



AFL Coaching Newsletter - September 2009

AFL Coaching this month provides details of the 2010 National Coaching Conference which will be held in Adelaide for the first time. As we come to the end of another season the newsletter delves into the issue of reviewing your season and planning for future success in 2010. We also look at reviewing club policies and culture and what needs to be done to provide a strong, positive and safe club culture and the role of a coach in that process. Again, we encourage you to update your coaching details through Footyweb. The newsletter also introduces the latest articles in the Coaches on Coaching series and there are updates from individual states and a calendar of coaching events coming up in each state.

2010 AFL National Coaching Conference

The AFL is pleased to announce that the 2010 AFL National Coaching Conference will be held in Adelaide from Friday 29th – Sunday 31st of January 2010. The conference will begin at 7pm on Friday evening and conclude at 4pm on Sunday afternoon.

The conference will take place at AAMI Stadium in the new Adelaide Crows Training and Entertainment facility.

We are currently working on a proposed program and brochure to provide further information about the conference and our online registration system. This should be available for the October edition of the AFL Coaching Newsletter.

Now that the date and venue has been finalised coaches can start planning to attend.

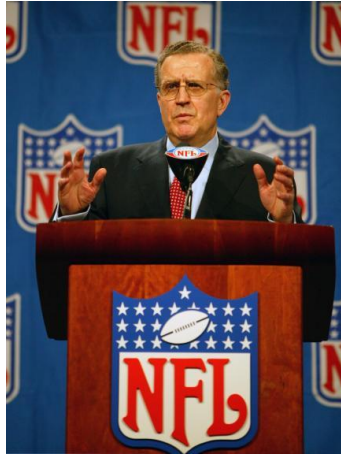


Impression from outside of the new Adelaide Crows Training and Entertainment facility at AAMI Stadium

"IF IT AIN'T BROKE, FIX IT ANYWAY" – Paul Tagliabue (NFL Commissioner, 1989-2006)

Conducting Effective Performance Reviews and Planning for Next Season

At the AFL's 2008 Industry Conference former NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue stressed on the leaders within the AFL industry the importance of striving for continual improvement. He explained that as custodians of the game, the AFL should never rest on its laurels. "If it ain't broke, fix it anyway", Tagliabue explained when emphasising the responsibility the AFL has to leave the game in a better position for future generations. As coaches we are constantly striving for excellence. With Tagliabue's comments ringing in our ears as the 2009 season draws to a close, the need to review your season and your own coaching philosophy is critical as you begin planning for 2010.



Former NFL Commissioner, Paul Tagliabue

The following excerpt has been taken out of Ray McLean's book 'Any Given Team – Improving Leadership and Team Performance'. It highlights the importance of reviewing your team in light of the leadership and teamwork it displays and poses some interesting questions that should encourage you to think outside the square when conducting your review.

How's Your Team Going?

By Ray McLean

There are no shortcuts to good leadership and teamwork but diagnosing the problems doesn't take long at all. You can do it yourself.

How would your team describe itself? Is that congruent with what you want? What 3 words would best describe this team now?

What behaviours do you tolerate in your team that you know are counter-productive? Listen carefully to the people around you. Do you hear the language of responsibility? Or the language of blame and excuses? Does your team's culture harbour any deep-seated excuses for poor performance?

What would you suggest this team should:

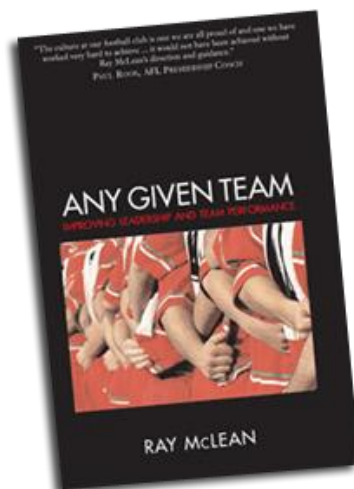
- Stop Doing
- Start Doing
- Keep Doing

Who are the real leaders in your organisation? What gets noticed in your organisation? Why?

Is feedback given in your team? Is it honest? Is it done face-to-face? How do the recipients respond?

What are the consequences for non-compliance with trademark behaviours? Who are the custodians of those standards?

There's your answer.



Ray McLean is a leadership consultant to the Australian national basketball teams, business and academic organisations, Australian Football League, National Basketball League, National Rugby League, Rugby Union Super 14 teams. Ray's clear and concise messages for improving team performance are resonating beyond business and elite sport and revolutionising the way we approach team activities in general.

Some coaches might argue that conducting end of season reviews is fairly simply and is based on common sense. However, as Wayne Goldsmith from www.sportscoachingbrain.com explains that common sense is not all that common – especially in reviews. The following article by Wayne Goldsmith looks at how to ensure your review will make a difference.

End of Season Performance Reviews – Making a difference or Making a mistake

By Wayne Goldsmith

Spring is the season of re-newal, re-birth and re-generation.

And for many Australian sports – AFL, Rugby League, Netball and Rugby – spring is also the season of the Performance Re-view.

That time when players, coaches, management and staff sit down together and try to work out what went wrong, what went right and how to do it better next time around.

How do you make certain your end of season Performance Review makes real difference to next season and is not a waste of time, energy and money?

1. FEEDFORWARD – not FEEDBACK. Everyone talks about wanting feedback – but they are lying! No one really wants to be told what they did wrong in the past – what they want is feedforward - suggestions, ideas and direction on how to improve in the future. No one ever achieved success in the future by looking backwards. So don't waste any time in your review by looking at the past season – it has gone!
2. BENCHMARK – only to establish a starting point - not to copy. If you have to benchmark, do it only to establish a starting point – to be certain where the current level of best practice is – but only so you can do it better, smarter and more consistently than your opposition. Copying = failure in high performance sport.
3. The last game of this season (and the review process) is the first game of next season. Use the end of this season and the review process to set the standards and behaviours for next season. If you are already lagging behind the competition, the earlier you start the continuous improvement process the better.
4. Challenge without blame: engage without emotion. Performance reviews are often a waste of time because it becomes a game of blame and a commotion of emotion! No use crying over spilled milk or fighting over lost matches and missed opportunities. Seek the views, opinions and comments of everyone involved with the team *without* judgement, blame, emotion or finger pointing. Engage everyone in the review process but take the emotions, personality conflicts and pointless petty political conflicts out of the equation.
5. Attention to detail – get the facts – eliminate the fiction. Performance reviews should be about what *actually* happened and not what the media, a few fans and a Board member thinks happened. The first step in every Performance review process is a commitment to data collection and the establishing of facts, evidence and a detailed, systematic analysis process.
6. Be systematic – look at all the performance elements. No one performance element can be totally responsible for the success or failure of the team. Look at coaches, players, facilities, management, sports science, sports medicine, rehab, resourcing and the other 2356 performance elements – in isolation and in combination.
7. Change something. Change something. Change something. In high performance sport, the dumbest attitude of all is the old "If it ain't broke, don't fix it". History proves again and again that this year's winning team is often the *least* likely team to win again next year – due primarily to the "if it ain't broke..." attitude. Every team is moving forward – the name of the game is learning faster and changing faster than the opposition.
8. Make decisions and communicate them clearly, concisely and immediately. Performance reviews are worrying times for all staff – particularly when they are accompanied by a major change, e.g. a new head coach, new CEO etc. All decisions and actions arising from the review process should be communicated quickly, clearly and appropriately to the people who are effected by them. Dismissals, retirements and retrenchments should be communicated in person, quietly, discretely, honestly, respectfully and with dignity.
9. Build quality control systems and structures to ensure the effects of the changes you make are measured and that people have clear accountabilities and responsibilities for ensuring the changes are successfully implemented, i.e. actually impact on the performance of the team.
10. Do what you say you are going to do. The purpose of doing a performance review is to accelerate the rate of change of the team and in doing so enhance the performance of the team next season. Talk is cheap – but winning comes from implementing consistent quality actions. Once you have gone through a detailed, thorough, professional review and made changes based on the findings – persist and persevere with them. Many teams will spend a fortune on their end of season review, make 1001 changes then go back to their old ways if they lose a few games early in the new season.

Performance Reviews: The Golden Rules:

- **Thorough, detailed and professional** and based on real, accurate information and analysis;
- **Develop an intelligent, independent, review process** – one which is systematic and methodical and devoid of personality and political influences;
- **Inclusive** – every one's opinion listened to, respected and valued;
- **Remove the emotion from the moment** – anger, blame and judgement do not lead to a quality review, good decision making or intelligent effective change management;
- **Do it now** – next season has already started;
- **Follow up – follow up – follow up:** Change is only as good as the commitment of people to implement the way it was intended.

Over the past 15 years, Wayne Goldsmith has reviewed high performance sports programs in professional football (including AFL, NRL and S14 Rugby Union) and several Olympic sports. For more information go to www.moregold.com.au or read Wayne's views on his blog www.sportscoachingbrain.com. For another article on conducting successful reviews; 'Ten Tips to Make Sure Your End of Season Review is a Preview for Success for Next Year' please click [here](#).

REVIEWING CLUB CULTURE

Conducting an effective review involves analysing the culture that is being harnessed within the club. Club culture is a significant influence in two current issues being faced by Australian Football;

1. Ensuring a safe environment, particularly at Junior Football matches, and controlling spectator behaviour.
2. Encouraging Responsible Drinking at Post-Season Celebrations

Preventing spectator incidents at Junior Football

The overriding objective of the AFL's Next Generation Australian Football Match Policy for the conduct of the game for players aged 5-18 years is to provide an environment where young players can play the game and inexperienced umpires can sequentially develop their skills through activities, games, match rules and conditions commensurate with their stage of learning and ability. This junior policy aims to provide clear direction for the provision of appropriate pathways for boys and girls in a safe, enjoyable and accountable environment.

Recently, there has been some publicity of incidents at junior football matches involving supporters and fans.

As coaches it is important to understand the role you play in guiding the members within your team to act appropriately. Garry Lyon provided the following article in The Age in response to the problems of parent behaviour at junior football. How can you make a difference and ensure that your club environment deals appropriately with this area?

By Garry Lyon

If alcohol is seen as one of the major sources of street violence in our city, then an unhealthy focus on winning is a similar problem at junior-level football.

Just as enjoying a beer or a glass of wine is fine, so too is hoping, and barracking, for your kids' team to win each time they play. But when that beer - or quest for victory - becomes the single-most important thing and it starts to impact negatively on your behaviour, you need to reassess your attitude to it.

The growing and abhorrent trend of violence at junior football matches needs to be acknowledged, addressed and urgently eradicated. The mindless, ignorant and anti-social behaviour of a minority group of people - chiefly associated with the 11-15-year-old players - has overridden the philosophy that should underpin all junior sport, not just football.

Coaching kids isn't easy. You are confronted with players whose skill levels vary greatly, but therein lies the great challenge for us all who have taken on the role. We need to re-define winning for everyone concerned, kids and adults alike, and reinforce, from the very first training session, that it doesn't always equate to what is happening on the scoreboard.

And this is, in my opinion, where the heart of the problem lies. Not all coaches, and parents, are able to equate victory with anything other than who is in front at the end of the game, and as a result their behaviour is inextricably linked to that.

Their frustrations are then directed to umpires, players, opposition supporters and coaches, and in the most extreme cases, that frustration and inability to control emotion leads to violence.

I have coached junior football for the past three years and some of our greatest victories have had nothing to do with the scoreboard.

One of my proudest moments in that time involved one of my players whose knowledge of the game and physical ability was very low. He started the year not knowing where to stand on the ground and, through his inexperience, was unable to get near the ball. In the last game of the year, with the support of team mates and coaches, he was standing in the goal square and managed to take a mark. The place erupted, his mates went crazy and all the parents cheered as if it were their own son. Without going overboard, it was as emotional a feeling as I have had in footy.

If we all take the emphasis off the end result, to even a small degree, there will be an immediate improvement in coach, player and crowd behaviour.

I would like to see junior football clubs officially graded on their clubs' policies, their behavioural history and their willingness to deal, positively but unerringly, with those that don't comply. Where practical, those A-graded clubs need to be rewarded for their efforts by way of resources or AFL player visits.

The future prosperity and strength of the AFL is inextricably linked to junior football. Without it, our game would wither and die. This is by no means a lost cause, and we can, and will, reverse recent trends. I watched games of junior football last weekend at Bulleen and Frankston, and went out to listen to the coaches at the quarter-time

huddles.

The messages given were positive and instructional, the win was important, as you would expect in finals, but not overriding, and the crowds were impeccably behaved. That is the standard we should aspire to. We will not tolerate thuggish behaviour, nor do we want to see grand finals called off in the middle of the game due to fears for the safety of its players.

This article is reprinted courtesy of The Age and Garry Lyon.

Garry Lyon is a junior coach with the Camberwell Sharks in Melbourne and has accepted a role with the AFL to coach the Victorian Country Under 16 team and to have an involvement with the AIS/AFL Academy squad.

Encouraging Responsible Drinking at Post-Season Celebrations

The Australian Government along with the AFLPA has launched the 'Just Think' campaign to help combat the growing trend of alcohol induced street violence, particularly amongst young Australians. The campaign, launched by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd during the first week of the AFL finals, uses eight AFL captains to deliver a strong message that alcohol abuse and violence is condemned by role models in the football community.


The football community should be working to reduce alcohol abuse and violence and seeing how football clubs can send a positive message and build awareness around responsible drinking policies. It is worth considering what role coaches may have in influencing the accepted behaviour within a club. The AFL does not suggest that coaches are totally responsible for the conduct of their players, however they can have a big influence. It is worth considering the impact the coach may have by emphasising the 'Just Think' campaign to the players and members within the club. For more information about the Just Think Campaign click [here](#).

"Just think how much fun the finals would be if you couldn't sledge the opposition because your jaw was wired shut."

"Just think how much fun the finals would be if you couldn't follow what was happening because you had irreversible brain damage."

"Just think how much fun the finals would be if you couldn't down a pie and sauce because you had to be fed through a tube."

"Just think how much an alcohol-fuelled fight could hurt your finals."

Advertiser We're not saying don't drink, **just Think** 

Updating Footyweb details

As the 2009 season winds down, we are doing some Footyweb administration and we need your help as we plan for the 2010 season and beyond.

The process takes roughly 5 minutes and is a tremendous help to us in providing you with quality service.

Please go to the AFL website [here](#), select your state and follow the on screen instructions.

In particular we require your **date of birth, current email address, your club and current position.**

In addition, monitor your email for a message from SportingPulse and AFL Coaching for further details. The email will also provide instructions on how to update and manage your details within the system.

Your cooperation with this process is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about the process you can contact us at coaching@ afl.com.au.

COACHES ON COACHING

For the past couple of months the AFL Record, in association with the AFL and the AFL Coaches Association, has continued to feature a series of articles on coaching. Each week one of the 16 AFL Senior Coaches explores various components of coaching the game. This series provides a rare insight into the minds of the AFL Senior Coaches. Recent additions to the series include:

- Mark Williams on coaching indigenous players.
- Ross Lyon on making the transition from assistant coach to senior coach.
- Dean Bailey on preparing and developing young players to reach their potential.
- John Worsfold on evaluating the playing list and building a balanced list for the future.
- Rodney Eade on finding the right balance between opposition analysis and focusing on your own structures and game styles.

To view these articles please click [here](#).

STATE NEWS



AFL Tasmania State League Coaching Positions Available

If you are an experienced coach with the ability to communicate, lead and develop a team please consider the following opportunities:

South Launceston FC – Senior Coach – please contact for Shaun Young on (03) 6333 0727 for further information.
North Launceston FC – Senior Coach – please contact Cameron McMullan on 0419 525 384 for further information.

Please note that applicants should have their level 2 AFL Coach Accreditation or working towards that level before considering these positions.



Level Two Youth (U13 – U18) and Senior Coach Education Course

AFL Victoria is conducting a Level 2 Youth and Senior coach education course at Mannix College (Monash University), Wellington Road, Clayton on the 21st and 22nd of November 2009. The course is a live-in course with sessions being conducted during the day and evening of the Saturday and concluding late Sunday afternoon. Your resources, accommodation and meals are included in the cost of the course.

The course is designed as an extension of the Level 1 course and should attract future leaders with experience and knowledge of Australian Football coaching. The key course selection criteria include:

1. Complete the official application form and payment (email Steve.Teakel@aflvic.com.au for forms)
2. Demonstrate through provision of a coaching resume that the candidate has coached at least two years as a Level 1 Accredited Australian Football Coach.
OR
Coached/played at AFL level for two or more years or coached/played at State League Senior level for four or more years.
3. Submit a letter of recommendation from current peer group leader, club president or the like also reflecting the benefits of the applicant becoming a Level 2 coach to the school/club coaching program.
4. If the candidate has acted contrary to the AFL Coaches Code of Conduct and found to be in breach of such code it will constitute grounds for refusal.
5. The candidate consents to a police screening and has not breached AFL Victoria's Police Screening/Check Policy (see attached)

The course costs \$290 (GST incl.) for AFCA members or \$320 (GST incl.) for non members.

The closing date for your application form, associated documents and cheque is Friday October 16th 2009

For further information on application requirements/procedures or assessment tasks involved in the course please contact:

Steve Teakel
Coaching Development Manager
AFL Victoria
(03) 8663 3015
steve.teakel@aflvic.com.au

2009 AFL Multicultural Academy Camp

The 2009 AFL Multicultural Academy Camp will take place during AFL Grand Final week. From Sunday 20th – Thursday 24th September, selected participants will take part in a free live-in camp in Melbourne where they will be exposed to AFL organised training sessions, sessions with AFL players, fitness and skill testing and guest speakers. The intention of the camp is to provide an opportunity for talented young people from multicultural backgrounds to continue their development as players and leaders in their communities.



Second AFL High Performance Coaching Course (Level 3)

Western Australia will host the second AFL High Performance Coaching Course for 2009. The course will be conducted at the home of WA Football, Subiaco Oval, from Tuesday 1st December to Sunday 6th December. Almost 50 applications for the course were received.

What's On!

New South Wales/Australian Capital Territory

October

Level Two Youth & Senior Coaching Course – Sydney
When – Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th October, 10am – 5pm
Where – AFL Office, Moore Park
For more information or to register please click [here](#).
Contact – Daniel Archer, State Coaching Manager
daniel.archer@aflnswact.com.au or (02) 8333 8020

Queensland

November

2009 Evolution of the Athlete Coach Education Conference
Mental Toughness : Leadership : Coaching Behaviours
When – Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd November
Where – The Sebel, King George Square, Brisbane
Keynote Speakers – Michael Kasprovicz, Craig Tiley, Glenn Stewart, Daniel Gucciardi, Darren Flanagan
Further information - www.eoaconference.com.au

AFL Level 2 Coaching Course
When – Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th November
Where – Anglican Church Grammar School (Brisbane)
Contact – Julia Price, Female Participation & Coaching Coordinator
jprice@aflq.com.au or (07) 3394 2433

South Australia

November

SA Coach Awards Dinner
Each SANFL Club invites 40 guests including Level 2 Coaching Course graduates and the coach awards winner in each of their country and metropolitan zones.
When – Friday 13th November
Where – AAMI Stadium
Contact – Development Manager of the SANFL League Club in the zone that you coach.

Tasmania

November

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

Victoria

October

SPORTS TRAINERS COURSE
When – Sunday 4th October, 9am - 5pm - Sports First Aid*
Sunday 11th October, 9am - 5pm - Level 1 Sports Trainer
Sunday 18th October, 9am - 5pm - Level 1 Sports Trainer
Sunday 25th October, 9am - 2pm - Intro Sports Massage
Sunday 25th October, 2pm - 5pm - Emergency Asthma Management
Where - Hawthorn Football Club, Waverly Park, Melways Ref: 80 H2
For further information please click [here](#).

AFCA Coach of the Year Awards – Eastern
When – Monday 5th October, 7pm
Where – Lilydale International, Maroondah Highway Lilydale
Contact – Shawn Wilkey, (03) 9724 9488

AFCA Coach of the Year Awards – Geelong
When – Wednesday 14th October, 7pm
Where – Buckley's Entertainment Centre, Breakwater
Contact – John Edsall, (03) 5241 6986

AFCA Coach of the Year Awards – Wimmera

When – tbc October, 7pm
Where – tbc
Contact – Geoff Burdett, (03) 5382 6443



2009 SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL COACHING CONFERENCE

Topic - "Inside the Game: An Insight into Match Day Management"

When – Tuesday 20th October

Where – Etihad Stadium, Docklands

Contact – Sheridan Nicol, Swinburne University

snicol@swin.edu.au or (03) 9214 8854 or 0414 880 532

November

AFL Victoria Level 2 Coaching Course - Youth and Senior

When – November 21 & 22 2009

Where – Mannix College – Monash University, Wellington Road, Clayton North

Contact – Steve Teakel, AFL Victoria Coaching Development Manager

steve.teakel@aflvic.com.au

Western Australia

December

Second AFL High Performance Coaching Course

When – Tuesday 1st December – Sunday 6th December

Where – Subiaco Oval

Contact – State Coaching Managers

PLAY BY THE RULES



Play By The Rules (www.playbytherules.net.au) is a free website which offers online training, information and resources for clubs and sporting organisations to ensure everyone involved in sport can do so in enjoyable, safe environments, free from discrimination or harassment.



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Copies of previous editions of the newsletter can be viewed on the AFL website by [clicking here](#).