

Game Day Coaching – Effective use of your board and breaks

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PRE-GAME

The pre-game is your opportunity as coach to set the tone and reinforce the key messages for the game ahead. Much of your work for the game should be done during the week at training and in team meetings. Try to avoid giving too much information on game day as players are unlikely to remember much of what is said. Preparation and effective communication are key.

Remember

- Be prepared. Have both your coaches' boards and game day board ready before players walk in.
- Define the role of your assistants.
- Keep the message simple. How much do your players really take in?
- Messages should be consistent with what you have worked on during the week at training.
- Utilise a time line.
- Talk to individual players. Make sure they understand their role. Assistant coaches can support this and work with their individual lines

Consider

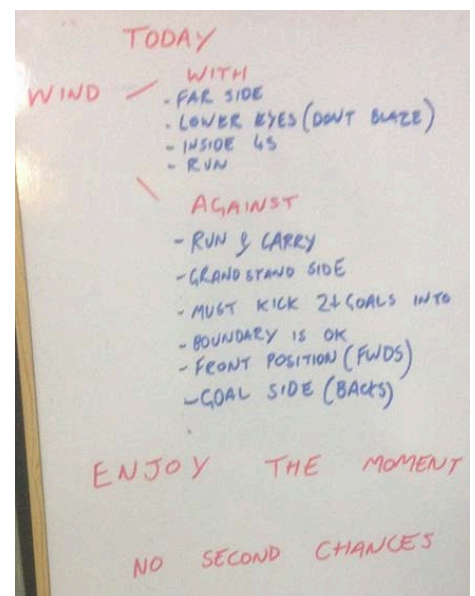
- Have you catered to the preferred learning styles of your players? Can you give the message in multiple ways?
- Game plans and tactics can be prepared prior to game day and utilised weekly. Prepare and laminate these so they can be taken to the ground every week. These should be a refresher for players, not learnt on game day.
- Line huddles are an effective way to use your assistants and allow you to be more specific on your instruction. Encourage players to take the lead and ownership of game day.
- Allow players to prepare best as suited to them. Work with players to respect all players' preparations. Music is very common in rooms. However there will be players who prefer a quiet environment and it is important to provide this to them as well.

Board Preparation

Your pre game board is one of your best opportunities to communicate your message to the playing group. Avoid having too much information on your board. It is for key messages and goals for the game ahead.

Key aspects of an effective board include:

- Clear and legible. If the players cannot read it is not worth doing.
- Use colour and divide key areas into sections so they are clear
- Have your starting line up on the board if possible. This way players can look at where they are playing.
- Have rotations listed if applicable. This is best done by colour coding.
- Keep the message simple. No more than 3-4 points is necessary.



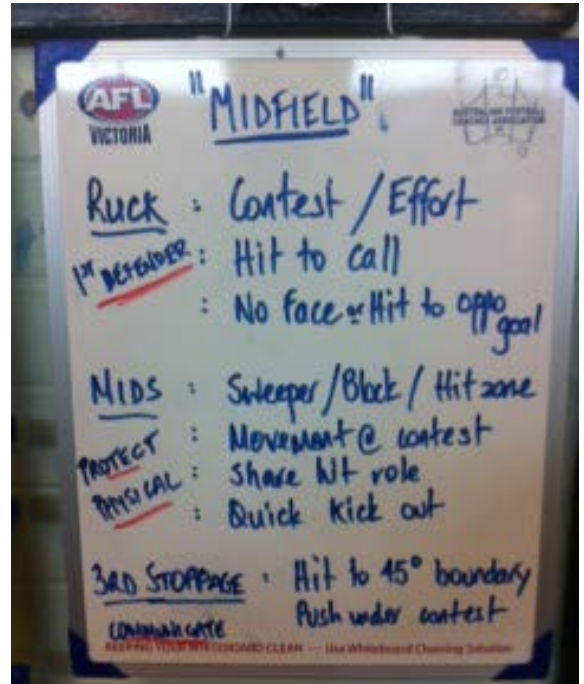
Note: These 3-4 points should help you in your pre game address. They will guide you in the key areas to focus on and keep your message succinct.

The quality of coaches' handwriting can be prohibitive. In this case try the following

- Prepare before arriving at the game
- Have an assistant write it up
- Prepare on the computer and print out in poster form
- Print rather than use cursive hand writing

There are many effective ways to present your information pre-game. These can include

- Have each players role for the day up on the board
- Use video to highlight what you want the players to do
- Have the players prepare their pre-game address during the week at training
- Utilise a guest speaker



EASTERN VS EDFL Saturday 6 th July Central Reserve 12.15 pm	Decision Making (Play smart. Composure, tempo. No panic) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactive, not reactive - Move it on quickly when free - Keep possession if nothing is on - Minimize handballs (release then kick, Nothing on start again) - Lower your eyes - No shorts to a contest. Take the responsibility
PRE GAME SCHEDULE 10.45- Arrive. If you need strapping need to be at the ground early 11.20- Meet in middle of ground. 11.40- Must be strapped and ready. Team Meeting- 11.40 Warm Up- Following Team meeting. On ground Last 5 minutes- Your time Quick message and out	Defend (Intensity: Effort, Controlled, aggression) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be switched on - Pressure acts - Make defensive acts count. - With intent and purpose. - Man on man- Work - Aggressive, in their space/face
THE EASTERN FOOTBALL BRAND Harder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ferocious attack the ball, the man, the contest - Hard at contest, hard at man. Stronger <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everything with purpose- Defend, run, voice - Intensity Effort, Controlled, aggression Longer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeat efforts - 80 minutes - Never out of the contest (will to win) 	Impact (The Eastern Way) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intensity - Shut down most dangerous man - Spread hard- Offensively to space, defensively to contain - Scoreboard pressure - Pace, precision, purpose Contested <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First hands at stoppages - In lower, in harder, in more often - In Football (Harder, Stronger, Longer) the space (Air and Ground) - For position (Front, Goal side) Voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive - Instructional - Every one - relentless Work Rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Own the corridor - No easy outs for the opposition - Offensively and defensively. - Don't be last to leave a contest - What is your REA limit (Matt DeLuca)
"There are only two options regarding commitment. You're either IN or you're OUT. There is no such thing as life in-between." — Pat Riley	

Time Lines

These are important and guide your players in what is expected and when to be ready by. The arrival time will vary depending on the level you coach. Try to have consistency in your time line throughout the year.

What you do pre game needs to suit you and your playing group - Player buy in and feedback is important.

Example

- 1.00 Arrive
- 1.15 Meet on ground at half time
- 1.40 All strapping done. On the oval at 3 Quarter time – kick around

1.50 Team Meeting (Following 3 quarter time)

2.00 Warm Up

2.15 Final Preparations (Individual time)

2.20 Final Address

2.25 On the Ground

Warm Up

Your warm up should be consistent from week to week. It should progress to the stage where it is almost self-manageable by players. Your runner or fitness coach should manage the warm up.

It is important to make it team specific and level specific:

- Multiple touches
- Dynamic stretching
- KPI's such as tackling or contested ball (with pads) may be included.
- Plyometric running vs traditional running
- Tailor your warm up to the level of your players

Pre Game Address

As coaches we have a habit of trying to tell, rather than engage. The aim of your pre-game should be to have your entire group on the same path and working as a collective unit. Avoid trying to say too much. At times less is more. Emphasise the key messages and highlight the key ingredients for success on that particular day.

If you are not a natural orator it is important to be prepared. Utilise your board to guide your pre game message and assist you in delivering it effectively.

Though many great addresses in AFL history have great passion and still bring the hairs to the back of your neck when you hear them, this method is often not ideal for your playing group.

You need to consider:

- Your players as a group and individually.
- Who can you address individually and who will wilt after being mentioned?
- Do they need a calm, soft approach or vocal and passionate.
- Does the game need a calm soft approach or a calm soft approach?
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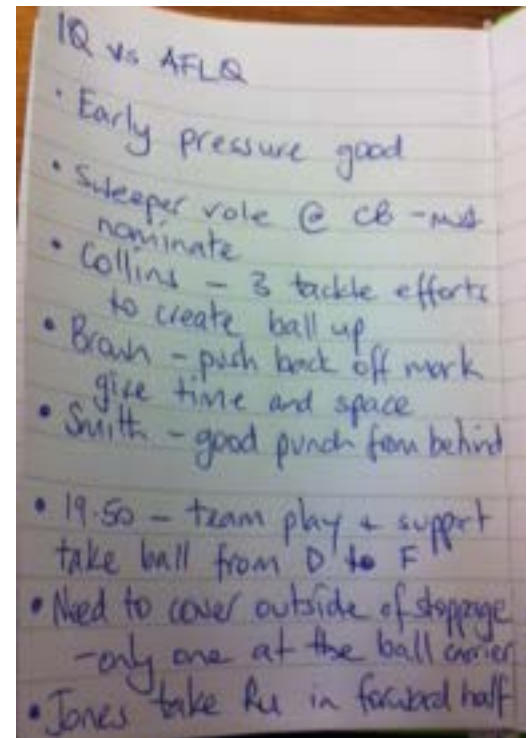
Helpful hints:

- Utilise notes if required
- Stick to 3-4 key points
- Do not over use the big rev up. It will only be effective so many times.
- What worked for you as a player may not and probably won't work for generation Z.
- Avoid swearing. Your message can be delivered without it.
- Focus on team/club KPI's, Values and trademarks

EFFECTIVE GAME MANAGEMENT

During a quarter:

- Take notes of coachable moments – both positive and constructive.
- Forget about the umpires. That is an uncontrollable. Whilst you are arguing with umpires, looking for support from others and lamenting poor decisions you are not coaching.
- Talk to players as they come on and off. Give feedback or recognise good efforts. Remember to always aim to teach and improve.
- Avoid just watching the ball. Look for what is happening across the ground.
- Quickly identify players from the opposition. Make adjustments when necessary.
- Manage your emotions. Players will be a reflection of the bench. Poor discipline from players is often instigated by poor discipline from the bench.
- Clear minds lead to clear decisions. Keep your emotions in check.
- Avoid barracking. You are there to coach, not to support
- Take KPI's. Avoid individual statistics. Focus on stats that will help you achieve your desired outcomes in the game. The app Stats tracker is excellent - <http://www.themoderngame.com.au/02-2014/press-release-stats-tracker-app>



At the Breaks:

- Coach the player at the break rather than chastise or criticise. Look for solutions - teach them how to do it better rather than just identify that a mistake was made.
- Focus on poor decisions rather than skill errors.
- Have your board ready. You only have 5 minutes.
- Get the team to group in their areas. Assistant coaches work with individual groups. Encourage players to lead the discussion. Coaches should only provide key information i.e., match ups, areas that need urgent addressing, game plan not being adhered to.
- Positive reinforcement is vital. Highlight players that have done key areas you have addressed at training or pre game.
- Focus on 3-4 messages. Keep it simple.
- Read your board out twice. At the start and the end of your address.
- Have someone hold up your board so players can see where you are playing
- Utilise your stats and KPI's in your address



Half Time break:

- Allow players time to rest, both physically and mentally. Use this time to meet with assistants and make necessary changes for the second half
- Write up your 3 – 4 messages on the board if that will help get the message through to players.
- Look at pre game goals and address how you are going.

- Avoid over talking. Keep the messages simple and to the point.
- Try to avoid external distractions. Allow parents and spectators in if you are comfortable, however they are not the coaches. If this occurs manage your room so you can coach effectively.
- Keep your emotions in check. What will be affective in changing the course of the game? Yelling and screaming no longer works very often.

Board

- If possible, have an assistant coach whose sole focus is managing the board.
- Rotations should be colour coded. In older age groups and senior football players should be able to manage these by them selves
- Avoid, as coach, being on the board too long. Too much of the game goes past if this happens.
- Have your board ready for the next quarter before the siren.
- Utilise a board with a timer so you know where the quarter is at.



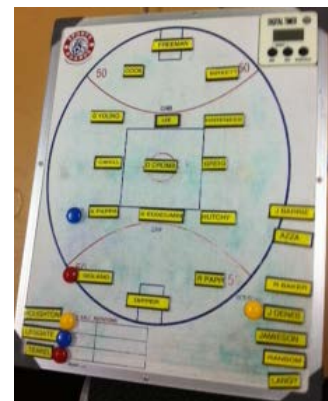
Note: Monitor time on and off the ground. Junior coaches so players are getting reasonable time on the ground. Seniors/ Youth so you prevent player fatigue. Apps such as <http://www.interchanger.com.au> are very good for managing this.

Rotations

At any level rotating players can be time consuming and cause angst amongst players, parents and coaches alike. It is important to organise your rotations prior to the game. These need to be carefully considered and be clear to players, coaches and runner.

Remember:

- Utilise colours
- Junior coaches should outline interchange and game time policy before the season.
- Look to play and develop players in multiple positions. You never know when your gun player may go down with an injury. Can your players adapt
- Rotate players through forward or defensive areas of the ground. They can go from one forward pocket to the other then off.
- You do not need to rotate every player off the ground.
- Rotate your mids through the back line and forward line.
- Wings can also be rotated through half forward and half back.



Note: For junior coaches rotating in groups is very effective. Allow kids the opportunity to play in different positions to develop. There are very few one position players in AFL football - the ability to play multiple positions is vital in AFL football.

Post-Game

- A proper warm down is vital. Treatment, ice, nutrition and stretching should be part of all warm downs.
- Try to be consistent in the manner you address the players post game, whether you win or lose.
- Avoid emotional responses. If you are unable to avoid a "spray", consider if addressing a players is ideal.
- Always focus on positives before negatives.

- Look at negatives as areas to address.
- Recognise efforts that align with KPI's rather than best players
- Some coaches like to do their reviews post game. Look to do this an hour minimum after the game so you have calmed down and the feedback session is most effective.
- Try to minimize

Effective use of assistants

Runner

- Utilise someone who can run well enough for the level you coach.
- The runner needs to be able to communicate the message. His football knowledge should match the level you are coaching.
- Choose someone who has a good relationship with the players.
- Avoid sending him out for every good effort. It is important to identify when that message is important.
- Focus on poor decisions rather than skill errors.
- Ensure your runner leads the way in sportsmanship and behaviour in your team.

Assistants

- Have a clear defined role for each assistant.
- Get them to take key parts of the day (warm up, line huddles) so you are free to talk to the players.
- Ensure they know what the KPIS and focus for each week before the game.
- Utilise them for jobs such as managing board, rotations and stats if you cannot find volunteers on the day.
- Appoint assistants that are different to you. If you are a talker, find someone softly spoken.
- Avoid yes men. A good assistant will challenge you and question decisions in a respectful manner.
- The assistant is not the coach. Each decision made is on you, good and bad. You need to take ownership of these and ensure you are happy with what is made.
- Listen to your assistants and take on board suggestions and feedback. Use what is relevant.