

**Philosophy on Coaching
Australian Rules Football
By Allan Jeans**



**“People can’t walk over you
until you lie down.”**

Philosophy on Coaching Australian Rules Football

By Allan Jeans

Index

Page 3 - Introduction: *Broad Principles of the Game*

Page 4 - Part 1: *Contributing Facets that are Necessary in Achieving Objectives*

Page 4 Physical Fitness

Page 4 & 5 Teamwork

Page 5 Direct Play On football

Page 6 Team Adapting to Umpiring and Weather Conditions

Page 7 Position Play

Page 8 Attitude

Page 9 - Part 2: *Three Phases of the Game*

1. The Ball in Dispute
2. The Ball in Our Possession
3. When the Opposition has the Ball

Page 10 - Part 3: *Performance*

Page 10 Motivation

Page 10 Pressure and Stress

Page 10 Concentration

Page 11 Confidence

Page 11 Restoring Confidence

Page 11 Formula for Success

Page 12 Player's Mental Approach to the Game

Page 13 - Part 4: *Coaching*

1. Communication
2. Morale
3. Discipline

Page 14 - *Allan Jeans' AFL Coaching Record*

Introduction

Broad Principles of the Game

“League football at the highest level is doing the basic fundamentals at a faster rate of speed.”

Two Important Principles in Australian Rules Football

1. One man against one man.
2. The ball can only be in one of three phases during a game:
 - Ball in dispute
 - We have it
 - They have it

Objective of the Game

To outscore your opponent

Game Plan to Achieve Objective

No positive formula for winning a game of Australian Rules, however I consider that the side that wins in most positions and makes the least number of errors is the side that usually wins. Therefore, my coaching principles, techniques and training programs are designed to ensure that these two features are achieved.

Difference Between Fundamentals and Tactics

Fundamentals:

Fundamentals are the basic requirements and guidelines that must be executed and adhered to in every game.

Tactics:

Vary from week to week, depending on the opposition. It is the methods deployed to exploit the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition and to negate similar actions by them.

PART 1: *Contributing Facets that are Necessary in Achieving Objectives*

Summary

1. Physical fitness
2. Teamwork
3. Direct play-on football
4. Adapting to umpiring and weather conditions
5. Positional play
6. Attitude

1. Physical Fitness

Objective

To prepare a player's body, physically and mentally to enable him to maintain a high level of efficiency in the three phases of the game for its duration.

Method

- Appropriate designed training program
- Diet (correct food)
- Plenty of sleep
- A great deal of self sacrifice and discipline is required

2. Teamwork

Theory

A minimum of two players with complete understanding who are prepared to give full co-operation without thought of favour or reward will normally beat one player.

Fundamentals of Teamwork

a) Communication (Talking)

Objective

To advise team mate of the unknown (Blind spots on ground)

Theory

- If you talk in correct manner, you are acting as your teammate's eyes.
- Talking is giving specific instructions such as "Your mark Bill" or "Steady, you are on your own".
- Talking is not barracking (leave to supporters). This does not exclude encouragement to team mates.

b) Co-operation and Co-ordination

Helping team mate and method of assistance

Objective:

- Doing your utmost to assist teammate to get possession or dispose of the ball productive manner
- Talking
- Shepherding
- Backing team mate up and taking handball
- The player backing up controls the situation as he is aware of the actual scene
- Lazy, selfish and individual member are not good team players

c) Leading

Objective

- Place yourself in the best position to receive the ball
- Team mate must have possession and is in a position to play-on before the lead is made
- Lead from the correct position. Lead into a player's vision, so that he can see you, and is balanced to dispose of the ball
- Forwards should not lead into defensive side of the ground or pockets
- If the lead and disposal are executed correctly, then the opponent has no chance: creates confidence within the team and ensures that we win the contest
- If we repeat this procedure it certainly assists in enabling us to win in that position on the ground

3. Direct Play on Football

Objective

- To get ball through goals in the quickest possible manner.
- Shortest way home, except last line of defence
- For simplicity - explain ruck rover and full forward formula
- Change direction to avoid packs.
- Explain why modern pattern of play was introduced – flooding
- Attack through centre half forward)
- Explain best position to score
- Explain why more players can assist
- Long kicks - gain more distance with less change of errors
- Long kicks to 10 yard square.
- Half forwards should follow the flight of the ball and crumb the ball off the pack

4. Team Adapting to Umpiring and Weather Conditions

Objective

To exploit both aspects to the maximum of teams advantage.

a) Umpiring

- Ascertain as soon as possible umpire's interpretation of the rules and play accordingly
- Do not argue with the umpire
- Don't criticise umpire in front of players

b) Weather Conditions

Wet

- It's difficult to pick up off the ground, therefore don't be afraid to kick ball off the ground (this applies to all conditions) when under pressure. Try and control the ball.
- Majority of play will be on ground, therefore only one player fly for mark.
- Overhead marking is difficult, therefore try marking with hands held flat
- Wear long sleeves to assist chest marking
- Ball will slip through hands, try and anticipate crumbs coming off the back of the packs

Wind

All players should know direction of wind at all stages of the game

Cross Wind

- Defend to leeseide of the ground
- Attack from windward side of the ground

Direct Wind

Attacking

- Long kicks straight down the ground, when attacking with direct wind
- Don't over kick and lose control

Defending

- A great deal of running and handball is required when moving the ball into direct wind
- Hug boundary line
- Keep ball low

Marking on windy days is difficult, therefore on most occasions only the player on the leeseide of the packs should contest mark. Wind will force ball to the position. Same principle is involved, when ruckmen are contesting ball-ups and throw-ins.

5. Positional Play

a) Defence

Objective

Stop forward from getting the ball

Pattern of Play

- One man each
- Play on the inside or between your opponent and the goals
- Be with your opponent until the ball kicked, when ball is travelling through the air is the time to back your judgement. (Anticipation)
- If caught behind your opponent or in doubt, punch the ball away, towards boundary line if possible
- Boundary line is backman's best friend
- Don't scrag or give silly free kicks close to goal. (Controlled pressure)
- Keep your feet

c) Centre Line

Objective

To get ball to forwards quickly and intelligently to enable team to score

- Defend when ball is in your forward line.
- Attack when ball is in your back line
- If backmen are under pressure when clearing the ball, must lead into their vision
- Don't play wide of opponent and make it a game of chance
- If opponent is winning, don't chase ball out of position to get kicks. Play closer to your opponent

d) Forwards

Objective

Kick goals

- Play in front, keep moving
- Don't contest play
- Don't be selfish
- Give plenty of handball
- Doesn't matter who kicks the goals
- If you are in scoring position have a shot for goals
- Centre the ball from forward pockets
- Punch ball away from backmen if caught out of position
- Chase opponents if beaten for the ball

e) Rucks and Rovers (on ballers)

Objective

Get ball into forward line and keep it there. To assist backmen when opponents are attacking.

- Have equal representation around the centre when the ball is bounced
- Don't crowd forward line
- Let resting forward ruckmen take knock out near goals
- Don't run too long on the ball
- Pick up opponents when they are attacking
- At all ball-ups and throw-ins opponents forward zone, rucks and rovers must play close to counterpart

6. Attitude

Definition

State of mind to a particular task

Explain - Physical Courage

- Fear is natural mechanism within the body to protect it
- Coaches must encourage players in a logical and sensible manner to master their fears
- Why does a person switch on a light when he enters an unfamiliar dark room?

PART 2: *Three Phases of the Game*

The ball can only be in one of the three phases during a game.

Basic fundamentals in each phase:

1. The Ball in Dispute

Objective

To gain possession as many times as possible during a game

- Use height, strength and body advantage at every opportunity. (Body contact is one of the great skills of our game)
- Contest every issue with great determination
- Keep in front of opponent. (Attacking position)
- Best position to receive free kick
- Make crumb gathering a special feature of your game. Front and Square
- When scouting for crumbs, don't play too close to packs and watch the front of the players contesting the ball to assist in determining the direction where the ball will land. (Front and Square)

2. The Ball is in our Possession

Objective

To retain possession and move it as quickly as possible until we score

- All players must be running attacking players
- Endeavour to keep ball moving at all times except when you have a shot for goal
- Avoid wasting time, when awarded a mark or free kick
- Create positions in front and behind so that team mate can play on
- When players can't assist in a contest, they should (particularly backmen, readjust and pick up his man (accountability))

3. The Opposition has the Ball

Objective

To regain possession of ball or minimise opponents use of the ball, by applying pressure to him in a controlled manner

- Tackle fiercely
- Only bump an opponent when he is not aware of your presence. On all other occasions tackle hard and in the correct manner
- Don't allow opponents to play on or give handball
- Stand on mark and concentrate. (Don't make two mistakes.)
- Play closer to opponent if he is winning
- Chase opponent regardless of how far you are behind him
- Don't stop or lie on the ground when beaten for the ball. (Only 17 men)
- Don't scrag, push opponents in the back and give away silly free kicks

PART 3: Performance

The undulating fluctuation of form is a natural process. Coaches must encourage players to understand the major elements that affect form and the methods and mental courage required, in order to minimise the area between their top and poor performance.

Consistency is the key to a top player.

Players who lack mental courage and not prepared to flight their way out of a slump in form for the team's benefit have the same affect on the team as cancer has on the body.

Cancer has no respect for the other organs of the body and continues to destroy until the body is deceased. However, in destroying the body it destroys itself.

Major elements that affect performance

- Players own ability
- Opponents own ability
- Luck
- Commitment
- Effort

Points that effect effort

1. Motivation

- Goal
- Need
- Effort and sacrifice
- Recognition or Reward

2. Pressure and Stress

Mental pressure or stress is a mental condition that affects the ability to assess and take the correct remedial action to overcome problems.

In a great deal of cases pressure is unnecessarily induced by the individual. (Man walking plank or driving through City).

Most people are not aware that they are under pressure. (Signs - Face, mouth and hand expressions are good indicators).

3. Concentration

Is the complete application of mind and body to one particular endeavour to the exclusion of everything else that is not relevant? Players must learn to "lock in" their concentration. (What should I be doing [now])?

4. Confidence

A state of mind where you believe you are in control of the situation.

Three stages of Confidence

- Supreme Confidence
- Desperation or perseverance
- Accepting things or making excuses

5. Restoring Confidence

Every failure or set back in life has a reason; identify and take appropriate steps to rectify.

Don't make excuses. Greatest alibi of all time "IF".

Having identifies the problem convince the player that he has the proven ability to overcome it. Don't harp on the problem.

Remind the player of his past successes and display a genuine belief in his ability to fight back. Note and emphasise any improvement.

Restore confidence on training tack by training well.

Success.is to do with preparation and recognising when opportunity knocks.

6. Formula for Success

Idea

Success or failure is the offspring of thought. Body manifests what the mind harbours. Positive thoughts "Mind is similar to an oasis".

Plan

Reasonable objectives.

Best People to Implement Plan

You

Faith

Has on many occasions robbed the grave of its early victim.

Perseverance

Failure cannot cope with perseverance.

Reward and Recognition

Coaches must be aware of the personal best of each player and reward accordingly.

7. Player's Mental Approach to Each Game

Objective

Gear mind to enable you to beat or reduce your opponent's efforts to the minimum.

- Believe in your own ability. (Never be beaten or accept defeat.)
- Analyse the strong and weak points of opponent's game, and exploit them.
- Carry out your Coach's or Captain's instructions.
- Avoid frustration. Think about problems that confront you, and solve them with clear thinking.
- People can't walk over you until you lie down.

PART 4: Coaching

Objective

To coach the best team in the competition

- Listen to all ideas. Base your pattern of play and decision on the ideas and thoughts that you believe are correct, you make the final decision.
- Get the maximum effort out of your players by understanding their true ability, weaknesses, temperament and private problems.
- Satisfy the psychological needs of each player where possible.
- Encourage and allow players to achieve their aims and goals within the overall guidelines of the team.
- Make players feel secure in a non threatening environment.
- Make players feel they are worthwhile member in a supportive group.
- Study opposition players and ascertain their strengths and weaknesses and encourage your own players to exploit them.
- Record all thoughts and ideas as they happen so that you may refer to them at a later date.
- Encourage your own players, only criticise (in private) when necessary.
- Be conscientious and enthusiastic and above all sincere to your players.

1. Communication

The ability to communicate or relate to players is a Coach's greatest attribute. (Coaches are responsible to players. Players are responsible for action.)

Communication is a two way system. Message is given and only when the positive action or reply is evident, do you realise that you have communicated correctly.

Communication varies according to the situation and person.

2. Morale

High morale is evident in a football club provided that:

- Every person in the club considers that a premiership or objective is a worthwhile achievement
- They have the ability to achieve it.

3. Discipline

Three forms of Discipline

a) Best of form of discipline, players wanting to do the right thing to achieve a premiership or objective (self imposed discipline)

b) Making players do the right thing

c) Chastisement. (No person gains)

Discipline does not guarantee freedom, however to have freedom you must have a form of discipline.

Allan Jeans' Coaching Record

Coaching Record

No of Games	581 Games	
St Kilda	1961-1976	338 Games
Hawthorn	1981-1987	
	1989-1990	221 Games
Richmond	1991	22 Games
Victoria	1972, 1984	

Premierships

St Kilda	1966
Hawthorn	1983, 1986, 1989
Night Premiers	
Hawthorn	1985-1986

Playing Record

St Kilda	1955-1959	77 Games
Represented Victoria	1955	

Awards

Inducted in the AFL Hall of Fame
AFL Life Member 1979
Member of the Order of Australia



HEALTH THROUGH FOOTBALL

Produced by the Australian Football Coaches Association (Vic)