



AFL Coaching Newsletter - April 2009

THE NEW SEASON

Most community football leagues around Australia kick off this weekend or immediately after Easter and NAB AFL Auskick Centres commence their programs in the next month. This newsletter focuses on a range of topics which are relevant to the commencement of the 2009 Australian Football season.

PLAYING AND TRAINING IN HOT CONDITIONS

The new season generally starts in warm to hot conditions and there is always a lift in intensity once the premiership season proper starts. Regardless of the quality of pre-season training programs, early games are usually more stressful and players and coaches should keep safety factors associated with high intensity exercise in warm conditions in mind – these include individual player workloads (use of the bench), hydration and sun sense. The following article by **AIS/AFL Academy dietitian Michelle Cort** provides good advice regarding player hydration.

Toughen Up - Have a Drink!

Why are so many trainers necessary on a senior AFL field and why they are constantly approaching players for a drink during a game?

Obviously the outcome of not drinking enough fluid is dehydration. The notion of avoiding fluid during sport to 'train', 'toughen' or 'adjust' an athlete's body to handle dehydration is extremely outdated & scientifically incorrect. Even very small amounts of dehydration will reduce an AFL player's performance.

Most senior AFL conditioning, nutrition and medical staff invest considerable time into ensuring the players are doing everything possible to prevent significant dehydration from occurring in training and games. The effects on performance are not limited to elite athletes. All levels of sports people are affected as are children playing sport.

An AFL player's performance can be reduced due to dehydration even before they notice they are beginning to fade. An increase in heart rate, body temperature and perception of how hard the exercise feels are the first noticeable affects of dehydration. These are accompanied by a decrease in concentration and mental functioning and a reduction in skill coordination. It is not overstating the importance of hydration to say that during intense, lengthy AFL games the hydration levels of players in a team can be the difference between winning and losing.

As dehydration progresses further muscle cramping can occur. If higher levels of dehydration (over 3-4%) are reached there is an increased risk of nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and other gastro intestinal problems during exercise.

Most players can expect to lose approximately 500-1500ml of fluid (mostly via sweat) per hour. However some players can experience losses of 2 or more litres per hour. It is not unusual during an AFL training session for a full squad to consume over 50 litres of sports drink in a training session in order to help maximize their hydration status.

Numerous scientific studies have proven sports drink to be a great choice of fluid during most forms of exercise. Consuming a sports drink, in preference to other fluids such as water or cordial, has been shown to improve performance. This is due to two major factors, 1. Sports drinks contain an optimal combination of fluids, carbohydrates and electrolytes which results in improved absorption of fluid, and 2. The carbohydrate in the sports drink provides the body with extra energy during exercise.

You will notice in senior AFL games, the team trainers running onto the field with their squeeze bottles at every possible opportunity. This helps ensure that the player has the best chance of avoiding dehydration. This in turn results in a faster, more skilful and entertaining game, and helps avoid the severe health consequences that can occur due to dehydration.



For your team's performance it is well worth the effort of structuring regular drink breaks in training and having trainers deliver drinks to players during matches.

Maintaining hydration and energy levels is a critical part of making sure an AFL footballer or a local footy 'weekend warrior' achieves their best. Well formulated sports drinks can help to achieve both of these things.

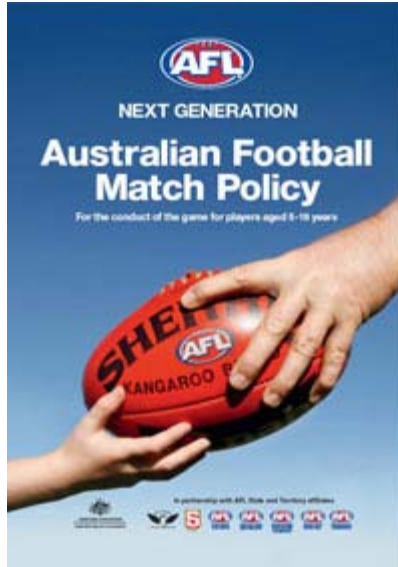
More information about safety when playing in hot conditions is available from the Sports Medicine Australia's website by [clicking here](#).

AFL JUNIOR MATCH POLICY

In 2008, the Australian Football League in collaboration with State football bodies and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) developed the Next Generation Australian Football Match Policy – For the conduct of the game for players aged 5-18 years.

The AFL, as the governing body of Australian Football, views the development and subsequent rollout of the Next Generation Australian Football Match Policy as a significant and critical step in ensuring that Australian Football provides the very best experience for junior participants and their families. The policy aims to:

1. Provide clear **direction to leagues and clubs** for the provision of appropriate pathways for all boys and girls in safe, enjoyable and accountable environments.
2. Ensure that **junior football is delivered in a uniform manner** across all States and Territories.
3. Maximise the **recruitment and retention** of players and umpires through programs and match rules appropriate to each age level (**meets the needs of children - they are not little adults**).



The Next Generation Australian Football Match Policy is broadly divided into the **AFL Junior Policy (5-12 year olds)** and the **AFL Youth Policy (13-18 year olds)** together with supporting policies and procedures.

AFL Junior Policy

Young people grow and mature at different rates. The junior policy is considerate of this growth and maturation diversity and provides an appropriate and sequential range of programs and match rules to cater for the individual differences and needs of participating children.

Modifications to ground sizes, team numbers and the laws of the game are introduced as boys and girls progress through the player pathway – **it is important to remember that children are not little adults**.

The emphasis is not on winning but the development of **FUNdamental** movement skills, basic game specific skills and maximum participation in a fun and safe environment.

AFL Youth Policy

The spirit and intention of the youth policy is to ensure that all games are played in a competitive and fair manner in an environment that:

- permits a player whose sole objective is to contest and gain possession of the ball, to do so in a safe and fair manner.
- rewards and acknowledges commitment and loyalty to the team, club and or school.
- allows all players to feel an essential part of the team while enabling each individual to develop self-efficacy, self-worth and an identity within the community (team/club/school).
- engenders and reinforces community values and social responsibility.

The policy has been developed in consultation with the ASC and is based on the ASC's Junior Sports Framework. The ASC developed the framework to assist sports with the development of their sport specific policies. The Junior Sports Framework is informed by contemporary research both nationally and internationally. This research has been invaluable in the development of the rules and procedures contained in the next Generation Australian Football Match Policy, together with continual research, refinements and evaluation from within the Australian Football industry over many years.

For the majority of affiliated leagues and clubs across the country the policy does not present a significant shift in the match rules and procedures that are currently being delivered. The AFL through our State football bodies looks forward to working in collaboration and consultation with all Affiliate leagues to ensure the complete rollout of the policy.

The AFL understands that in some circumstances it may take time and would encourage leagues to work

through any issues with their relevant State football body.

The policy was launched by the Federal Minister for Youth and Sport Kate Ellis and Port Adelaide Coach Mark Williams on 2 March.

For full details of the policy please [click here](#).

AFL GREEN SHIRT PROGRAM

With the 2009 season about to commence it is critical that coaches understand the importance of role modelling positive behaviour towards umpires. The coaches' influence over their playing group is significant, and the way the coach behaves towards the umpires will be reflected in the way his/her players interact and respect the umpire.

It is important that coaches are aware and supportive of umpiring development initiatives aimed at assisting and developing umpires across Australia. One program that all coaches should be aware of is the **AFL Green Shirt Umpire Program** which is now in its 5th year.

The AFL's Green Shirt Program is an umpire education and development program that aims to use experienced umpires to mentor new and inexperienced umpires. Under this program new and inexperienced umpires wear a light green coloured shirt to signify that they are learning their craft and are being supported by a mentor in a similar fashion to a learner driver displaying 'L' plates on the road. It is important that coaches make team officials, parents, players and supporters aware that a 'Green Shirt' umpire (just like young players) is still learning how to umpire and needs to be supported at all times.



It is critical that we all make a positive contribution towards the development of young umpires as this impacts on the overall quality of the game –

- Good COACHES know the laws of the game and are good role models for their players. As a coach you should meet the umpires before the game and respect the decisions they make during the game.
- Good PLAYERS know the laws of the game and show respect for the decisions the umpire makes during the game and focuses on helping their team.
- Good PARENTS and SUPPORTERS encourage their team, know the laws and understand and respect the role the umpire plays in the game.



COACH APPEARANCES - AFLCA

The AFL has reached agreement with the AFL Coaches' Association giving

access to the 16 AFL coaches and their assistants for development appearances, in a similar mode to player appearances. The program, which has a focus on coaching coaches, commenced at the beginning of 2009 and a range of appearances have been undertaken to date and others planned throughout the year.

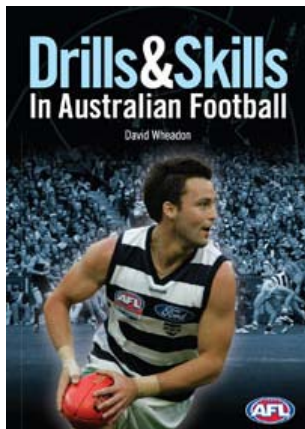
Examples of recent appearances include;

- Alastair Clarkson, Neil Craig and a number of assistant coaches presenting at the 2009 AFL National Coaching Conference.
- Paul Roos presenting a segment on the new AFL On-line Junior Coaching Course which is under development.
- Mark Williams reviewing and launching the AFL Junior Match Policy.
- John Worsfold presenting a session on leadership development to 150 coaches at the WAFC Coaching Academy.
- The Melbourne Football Club coaching team, led by Dean Bailey, conducting a community "Coach the Coaches" session for 100 coaches at Casey Fields (see story following in VIC NEWS)

For more information about the AFL Coach Appearance Program, please contact your state coaching manager or regional development manager.



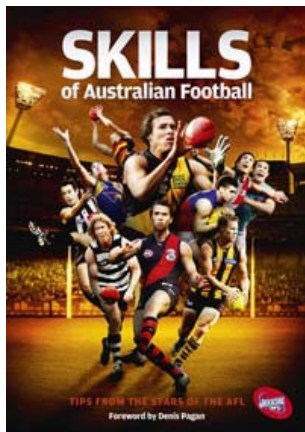
RESOURCES



Drills & Skills In Australian Football

David Wheadon has developed a comprehensive selection of drills and practices related to the key aspects of the modern game in this third edition of *Drills & Skills in Australian Football*.

Drills & Skills in Australian Football is available from the AFL for \$25 plus handling and postage through the afl.com.au. [Download an order form from the Coaching Section at afl.com.au](#)



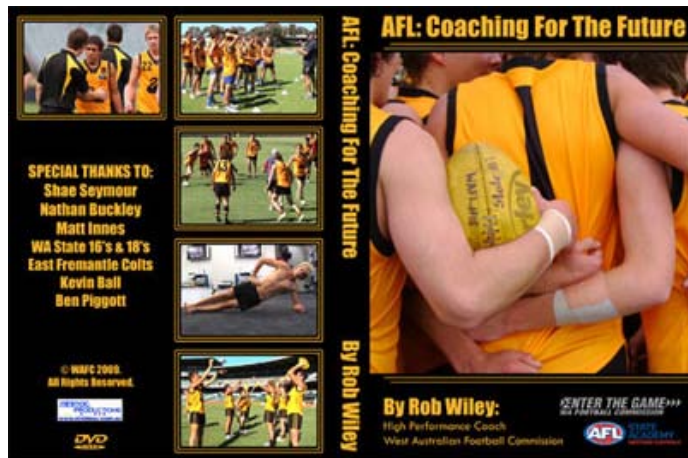
Skills Of Australian Football

Every week over the last football season we marvelled at how today's AFL stars have become so proficient in the execution of their skills. These are gifted athletes but their breath-taking 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

become 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.

Skills of Australian Football will be on sale from 1 May in most bookshops and will be available directly from the AFL – watch the Coaching section of the AFL website for details.



AFL: Coaching for the Future

A DVD produced by WAFC High Performance Coach Rob Wiley who is a former Richmond and Perth Champion and premiership player and long time West Coast Eagles assistant coach. Rob has created a total package that can help set up an effective training session /program. This DVD not only has a wide range of skills and drills but concentrates on kicking technique, tackling technique and core stability exercises.

The DVD can be obtained from the WAFC through the Coaching section of their website ([click here](#)) or by telephoning Tarryn Kailis on 08 9287 5552

STATE NEWS

NSW/ACT



Coaching courses

Coaching courses have been taking place in various locations around NSW since the beginning of 2009. Close to 400 participants have taken part in working towards both level 1 and 2 accreditations, attending courses that have included presentations by Stan Alves (AFL Coaching Ambassador), David Wheadon (Geelong Skill Development Coach), Alan McConnell (AIS AFL Academy High performance Coach), Lawrie Woodman (AFL Manager Coaching, Umpiring and Volunteers), Brett Allison (Sydney Swans), Mark Stone (Sydney Swans), John Blakey (Sydney Swans) and various NSW/ACT Talented Player Program Coaching Academy coaches. There are a number of courses still to run in coming weeks and later in the year.

[Click here](#) to view coaching course dates.

School Ambassador Courses

School Ambassador coaching courses are underway throughout NSW and the ACT. These courses are directly targeted towards school teachers and providing them with the relevant knowledge and resources to run effective football program within their schools in conjunction with development staff.

Course dates can be found by [clicking here](#).

Coach Coordinators Program

Nominations are currently being received for the exciting new Coach Coordinators Program for the Greater Sydney Juniors Region beginning in May. The course will be run in conjunction with the Sydney Swans Coaching Staff and is aimed at up-skilling a nominated club representative/coach with relevant sessions and workshops to implement a whole club approach to coaching back at their individual clubs. This is an opportunity for clubs to access an outstanding array of knowledge and information that will surely continue to improve the environment of all clubs involved. **Nominations close on 6 April.**

AFCA Launch

The NSW/ACT branch of the Australian Football Coaches Association (AFCA) is set to be launched in the coming weeks. The NSW/ACT Coaches Association is aimed at delivering a wide range of educational and development opportunities to all accredited coaches across the state through the distribution of newsletters along with monthly forums around the state allowing community coaches with access and invitations to hear from some of the sports elite coaches.

NT

Alice Springs Level 1 – Introducing Cultural Relevance

Congratulations to Tim Lawrence and the AFL NT Coaching staff who have recently delivered some Indigenous specific coaching modules.

Several sessions were designed to be culturally relevant to the Indigenous community coaches, who face very different Coaching conditions to those in town. These sessions are being developed in conjunction with the AFL to become part of a specific Indigenous Level 1 AFL Coaching Accreditation course in the future.

Thanks to the networking of Indigenous Sports Programs Manager, Ross Fraser, twenty-eight coaches attended including some coaches from as far away as Docker River and Kintore.

The day was also timed so the attendees were able to travel to Alice Springs to watch the West Coast vs. Adelaide preseason match.



The following letter from the Kintore Community to course organizer Tim Lawrence sums up the impact

“Hey Tim,

Gallay (Mike) has been very happy since his return from the footy coaching course. He has become very professional in his approach towards coaching and using the newly learned drills as part of training. He translates the ‘whitefella’ way of tactics with magnets and clip board to rocks and dirt and is managing to get success. Gallay also even tells his players to drink plenty of water and eat right before training and games, which is pretty amazing!

Gallay has been coming into my office regularly to answer to coaching accreditation questions. I’m trying not to rush him but rather make sure he fully understands it all. We should easily have them done and sent to you by the end of the month.

Also I don’t think Gallay walks anywhere around the community without his beloved coaching course folder you mob gave him; it’s like his V.I.P card to fame out here.”

VICTORIA

Community Embraces Demon Coaching

While Melbourne coach Dean Bailey called instructions to the young Demons players as they worked the ball from one end of Casey Fields to the other, Melbourne Football Manager Chris Connolly and AFL Victoria Development Manager Mark Wheeler were hosting over 100 community football coaches from the southern and eastern regions of Melbourne.

This community “Coach the Coaches” session, a joint initiative between the Melbourne Football Club and the Australian Football

Coaches Association (AFCA) enabled local coaches to watch at close quarters a mixture of full ground drills and specialist training activities performed by the Demons in preparation for the 2009 season.

Assistant coach Kelly O'Donnell provided an overview and commentary on the drills and skills session explaining why certain activities were being conducted and to answer coach's questions on how to develop their own specific skill drills. Senior players Brad Miller and Cale Morton demonstrated their kicking skills with O'Donnell explaining that coaches need to have their players practicing the variety of kicks used in the game including switching the play, set shots for goal and kicking to a team mate's advantage.



At the end of the training session the coaches listened to Dean Bailey outline his coaching philosophies, which included fun, "getting excited" and maintaining a high level of encouragement for all involved in the team. He stated that the Demons had extensively reviewed their 2008 season and were now better prepared with some key training focuses on kicking and decision making. At Melbourne enormous importance has been placed on developing leadership through behaviours for players and coaches. Bailey then handed over the session to his other assistants who provided a greater insight into their roles. Forwards coach Josh Mahoney presented measurements he is using – inside 50's, efficiency rates and accuracy – to measure the effectiveness of the forward structure, while Sean Wellman made it quite clear that "it is not just the back six who are responsible for defence". Mark Williams was looking for pressure, work rate and spirit in the mid field.

The Melbourne "Coach the Coaches" session kick started the Australian Football Coaches Association seminars which are conducted throughout Victoria by AFL Victoria's team of Development Managers (Future seminars are listed below).

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Kevin Sheedy Impresses WA Coaches

Fifty eight passionate West Australian coaches soaked up the coaching genius that is Kevin Sheedy at the AFL Level 2 Coaching Accreditation course held at the University of WA over the weekend of March 14 and 15.

Sheedy engaged the coaching group with a range of experiences, whilst always maintaining the relevance of his message to community level coaching. Kevin's honesty and his ability to encourage coaches to question the status quo was a key characteristic of his 3 presentations over the course of the weekend.

Sheedy was well supported by WA football identities such as Rob Wiley, Chris Scott (FFC), Brad Smith (WCE), Simon Eastaugh, Andrew Lockyer, Trevor Williams, Darryl Sinclair and Nick Randall along with sports science experts Glenn Stewart, Brian Dawson and Ben Piggott. The information presented was of the highest quality and all coaches walked away from the weekend much richer for the experience.

"The WAFL Districts need to be acknowledged for supporting the course and having such dedicated coaches within their ranks. The course provided a unique opportunity to further the depth of coaching knowledge and it was exciting to see the commitment and enthusiasm of the coaches involved" Sheedy said.



The course at UWA followed on from the previous weekend where the first ever level 2 course in the south west region was conducted with 43 coaches attending. The total number of level 2 coaches graduating in WA in 2009 will be 101, which is a massive boost to the coaching ranks and the development of quality environments for our junior players.

Coaches seeking further information on official AFL Coaching Accreditations and seminars can contact their local WAFL Development Staff or alternatively, the WA Football Commission on (08) 9381 5599.

AFL 2009 NATIONAL COACHING CONFERENCE

MCG, Melbourne – Friday 30th Jan (evening) - Sunday 1st Feb 2009.

The AFL 2009 National Coaching Conference took place in Melbourne over the weekend of Friday 30th Jan (evening) to Sunday 1st Feb.

The conference attracted over 450 coaches from across every state and territory in Australia.

The conference was an overwhelming success and the quality of presenters was again outstanding.

Coaches who attended the conference were given strategies to help their coaching effectiveness in through enhancing their own

coaching and providing better quality programs and learning environments for their players.

Highlights from the conference include:

- Alastair Clarkson opening the conference
- Patrick Hunt's presentation on coaching development and the associated challenges
- Peter Clark's presentation on performance psychology
- The sharing of knowledge in the coaching workshops
- Neil Craig's presentation on effective coaching
- The Saturday night conference dinner;
 - o Brian Cook's insightful address
 - o Peter Rowsthorn's entertainment
- Brian Goorjian's keynote address on defensive techniques
- David Parkin concluding the conference with a presentation on coaching effectiveness



The Australian Football League offers thanks to all the presenters and attendees for making the 2009 AFL National Coaching Conference an outstanding success.

Level 2 AFL/AFLPA Coaching Course

The Level 2 AFL/AFLPA Coaching Course was held at Telstra Dome over the weekend of the 17th and 18th January. The coaching course is coordinated between the AFL and the AFLPA to give current and past players the opportunity to attend a level 2 coaching course.

Among the 22 players to attend the course were Sam Mitchell (Hawthorn), Simon Goodwin (Adelaide), Lenny Hayes (St Kilda) and Nathan Buckley (Collingwood – past).



Presenters included David Parkin (AFL), Damian Farrow (AIS), Danny Frawley (AFLCA), Kevin Sheedy (AFL), Ray Breed (North Melbourne), Mark Riley (Carlton), Kevin Sheehan (AFL), Simon Lloyd (Collingwood), Simon Ball (Victoria University), Dean Robinson (Geelong) and David Wheadon (Geelong).

The Australian Football League would like to thank all presenters and attendees for their contribution to the course.

What's On!

April

Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Central East)

Presenter – U18 Coaches and Fitness Staff

When – 14th April, 5pm – 7pm

Where – Warrabee Park Oval, Warrigal Rd, Oakleigh

Contact – Mark Smart (03) 9563 0588

Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Goulburn Murray - Seymour)

Presenter – Stan Alves

When – 20th April, 7.30pm

Where – Kings Park Seymour Eastern Hill Social Rooms

Contact – Greg Liddell (03) 5822 2366

Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Goulburn Murray - Goulburn)

Presenter – Anton Grbac

When – 22nd April, 7.30pm

Where – Tongala FC Social Rooms
Contact – Greg Liddell (03) 5822 2366

Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Goulburn Murray - Shepparton)
Presenter – Steve Ball
When – 27th April, 7.30pm
Where – Shepparton United Social Rooms Deakin Reserve
Contact – Greg Liddell (03) 5822 2366

May

Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (South West)
Presenter – David Wheadon
When – 25th May, 7.30pm
Where – Monivae College
Contact – Jock Whiting 0408 331 736

Regional Coaching Seminar – Victoria (Western)
Presenter – Western Jets Coaching Staff
When – 30th May, 10am – 12pm
Where – Burbank Oval, Williamstown
Contact – Graeme Pratt (03) 9390 0611

June

Level Two Coaching Course – Northern Territory
When – 12th, 13th and 14th June
Where – TIO Stadium - Darwin
Contact – Jarrod Chipperfield, Talent and Coaching Manager
jchipperfield@afnt.com.au or (08) 8980 4810

November

Level Two Coaching Course - Tasmania
When – 14th and 15th November
Where – TBC
Contact – Nick Probert, High Performance Manager
nprobert@footballtas.com.au or (03) 6230 1806



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