

At times, the umpire may have to caution a player to cease certain actions to avoid being reported.

When communicating this, the umpire should be mindful to focus comments on the offending behaviour or actions, not on the person's character or personality.

This is particularly important when the player is angry or frustrated.

## **8. Selectively ignore comments**

Some issues are better left alone, not every remark requires a response, especially if the remark was viewed as a natural expression of frustration.

On occasions, it may be better to ignore the remark at that time but take the opportunity to follow up at a later stage if necessary, when the player may be more responsive.

## **9. Avoid sarcasm**

Sarcasm is a barrier to effective communication. The purpose of sarcasm is to hurt the feelings or reduce the self esteem of others; it is unprofessional and has no place in umpiring.

## **10. Do not try to have the last word**

In many instances the umpire will not change the player's mind then and there. It is good practice for umpires to answer a question. Your answer should be brief and direct yet provided in a calm and respectful manner.