



Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the Eastern Region Coaches Association e-newsletter for season 2014. With the season well under way coaching at this time of the year can be as challenging as anytime throughout the year.

The challenges any coach would be facing this time of year are issues like injuries, conditions of grounds for playing and training, performance levels, list management, etc. The main message from the Eastern Coaches association to deal with any issues is to, "plan and then plan and then plan again!"

As mentioned in the 1st newsletter, we have held many coaching courses and seminars in our region for 2014. We have held a record number of courses this year with a record number of coaches attending the courses. Overall, we have had over 300 coaches attend our courses.

The final ERCA seminar for the year will be held on the Monday 21st July at Pinks Reserve Kilsyth. This seminar will be based around practical coaching with sessions on game sense, using game mat, small games, tackling, and kicking. Be good to see as many coaches as possible to this seminar.

Good Luck with the remainder of your year. We will continue to offer ERCA coaches the best possible coaching development and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Should you wish to find out more information about the Eastern Region Coaches Association and its role in the region, please don't hesitate to contact me dean.rice@aflvic.com.au or Aaron Bailey abailey@efl.org.au.

ERCA Committee members

Dean Rice

Football Development Officer- Yarra Valley
Level 2 Coach

Aaron Bailey

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Level 2 Coach

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Leeann Gill

Rowville Football Club
Level 2 coach

Graeme Hocking

Mooroolbark Football Club Under 19 Coach
Level 2 Coach

John Myers

President Dandenong Rangers Junior Football League

Craig Winter

Director-The Modern Game
Level 2 coach

Busy schedule for Petracca

Nick Brown

Eastern Ranges vice-captain Christian Petracca is hopeful his extremely busy and tiring schedule will all be all worth it come the NAB AFL Draft in November.

The draft prospect admits his hectic agenda, which is vastly different to that of the average 18-year-old takes its toll at times, though knows its part and parcel for someone in his position. "I think more mentally it really tires me in terms of trainings, games and reviews," He explained "But it's something I love doing and hopefully if I am given that chance next year in the AFL, it will step up even more."

It's not even the middle of June and already Petracca has accomplished so much. He spent the summer training with Hawthorn, then played on the MCG and travelled to Europe where he represented Australia on both occasions as a member of the AIS-AFL Academy. "It's an unbelievable experience representing the country in Europe," he said "The whole trip was just unreal and sharing that with some close mates was something that I will never forget."

And it doesn't end there. He has also pulled on the 'Big V' for Vic Metro in the National Under-18 Championships where he has starred in both matches, showing why he is part of Vic Metro's leadership group.

In between all of these commitments, the 2013 premierships player has also managed to squeeze in five games with the Eastern Ranges.



To make it a real juggling act for the promising footballer, he is also studying a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing) at Swinburne University. "Yeah it is a little bit frustrating trying to balance uni, social life and footy," Petracca admitted. "But I feel as though these last few months with metro starting, I've done a good job of staying organised. "I know when to hang with mates and when to study and when to have some alone time, and when you get that balance right it allows you to play some very good footy."

Petracca is confident he has already benefited from the experience of playing at the highest level with and against the best young players in the country. There has been plenty of talk about the 186-centimetre utility this year, though he revealed it doesn't bother him all that much. "It does give me a bit of confidence," He said. "But at the moment I'm just trying to get some consistency in my footy and just take it as it comes not getting ahead of myself and basically trying to enjoy the year. "Look I'm not going to lie, every kid wants to hear a bit of talk about them, and it does add pressure to me internally as well, but I



love that. "I love that side of things and that if people don't think you're good. For me it's just about showing that I'm confident, not arrogant."

Though 2014 is a big year for Petracca on an individual level, he is still looking forward to getting back to the Eastern Ranges and fulfilling his duties as a player and vice-captain. "The carnival is nearly finished so I think I need to keep playing at the level I am and when I go back to Eastern just keep performing and act as a leader and teach the younger boys", he said.

Gordon Sumner - New General Manager for Yarra Valley

It is with great enthusiasm that I assume the position of Regional General Manager of the Yarra Ranges Commission, incorporating YVMDFNL, DRJFL and Yarra Ranges Umpires.

Having grown up in the Yarra Valley it gives me great pleasure and honour to know that the work that I will be doing is to further develop our League and establish a solid foundation for the present and future generations.



I would like to applaud the work and business structures that the former CEO of YVMDFNL Stephen Walter has done over the last 8 years. Regardless of who is in charge of the Leagues and/or associations, it should be acknowledged that their efforts are always in the best interest of the YVMDFNL, DRJFL and Yarra Ranges Umpires Association as a whole.

A large part of my working life has been in accounting with more recent years in Business Management and sales development.

My football career started 40 years ago with the Wesburn Boys Club and has taken me through a various number of football leagues as Player, Coach, Committee Member and Major Sponsor. (YVMDFL, AFL, Ballarat, Bendigo, Ovens and Murray, Central Murray, TAC, EFL, Maryborough Castemaine, and Geelong and Districts).

The experience I have gained from AFL, TAC, major and minor leagues throughout Victoria hopefully stands me in good stead to be able to impart this knowledge within our League so it can continue to be a very well operated and respected entity within Country Victoria.

As Regional General Manager my primary responsibility is to convey the Development Pillars of AFL Victoria Country - community foundation, talent, infrastructure and culture - which are proven formulas for the development of country Leagues.

Having said that, it is also must be recognised that all regional leagues within the state have very different challenges facing them including population, employment, social and volunteer development etc. So to identify and solve these challenges is a primary objective of my role.

It will be my key focus that both the commission and myself are accessible at all times for every club to be able to discuss any issue, none being too small, to ensure that the relationship between all clubs and the League is both honest and amicable.

I realise the enormous work load that volunteers at every club contribute so that players are able to represent their respective clubs. It is with this in mind that I once again encourage communication

between Clubs, Board Members and myself, so that we are proactive rather than reactive in rectifying problems earlier rather than later.

In finishing, it is my ambition to develop an honest culture within our League so that every club has the chance to succeed as desired - premierships are just a small part of community development.

Once again I thank the Yarra Ranges Commission and AFL Victoria for giving me this opportunity in developing our game within our region.

Simple, Difficult or Plain Perception?

Luke Parker – Premiership Captain Doncaster Football Club

I agree that there are so many styles of play in football. There are a lot of ideas on game plans; flooding, pressing and even zoning. What are our structures? How do we practice these? Do we have buy in? What is a KPI?



More importantly, what effect do these have on the outcome of a game? Have we got the right rotations? Rotating enough or not enough? Midfielders, are they working hard enough?

Quarterback release. Our thoughts and terminology have come a long way.

My mind spins with just how far this has come in the past 15 years and some are reluctant for the change in play. More one on ones with a direct style like the good old days perhaps is better welcomed. It makes for a great spectacle for sure, but we are seeing different trends.

I think the coaching of yesteryear battles in this modern age of football. Kids are more introverted and perhaps appear a bit anti-social at times. I think you need to be able to relate to your players, find out what you've got and work with it.

This new age of technology is giving us a closer look at the game as everything can be closely measured. Eyes are on you constantly feeding back your every move, even at metro or suburban level. We see the same habits naturally filtering through. Pressure is everywhere, in all facets of life. It can be at work, sport and especially socially and around peers. Every individual has different tolerances to pressure.

Is our game simple or is it becoming more difficult? Or perhaps the real question is perception?

In my first game of seniors I remember a guy who I had great admiration for, a true leader and a man that had achieved nearly everything in local footy said to the group on field, "Boys, keep this simple. What are you doing when we have it, when they have it and when the ball is in dispute? Take risks and be hungry to compete." That was the message back then, simple. With that playing group at the time it was enough.

I remember my first year of senior football back in 2001, coming off an under 18 Premiership it set the tone for the pre-season ahead. Realising that I'd just become one of 55 players, it was time to step up and be counted, to work harder than others and to get a step ahead. I was excited to impress. So I tried my best to keep up fitness in the midst of celebrating our win.

Our senior coach at the time welcomed us all to our first night. Our firsts, seconds and thirds all won the Premiership Cup that year so reigniting the flame again was a must, a true test of the character for the group to set new goals, welcome new recruits and set out again to achieve excellence.

It was daunting at first and I remember the feeling like I didn't belong. I wanted it all right now, the typical mindset of teenagers from this era and don't we have some fun with this topic.

I would try to be the first there to jam in some extra kicks and handballs before the main session had begun. I think it helped looking back on it now. There were great conversations had and plenty of laughs - some gems before we got started. It was a great opportunity to get to know the older crew.

I played the first couple games in the reserves. I'd been hearing around the traps that most young guys would have to do their "apprenticeship" and play a couple of games here and there before they got their start. I didn't like that phrase at the time however I now understand that we all develop in different stages. It was time for my first game. I'd be given the call up and you couldn't get the smile off my face. I went into the team meeting and the beginning of it was a blur.

I heard my name, so I tuned in, "Parks. Playing you off a half back flank. Want you to shut down one of their power forwards."

What?? That forward was their coach. I had heard of this bloke, he was a very influential player in their forward line. Very crafty and had played hundreds of games already, he was known for being hard and dirty at times. Welcome to the big league. There were no 'L' plates on my back now.

At the end of the meeting I was walking out of the rooms. Teammates were shaking my hand. "Well done young fella." I finally felt that hard work was paying off and a sense of belonging was approaching perhaps. What was about to happen next would change my outlook on how I would conduct myself on the football field for the next decade.

My coach called me over. He said, "Parks you've earned your spot. We believe that you can handle responsibility. Yes we've given you a tough assignment, but you have to begin somewhere. Go out and be yourself. Play with no fear. We want you to help conduct our defence and remember, if you can't TALK out there, you are no good to us."

I would never forget that chat. How often at training do you hear "lift the talk boys". Or a teammate got run down from behind because there was no TALK? Naturally when a team is struggling there is no TALK.

If you do not talk, how do you communicate on a football field? It's one of the greatest tests whilst fatigued is to TALK. I challenge you to this. This is entering our game more and more. Players who battle to speak? Who maybe expect from one another that a lot should just happen?

Communication in everything is the key. We all need to be leaders out there on the football field. Don't just leave it to a few. Our minds will wander throughout the course of the game. Talk and reminders help steer wandering minds. Above all, encourage. At times it is so easy to be negative but have you tried being positive? You might be surprised.

Our game is evolving and I agree we must learn to move with it. Find the right balance within your playing group to just how far you push certain things. You may need to tweak your methods a touch to go forward but do not over complicate it. Continue to teach and to act under pressure.

Most of all never forget the game we all began knowing nothing about. It's all been learnt.

Eastern Auskick



Auskick boost for kids with Autism

More than 50 young boys and girls with Autism turned out for opening of the Irabina NAB AFL Auskick Centre. It may not have made the headlines in the weekend papers, but one very important NAB AFL Auskick Centre opened its doors on Saturday.

The Irabina Auskick Centre held its first session at Irabaina's offices in Baywater with more than 50 young boys and girls with Autism given a chance to learn the skills of Australian football.

Irabina is a not-for-profit organisation that specialises in early intervention programs and services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

FIDA Football Administration Manager Logan Whitaker, who, along with AFL Victoria Football Development Manager Aaron Baily, helped establish the clinic said they were excited by how many people turned up for the first ever session.

"It's never been offered before so to have more than 50 girls and boys in attendance was fantastic." "To see so many kids, all of whom have autism, having fun playing football with their brothers, sisters, mums and dads, shows how important it is to offer these sorts of programs."

Whitaker said the aim of the Auskick Centre was improve gross motor skills and help increase confidence levels. "It really has so many benefits and flow-on effects," he said. "The kids are obviously being physically active but it's also a great way for parents to engage with them."



In a further boost, Deakin and Victoria Universities will undertake a study to see if the regular clinics do indeed help improve the motor skills of the girls and boys involved. Whitaker said the new AFL Victoria Access All Abilities NAB AFL Auskick Strategy, funded in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV), would provide a model for Auskick that supports and develops inclusive Australian football opportunities for boys and girls with disabilities, in an enjoyable and supportive environment.

He said the All Abilities Strategy would hopefully lead to more centres like this being set up in the not too distant future.

INSIDE THE EFL



I was fortunate enough to attend the season launch at Montrose Football Club the week of their round one game in division one vs. Noble Park. It was a great night filled with a sense of pride at their accomplishment in 2013, measured with anticipation about heading into the EFL's premier division. History shows they recorded a fantastic win against last years' grand finalist and have started division one with three wins in a row setting up a huge home game this week against the impressive Norwood.

They had a great line up of guests including Mark Evans, former Croydon and EFL interleague coach, and current AFL General Manager of Football Operations. Mark is a quality football person evidenced by his progression to his current role and speaks a lot of sense on all matters football. He was interviewed by journalist Rohan Connolly and it was interesting to hear his thoughts on a number of issues in the AFL and got me thinking how closely they relate to the current status of many similar areas in the EFL.

The change in umpiring at AFL level was one topic where Mark referenced that AFL Umpires Coach Hayden Kennedy and his new team (including former EFL Head of Umpiring Michael Vozzo) were focusing on paying the obvious free kicks with more leniency shown in some other areas. It's a philosophy that has long been the consistent message to EFL umpires officiating EFL games played in much smaller confines and with many more contests than in the AFL.

The unbalanced AFL fixture was raised and Mark highlighted the fact this year would see games of more teams playing "second" games against opposition who finished the ladder in a similar position. The results of this were unlikely to be seen until later in the year but are expected to provide more close games and less one-sided contests. At EFL level we have observed the success of our seeded draw in competitions with more than 10 teams which has been in place since 2007.

One of Mark's main points was the genuine concern around the AFL Commission table with regards to the game at community level, particularly player welfare. He cited the tragic case of quadriplegia victim Beau Vernon, and the steps the commission wanted to know had been put in place to ensure appropriate support was available for such accidents that may occur in the future. It was a pleasing validation of the EFL Board's decision to mandate \$1 million cover for such injuries, which is in excess of the AFL's own insurance program for local footy, and something we all hope never has to be called on.

The final question of the night regarded the AFL's push for more equalization measures and Mark was asked if he had any thoughts on what the EFL could do to equalize our own competition. Mark referenced an AFL Vic Working Party which has been put together, of which I am a member of. Other members include senior figures from AFL Victoria, AFL Vic's Community Reference Group and CEO's/Region General Managers from some of the big metropolitan and country leagues.

Player payments is a topic many people want to talk about as we move around the grounds on weekends and there appears a genuine resolve in the football community to try and identify any measures that may be able to be put in place to help. Part of this will be consultation with clubs on their thoughts on what the main issues player payments are creating and any measures that may be worth trialling.

Points systems, salary caps, premium player taxes and the like are all under review. The one point everyone can agree on is that for something to work it needs to be inclusive of all leagues. The working party is meeting regularly and consultation with clubs and leagues will begin shortly.

It showed that although we have much to learn from the professionalism of the AFL, with us managing in excess of 230 games each weekend there are some things the AFL can probably learn from us. It reinforces the importance of the EFL remaining an autonomous body responsible for managing our own rules and regulations to suit our football.

EFL DIVISION 1 PREMIERS!

Our under 14/15 Division 1 sides yesterday completed the first Premiership double with both sides winning **National Sports Museum Metropolitan Junior Championships Grand Finals!**

14/15 Division 1: Saturday June 21, Shepley Oval Dandenong

Under 15-1: South Metro JFL 6.6.42 def. by **Eastern Football League 7.10.52**

Goal Kickers: J. Stephenson 2, J. Prior , N. Walkden , D. Clarke , J. O'Sullivan , R. Costantino

Best Players: A. Cerra, A. Condello, J. O'Sullivan, T. North, N. Walkden R. Costantino, J. Stephenson

Best on Ground Medal: Nick Walkden

Under 14-1: South Metro JFL 9.0.54 def. by **Eastern Football League 19.12.126**

Goal Kickers: T. Robertson 5, M. Perry 3, B. Werle 2, D. Brown 2, B. Bredin 2, A. Mastroianni , J. Bourke , L. Fletcher , J. Sharp , I. Biasuzzo

Best Players: C. Daraio, J. Bourke, B. Bredin, D. Brown L. Fletcher, M. Perry

Best on Ground Medal: C. Daraio



INSIDE THE EFL – COACHING

Phil Murton

The sad passing of Tom Hafey has left the football community in mourning. I was fortunate to meet Tommy a number of times over the last few years as he spoke at a number of EFL club game-day luncheons with the energy and enthusiasm to shame men a quarter his age. He traveled thousands of kilometers every year talking to footy clubs, businesses, and importantly school kids on the virtues of discipline, health and fitness.

My wife has little interest in football but remembers Tommy Hafey as the best corporate motivational speaker she has seen. He was like that. Whether from a footy background or not, whatever age, he left everyone he met with an indelible reminder of the capacity of the human spirit. I have always felt a sense of affinity with Hafey.

I was born the day Richmond won the premiership in 1973, midway through the final quarter. My dad was a Richmond supporter in his youth, who later changed his allegiance to the Pies after playing a few games for them. Given my timing and the occasion I was initially named “Thomas Royce” by my dad, in respect to Tom Hafey the coach and Royce Hart the captain of the premiership Tigers. It appeared in the births section of the paper and all, but not being much of a footy fan, my mum changed it before it was lodged with the births registry and so I became Phillip. I may have drawn the short straw.

On reading the tributes following his passing, the ones that made the biggest impression were those of his former players, ‘his boys’ as Tommy called them when he spoke. Legends of the game spoke with raw emotion and in awe of the man that had helped shape their lives. But it was not as footballers most of them spoke of the true impact he made, it was as people. It’s what the great coaches do.

I was fortunate enough to spend some time at Hawthorn in the early 90’s. Alan Joyce was my coach and as a young man the discipline and work ethic he demanded was perfect for a player starting out his career. Allan Jeans had been the coach prior to Joyce and was spoken in revered tones by every player who played under him. Hard but fair, someone who knew the person not just the footballer was the constant theme. He knew every player and what made them tick. A quiet word to Chris Mew, a public tirade to Dipper or Derm, those who knew him said he had people skills that the best psychologist would envy. Knowing his players work and family life were also huge parts of “Yabby’s” legacy and the reason life-long relationships were developed.

I always respected the role of a coach as a player but in my time in football administration I’ve quickly come to realize the senior coach is the most important person at a club, particularly at local level. They set the standards of behaviour, on and off the field. They galvanize and motivate the group to perform acts they otherwise would not. Or just as quickly can lose a group and watch the fabric of a club erode away.

Coaching is a bit like teaching, managing employees and parenting. It’s about being respected, not liked. I’ve had some mates who have been successful senior coaches and to a man they say watching and helping guide young men grow into quality adults has given them more satisfaction than any game or premiership won. Former Doncaster premiership captain and current under 19 coach Luke Parker recently wrote a “players perspective” article on the important role football and in particular coaches play in the lives of these young men. It was a great article and well worth reading.

It’s one of the reasons why compulsory coaching accreditation, and continued coach development is critical. We play a physical game and managing a group of players (and their parents for junior coaches) is a difficult task. Emotion is both the strength and weakness of our great game, and a coaches role is to

harness and manage this. The demands of the game are continually changing and there is always more to learn.

As the coaches of our 460 plus teams in all age groups read the tributes to Tom Hafey this week, I hope they take a moment in their busy week to reflect on the legacy they are leaving on their club and their players. Make the role more than just managing a group of players for a period of time to play a game of footy. Get to know your players. Make a difference.