

2024 UMPIRES MANUAL



This manual provides Adelaide Footy field umpires with the information that they require to carry out their duties in order to successfully umpire a game of football.

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 in the spirit of true sportsmanship.

The Laws of the Game give the umpire, the guidelines and responsibility to manage the game both on and off the ground. Umpires are to apply the laws and their interpretations according to the spirit of the laws and also to attend to the administrative requirements necessary for the successful staging of the game.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR COACHES

NAME	POSITION	PHONE	EMAIL
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10 GROUND RULES FOR ADELAIDE FOOTY UMPIRES IN SEASON 2024

ENJOY

Make the most of the opportunity to be involved in the great game of Australian Rules Football

BE A TEAM PLAYER

Represent the umpiring panel in a professional manner at all times
Assist other umpires wherever necessary

SET THE PATTERN IN THE FIRST TEN MINUTES

Stay alert
Use strong verbal control
Ensure the players' prime objective is the ball

PAY THE OBVIOUS AND BLATANT FREE KICKS

If they want to play footy, let them

ERR ON THE SIDE OF THE BALL PLAYER

Hold the whistle before paying holding the ball to give player a chance to get rid of the ball

The high tackle is the most important free to pay

TAKE NO SHIT

Take positive action when required Have a presence when necessary Use yellow or red cards when appropriate

BE PROACTIVE WITH POSITIONING, REACTIVE WITH DECISION MAKING

High workrate and high urgency = high performance Keep moving to be able to see the ball player's head and shoulders Pay decisions according to what the players do, not what they might do

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH PLAYERS

Speak with offending players, let them know what they are doing wrong Talk to players in the same manner you would like to be spoken to

KNOW WHERE TO FOCUS

As the number one umpire in control, 90% of the time the focus should be on the player with the ball As the number two umpire (not in control), 10% of the time the focus should be on the player with the ball while 90% of focus should be on players in the anticipated contest

Don'T RELAX

Keep your vision on the last act of play when the ball is disposed of Don't worry about any previous decisions – the next contest is the most important contest to concentrate on

SPIRIT OF THE LAWS

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 and elects to play on.

TRIGGER POINTS (for those aspiring to umpire higher divisions)

A trigger point is a 100% effort sprint with an obvious change of pace in the following situations:

- 1. As the ball crosses the line for a score (i.e. just prior to giving the all clear signal), commence sprint.
- 2. As the ball starts to run towards the boundary line, the umpire should sprint and deviate to side of the contest.
- 3. At a boundary throw in, the umpire should be adjacent to contest, then sprint to 20-25 metres away from the ball.
- 4. When the umpire pays a free kick or mark and is to retain control, the whistle is the trigger to sprint. This is especially important when paying head high free kicks so as to speak to players and create a presence.
- 5. In the same situation as 4, the number 2 zone umpire is to use the whistle sound as a trigger to sprint and control the mark.
- 6. As the umpire in general play, just prior to a kick or hand ball and you are to retain control, anticipate and sprint.
- 7. As the running player takes a bounce, use the bounce as the trigger point to sprint (don't allow the player to run from you).
- 8. When the whistle is blown for a ball up after the ball has become trapped, the whistle is the trigger to sprint in for the throw up. Following the throw up, it is a trigger to sprint backwards to 20-25 metres from the ball.
- 9. When a player is awarded a free kick or a mark within scoring distance, the whistle is the trigger to sprint in and line players up.
- 10. When the full back kicks off after a behind, the ball contacting the players boot is the trigger point to adjacent the contest.

EXPECTATIONS FOR FIELD UMPIRES IN SEASON 2024

REGISTRATION

Registration is done online via Officials HQ. A Working With Children's Check must have been processed within the last five years by the Department of Human Services in South Australia before an umpire is appointed to a game.

ENJOY UMPIRING

The most important thing in umpiring is to enjoy your involvement in the game. If there is anything getting in the way of that, send an email to colin@adelaidefooty.com.au so the issue can be addressed.

TRAINING

The training venue for the entire season will be in the East Parklands, next to Bartels Rd. We will be training two nights a week until the end of March (unless the hot weather policy applies). From the beginning of April, training will be once a week on Wednesday nights, with a Zoom coaching meeting each Monday night.

If you train regularly, this will be considered when it comes to Minor Round and Major Round appointments.

If you are unable to train, it would be appreciated if you can send an email or text to put in an apology. It can be a one-off message if you will be missing a particular night on a regular basis or otherwise send a message on the occasions you can't make it.

Make sure your name is marked off on the sign on sheet when you attend training.

OFFICIALS HQ

Use the Leave section in Officials HQ to indicate when you are unavailable to umpire – keep this availability up to date a fortnight in advance wherever possible. There is no need to send separate emails unless you need to request a specific venue/location.

Even though availability in Officials HQ is used for trial games, trial game appointments will be sent via email as they are not kept in Officials HQ for official purposes.

During the season, Officials HQ appointments will be sent out at 3.30pm on Tuesdays and it is expected that you confirm by the end of Tuesday.

Please update your profile in Officials HQ by answering "Which data may be shared with the colleagues with who you are appointed on a match?"

If you indicated you wanted to umpire more than one game in a day but there are days where you only want to do one game, put in Leave into Officials HQ for the time when you don't want to umpire.

UMPIRES ASSOCIATION

The Umpires Association do a great job of supporting umpires, so it is expected that all panel umpires becoming a member. Only Association members will be eligible to umpire a Grand Final at the end of the season. Payment must be done online (not cash) via the Try Booking link on the umpiring page of the League's website (https://www.adelaidefooty.com.au/umpiring).

SOCIAL MEDIA/MEDIA

If approached by media, umpires are not to comment unless you have permission. Umpires should be careful of what they post on social media and always aim to portray the League and umpiring in a positive light when doing so. This includes comments about umpires in other Leagues (including AFL).

COACHES/OBSERVERS

The majority of official observations throughout the year will be on Div 1 and 2 A grade umpires as well as on First Year umpires in B grade. If you are one of these umpires, it is likely you will be observed 6-10 times during the season. For other panel umpires, don't expect to be observed officially more than 2 or 3 times. Don't forget though that there are plenty of unofficial observers around the place!

There will be two emails during the season to all panel umpires with information from the observations.

APPOINTMENTS

Treat every game like it is the most important game that weekend for the players because it is! The qualifying time for Division 1 umpires to be appointed in the 2 umpire system for the 3km trial time is 12:30. Up to two Division 1 games per week may have 3 field umpires appointed, with no time trial requirement.

As has been the case in recent years, A grade umpires will be rotated between two divisions. B and C grade umpires could find themselves umpiring up and down the grades regularly. If you are ever dropped, you will be told before appointments come out so there is no need to worry if you go down for no reason.

For umpires starting with us for the first time this year, you will be umpiring in B grade men's football or in women's football to start with, whatever your background is. This will help you to settle into our ranks and learn what is expected. For those who haven't field umpired at all previously, you will most likely not umpire men's A grade this year while you develop your skills.

Umpires doing more than one game will usually either do a C grade at 10.15am and an A grade men's game at 2.15pm or do a B grade men's game at 12.15pm and then a 3.15pm women's game.

BEFORE A GAME

It is acceptable to wear your on-field uniform to and from games.

If you would rather get changed at the ground, you should wear the Adelaide Footy League polo shirt, black pants and black shoes, with an Adelaide Footy League jacket if cold.

Arrive at least 45 minutes before the start of a game. If running late, ring (don't text) another officiating umpire or Colin/Peter so umpires are aware.

Field umpires must go to meet coaches of both teams pre-game. This is important! If this does not happen, the field umpires can be suspended or demoted in subsequent game(s).

Do not leave any valuables in the changerooms.

For games of women's football, inspect the fingernails of all players to ensure there are no safety issues due to long nails.

Do not start the game until a Match Day Official for each club is in place.

Check to see if goal umpires are ready before holding the ball up to commence the game.

AFTER A GAME

Unless there are technical problems, BOTH umpires MUST input information into Officials HQ together in the changerooms after the game. It is NOT acceptable for one umpire to do it on their own. This includes putting in information about red or yellow cards. Best player information needs to be checked by both umpires using the team sheets.

If there are any queries or concerns, do not hesitate to call Colin or Peter to discuss.

Send a text to 0434 547 904 if you have had a red card.

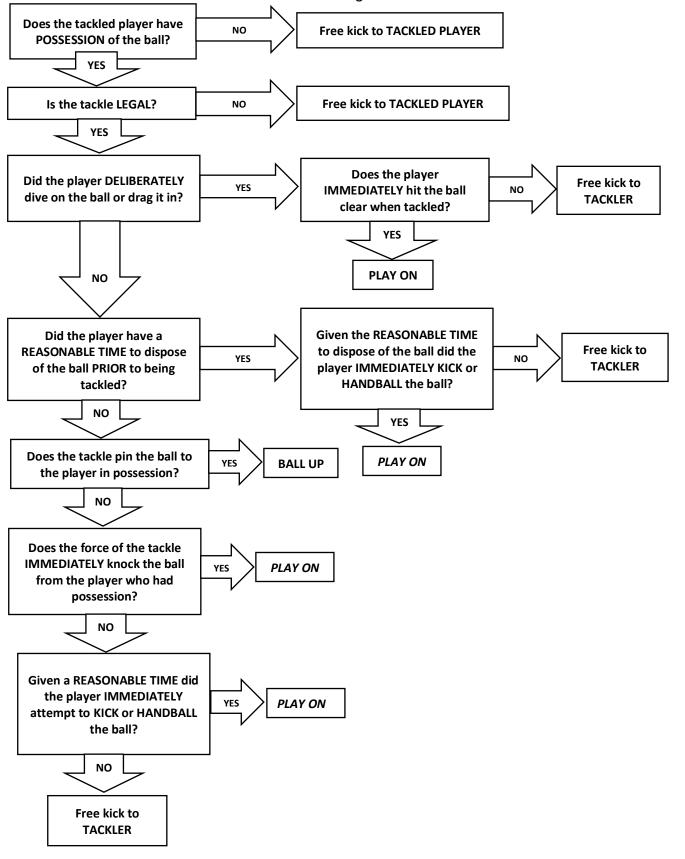
If you want to withdraw a yellow or red card, do not do it without discussing it with Colin first. If invited, make an effort if possible to have a drink at the home club. If atmosphere is not welcoming, discretely excuse yourself and leave.

RULES/INTERPRETATIONS FOR SEASON 2024

The latest version of Laws of Australian Football is available to download on the umpiring page of the League's website (https://www.adelaidefooty.com.au/umpiring).

All field umpires need to watch the 2024 Interpretations Video – https://www.dartfish.tv/Player?CR=p132071c358428m8592216

The Interpretations Video includes a number of examples of the Holding the Ball rule. The different elements to this rule are outlined in this diagram:



NUMBER OF PLAYERS IN SQUARE AT THE START OF THE QUARTER OR AFTER A GOAL

Only 4 players in each team are allowed in the centre square for a ball up at the start of the quarter or after a goal. Field umpires should proactively count this number and tell players if they are too many or too few. If there are too many players and the players do not exit the square immediately when instructed to do so, a free kick can be paid for wasting time.

OVERRULING

Only ever overrule another umpire in the case of a missed high tackle or an incident which compromises player safety (especially yellow/red card incidents). This does not include illegal tagging tactics which usually happen off the ball and can be paid by either umpire.

INTERCHANGE AREA

If necessary, field umpires should stop the play and ensure all coaches and interchange players move back to the coaches' box if they are standing up near the boundary line.

UMPIRE ABUSE

There are different levels of umpire abuse. Respectful questioning of a decision is NOT abuse and should not be penalised – use this as an opportunity to communicate with players. Good rapport builds respect. On the other hand, minor abuse should not be ignored – you can choose to warn, pay a free kick or issue a yellow card. If a player keeps going in this situation, this can progress the actions of the umpire further (e.g. warning turns into a free kick, a free kick turns into a to yellow card, a yellow card turns into a red card). For over the top serious umpire abuse, a red card should be issued immediately. When issuing a red card, make sure to state exactly what was said in the red card section of Officials HQ.

Zero tolerance of abuse when 100% sure it is from officials on the coach's bench – pay a free kick and/or report if warranted.

If abuse comes from an unidentified source in the coach's box or in the immediate surroundings of the coach's box, use the next stoppage in play to warn the Match Day Official that action will be taken the next time abuse is heard. If there is further abuse from the coach's box or the surrounding area, pay a free kick or 25m penalty. Please email details to colin@adelaidefooty.com.au
Umpires are to always "take the high road" and not lower themselves to the level of anyone who decides they want to verbally abuse umpires. If a player questions a decision without abusing, do not penalise them. Use this as an opportunity to communicate and build rapport/respect.

RACIAL/RELIGIOUS VILIFICATION

If a player reports an instance of racial or religious vilification without you hearing what was said, take notes and write a detailed confidential note to the League. Do not discuss the issue with anyone else. If you overhear an instance of racial or religious vilification from a player or official, use a yellow card to send off offender for 10 minutes. Communicate that this is to calm the player down but DO NOT announce that it is for racist/religious vilification. Take notes and write a detailed confidential note to the League. Do not discuss the issue with anyone else.

SPECTATORS INSIDE THE FENCE

When a fence is close to the boundary line, spectators needs to be behind the fence for safety reasons. Utilise the assistance of the MDO (Match Day Official) to make sure this happens.

TIMEKEEPERS

Each club is responsible to appoint one timekeeper each who should be aware of the League's Rules and Regulations. There is no need for umpires to instruct timekeepers of what to do in any circumstance. Timekeepers can contact League representatives if there are issues to be sorted out.

COMMUNICATION

It is preferable to use your voice instead of your whistle to let players know what you want them to do (except in the case of the melee rule when there is a combination of whistle and voice).

SIGNALS

Indications are to be carried out according to "Umpire AFL – A Basic Guide DVD" (available on Youtube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYBN54Oxf24).

NEW INTERPRETATION

As per the changes announced in the AFL, there will be a small tweak to the interpretation of ruck contests in 2024:

Straight-arm blocks will be permitted in a ruck contest, provided the player contests the ball. Note that if there are two separate actions where the first intention is to block with two arms or moves across the line of the ball and then goes for the ruck tap, it is still a free kick. It is only play on if one arm/hand is going for the ball.

DANGEROUS TACKLES

There will continue to be a crackdown on dangerous tackles. Any tackle of concern should be penalised. Players when tackling should not place their opponent (head or body) in a vulnerable position which is inherently dangerous. A dangerous tackle could be considered when the level of force is more than is normally expected in a given situation. Cues:

- Leaves head or body in a vulnerable position
- Excessive rotation, including slinging
- Arm or arms pinned
- Lifting legs
- A tackle that drives or has 2 actions

In addition to paying a free kick, the umpire has the capacity to also issue a yellow card or red card. The following guidelines are designed to assist umpires in determining whether a yellow or red card should be used for a dangerous tackle:

IMPACT	HEAD CONTACT	OUTCOME
Low	Head does NOT hit the ground	Free kick
Low	Head DOES hit the ground	Yellow card (can upgrade to red after game)
High	Head does NOT hit the ground	Yellow card (can upgrade to red after game)
High	Head DOES hit the ground	Red card (reportable offence)

There are other circumstances which may warrant an instant red card where tackles are deemed to be inherently dangerous. For example:

- Slinging motion where the ball player does not have control to brace themselves for landing
- When a player is lifted off the ground and not returned to ground with reasonable care
- When the tackler pins the arms of the ball player and they have no way to brace themselves for landing

A useful video with good examples was put together in WA on this topic and can be viewed at https://www.dartfish.tv/ChannelHome?CR=p177206

RED CARDS

All appointed umpires (field, boundary, goal) can report a player for an offence during a game, whether they are League umpires or club umpires. Non-running League umpires who are present at a game can also issue a report. If the report is by a boundary umpire, goal umpire or non-officiating umpire, the officiating field umpires are to be notified of the report at the next break in play. The officiating umpires can choose to issue a red card at the time, which would mean the player is sent off and cannot be replaced for 10 minutes. If the field umpires have doubts about the validity of the report, they can choose to not issue the red card but still need to enter the details into Officials HQ if the reporting umpire wants to proceed.

Umpires are required to take a note of the number for any player sent off during a game (do not rely on the interchange steward to do this).

An umpire who issues a red card must text 0434 547 904 immediately after inputting details into Officials HQ to make sure the details have been received and to sort out any further requirements. Make sure to determine "impact" according to the Tribunal Reference Manual:

Impact Guidelines			
Low	Minimal or no impact on the player - the Player continued to play the majority of the match and suffered no or minimal ongoing issues.		
Medium	Clearly some impact on the Player, and / or the Player left the field for a lengthy period of time, and/ or some possible lower level ongoing treatment(s) required.		
High	Major impact on the Player, and / or the Player was unable to participate in the remainder of the game, and / or major ongoing issues that require medical intervention and / or may miss some matches.		
Severe	Major impact and serious injury to the Player, and / or likely to miss a significant number of matches.		

Note – These are base level impact guidelines. The impact can be categorised as higher where there is the potential to cause serious injury.

TRIBUNALS

Tribunal hearings are in most cases to be heard on Wednesday nights.

Dress attire is Adelaide Footy League polo shirt/jacket, black trousers, black shoes.

Don't hang around after giving evidence (get out of building).

Do not be concerned with the verdict.

New umpires are welcome to sit in on tribunals to see how they operate.

For more details about the tribunal process, read the League's Tribunal Reference Manual on the Adelaide Footy League's website.

COACHING FEEDBACK

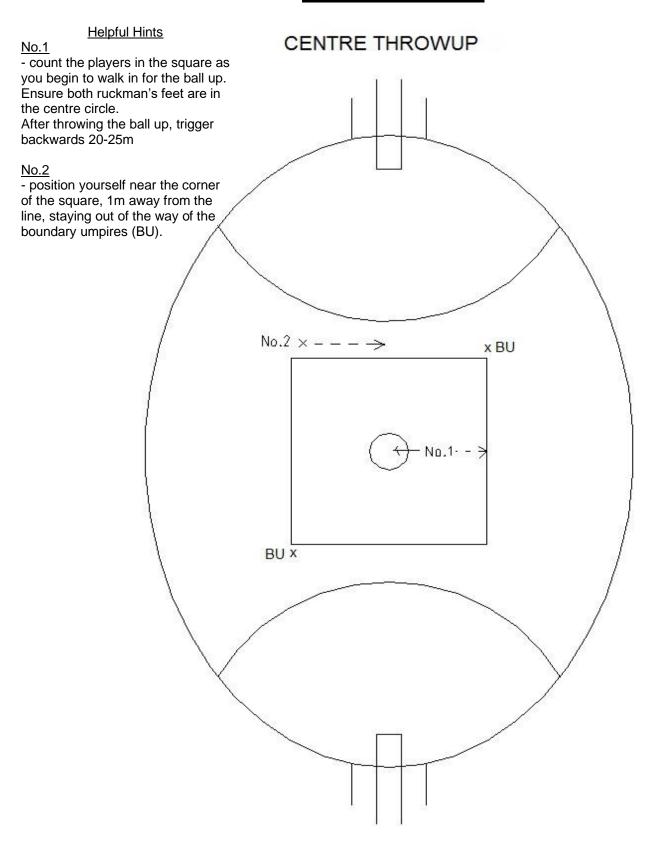
Non running coaches will communicate with umpires before and after a match (rarely during a game).

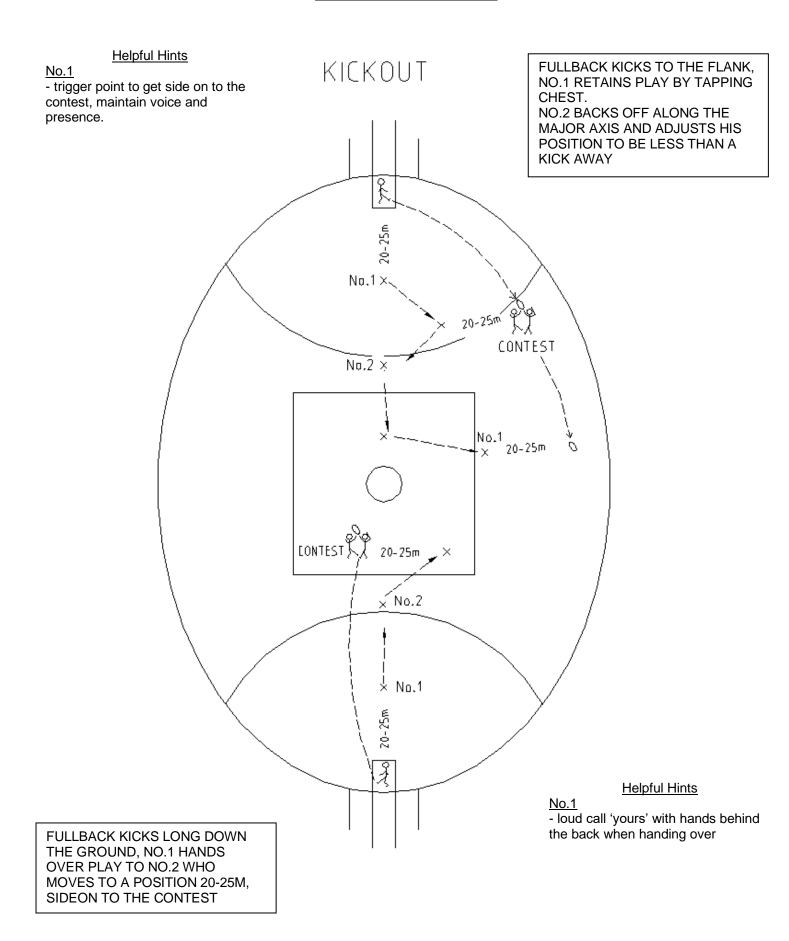
Running coaches can provide general constructive feedback during a game if necessary.

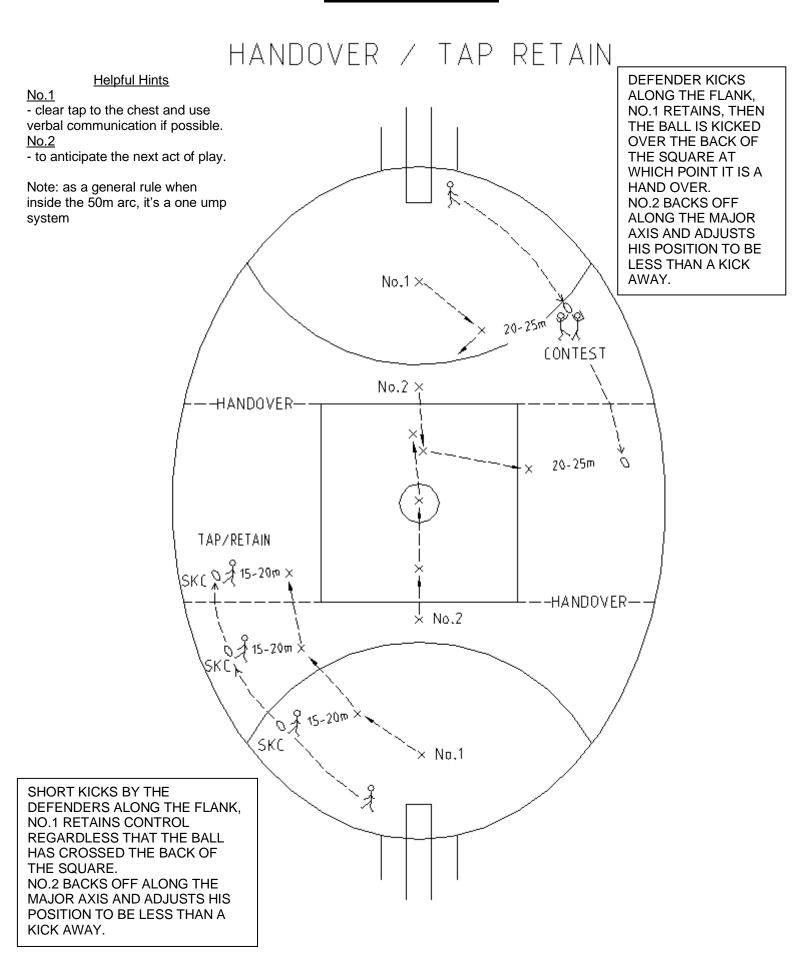
Verbal feedback will be delivered briefly after a game and more in depth by Monday on the phone if necessary

Coaches provide written feedback (including ratings) to Umpiring Manager in the week after the game.

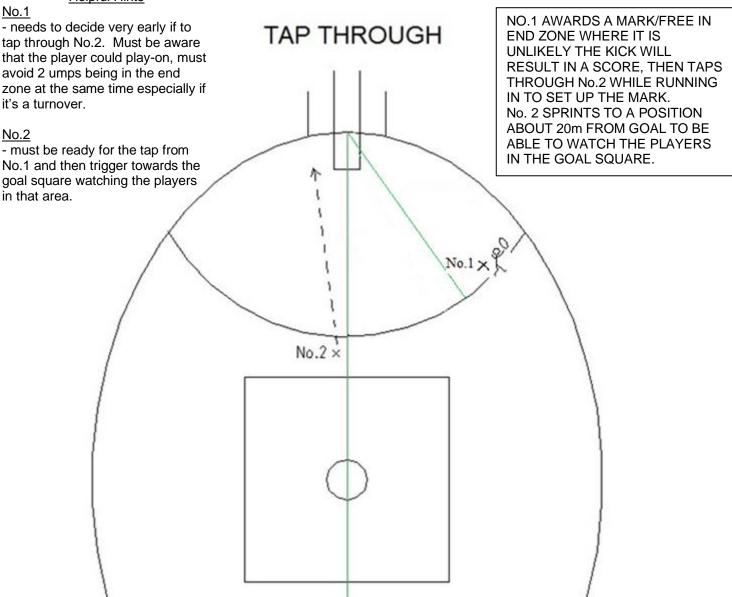
Written feedback will be provided to umpire twice during season by the Umpiring Manager. Feedback is to be constructive (not critical) with the aim to improve future performances.







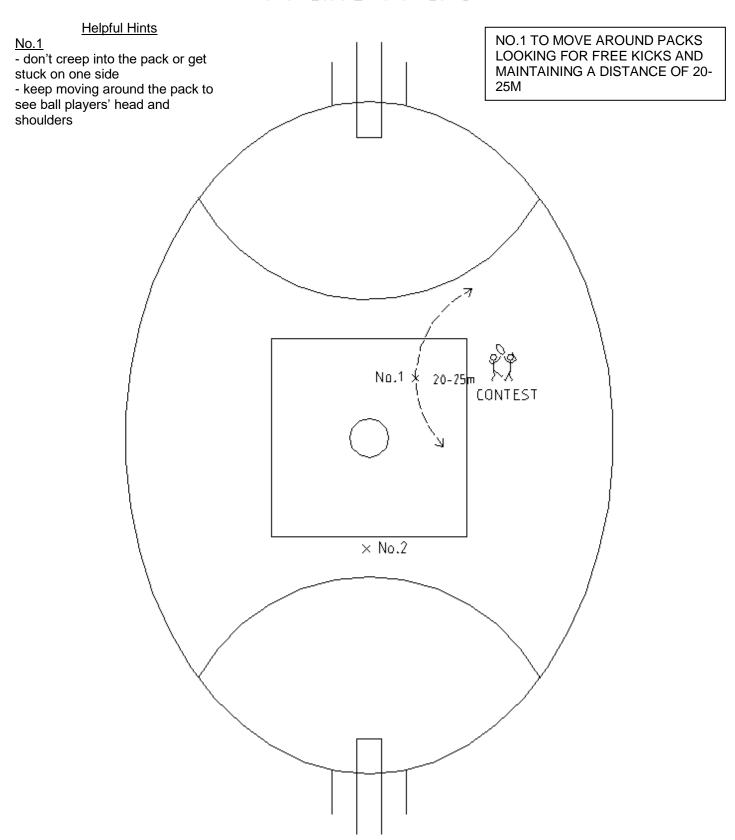
Helpful Hints



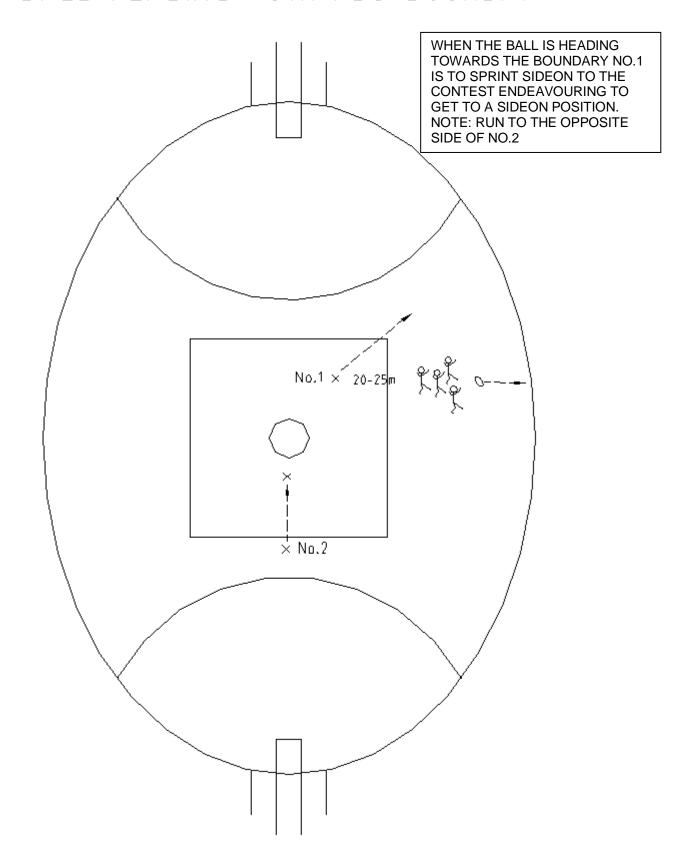
IF THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL IS LIKELY TO SCORE, THE NO 1 UMPIRE REMAINS IN CONTROL THE ENTIRE TIME. THE UMPIRE SETS UP THE KICK WHILE IN A 1M OUT, 1M BACK POSITION AND THEN SQUARES OFF IN LINE WITH THE PLAYER ON THE MARK, WATCHING THE PLAYER WITH THE BALL THE WHOLE TIME. AS THE PLAYERS KICKS THE BALL, THE UMPIRE MOVES TOWARDS THE GOAL FOR THE ALL CLEAR.

NO 2 UMPIRE REMAINS AT THE TOP OF THE 50M LINE, WATCHING THE PLAYERS IN THE GOAL SQUARE.

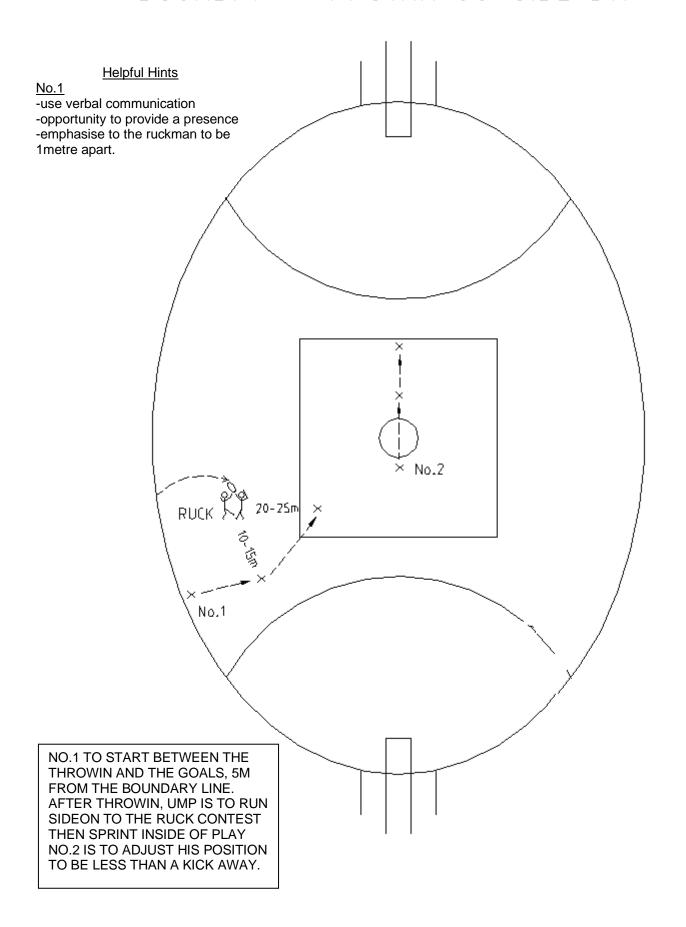
ARCING PACKS



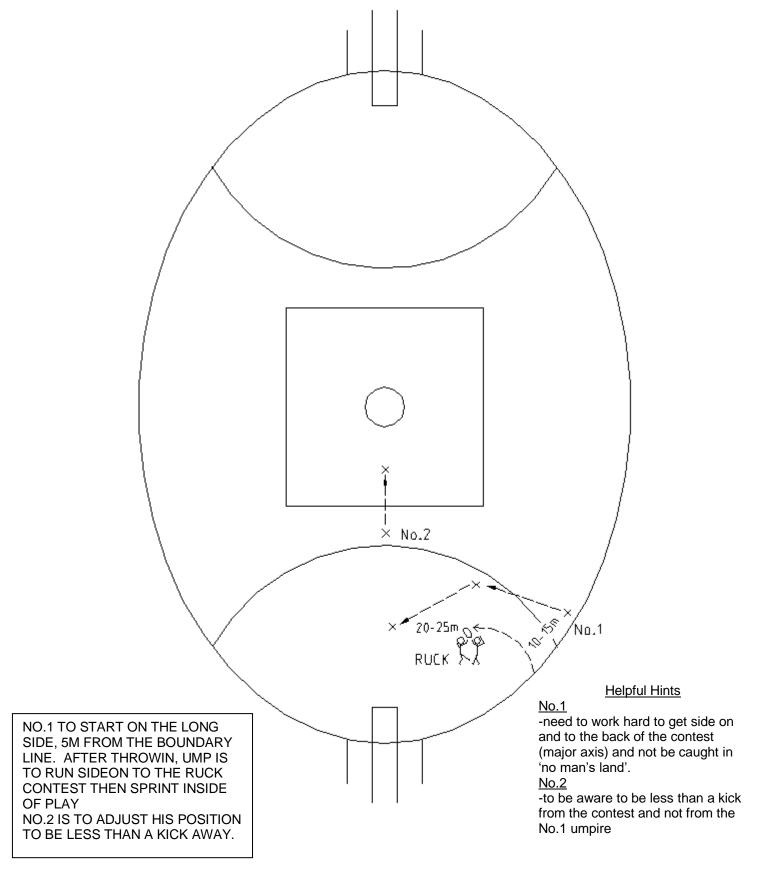
BALL HEADING TOWARDS BOUNDARY

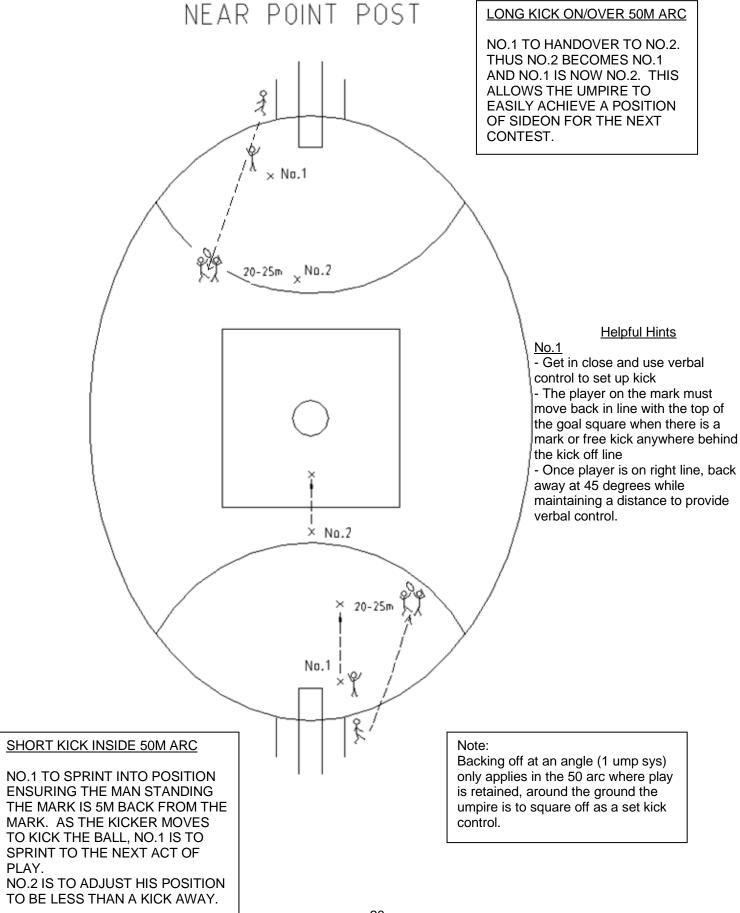


BOUNDARY THROWIN OUTSIDE 50M



BOUNDARY THROWIN INSIDE 50M





OUT OF BOUNDS ON FULL GENERAL PLAY

