



FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

MARK EVANS
GENERAL MANAGER

It was a challenging but successful year for the AFL's Football Operations Department which implemented changes to key processes and policies.

The AFL's Football Operations Department successfully introduced major changes to the game's disciplinary system around the Match Review Panel and the Tribunal for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season.

These changes were introduced primarily to simplify the understanding of the game's judiciary process for all members of the football community.

Over the past 12 months, the Level Four Coaching Program for leading coaching candidates was significantly expanded and department staff had central roles in major changes around the competition rules relating to Father-Son and Academy Player bidding at the National Draft, the trading of future draft selections and key Laws changes.

In close consultation with the AFL Players Association, the game's world-leading Illicit Drug Policy was significantly revamped, with major changes announced after the end of the 2015 premiership season.

The Football Department is primarily responsible for the operation of the elite AFL competition and staff responded strongly in difficult circumstances to the unprecedented cancellation of a game in 2015, following the tragic death of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh.

The death of a serving senior coach shocked all parts of the Australian sporting community and the football department was required to ensure the AFL competition could appropriately grieve for the loss of Walsh while displaying the professionalism required for the season's remaining matches to continue. →

DOCKER DYNAMO

Livewire small forward Michael Walters led the goalkicking as Fremantle finished the home and away season on top of the ladder for the first time.

3

TRIBUNAL/ MRP CHANGES

The AFL Commission approved changes to the operation of the Match Review Panel and AFL Tribunal for the 2015 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, designed largely to simplify the understanding of the game’s judiciary process for all members of the football community.

The key changes included:

- All offences categorised as fines or matches of suspension, no longer using any reference to base demerit points.
- The elimination of carryover points on any offence.
- Conduct graded in two categories only – intentional or careless.
- The MRP to issue fines, two-match and three-match suspensions, with more serious offences referred to the Tribunal.
- Simplification of the Bad Record provisions, with a maximum addition of one extra match of suspension on a penalty.
- Retention of discounts for early pleas (lowering of fines or one-match suspension reduction), but removal of automatic good record provision.
- Brownlow Medal eligibility based around whether a player was suspended/not suspended for a match in any particular home and away season.

AFL TRIBUNAL SUMMARY										
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Charges	137	150	128	147	159	178	236	157	183	196
Tribunal hearings	32	42	22	35	25	15	25	15	15	11
No. of cases not sustained	11	12	6	15	5	3	8	2	5	1
Appeals	4	1	0	3	0	1	1	0	2	0
No. of players accepting prescribed penalty	105	108	106	112	134	163	211	142	168	185
% of players accepting prescribed penalty	77%	72%	83%	76%	85%	92%	89%	90%	92%	97%
No. of players suspended	45	37	41	43	51	47	59	59	55	36
Matches lost through suspension	71	71	77	68	86	72	112	104	75	57
Fixed financial sanctions (\$)	66,900	114,800	65,700	101,700	77,300	92,600	159,850	93,550	96,350	95,000
Low-level financial sanctions (\$)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77,500
Reprimands	36	38	31	29	42	47	41	33	41	-

The previous Tribunal system operated from 2005-14. The revised Tribunal system was introduced for the 2015 season.



IN THE BOOK
Fremantle defender Alex Silvagni has his number taken in round 20 against West Coast.

- Introduction of fines for low-level offences, but with suspensions imposed for repeat third offenders within a season.

Four new MRP members were named to the weekly operation of the review of all games – Luke Ball, Nathan Burke, Michael Christian and Brad Sewell, who could call on four premierships and nearly 900 games of AFL experience between them.

The operation of the panel was that three of the four members would rule on incidents each week, with the make-up of the panel regularly altering through the season. A chairman was not appointed, with a majority 2-1 or 3-0 ruling on each incident to determine whether a charge was laid.

Daniel Harford, Shane Wakelin and Paul Williams also joined the Tribunal jury as new members, as part of the rotation of members to sit on any cases taken to hearings through the season.

In 2016, the guidelines for dangerous tackles will enforce a stricter definition of dangerous tackles which cause forceful high contact and the following changes will also be made:

Appeal Grounds – A ‘manifestly inadequate’ sanction or classification will be available as appeal grounds. This has been introduced after the AFL considered it could not appeal a suspension that was deemed too low, whereas a player or club retained the right to appeal a suspension that was deemed too high.

Impact Guidelines – The wording around the potential to cause serious injury will be expanded to include intentional head-high strikes and high bumps with significant head contact and/or player momentum.

Contact With An Injured Player – This will be deemed as a fixed financial sanction on the table of offences.

ILLICIT DRUG POLICY

A revised Illicit Drugs Policy was announced after the end of the 2015 season, after wide-ranging discussions through the year between the AFL and AFLPA, medical officers and AFL clubs.

- Enhanced player education and counselling programs – to help players with meaningful and lasting behavioural changes.
- Appropriate system of medical interventions as required – delivered by the AFL Medical Officer, AFL doctors and medical experts.
- Opportunity for players to modify behaviour at first detection – interventions at this stage do not involve a playing or financial sanction but trigger education and counselling programs, along with target testing.
- Stricter set of consequences for players who fail to modify their behaviour – public suspension and fine after second detection.
- Increased club involvement – clubs informed earlier and greater involvement in education and counselling programs.
- Urine testing and year-round hair testing – urine testing to determine consequences; hair testing to monitor behaviour and direct target testing and education programs.
- No public release of results – the AFL will no longer release the results of illicit drug testing.
- Self-notification – players will be permitted one self-notification, allowed only if they have not previously been identified under the Illicit Drugs Policy.
- Players in the AFL’s Talent Pathway programs will also undergo testing with detections of an illicit substance to be communicated to the respective club doctor once drafted.

Interventions and consequences are as follows:

- First detection: \$5000 financial sanction (suspended) and compulsory counselling and education programs.
- Second detection: Four-match suspension and \$5000 sanction imposed. Club notified and the suspension confirmed publicly.
- Third detection: 12-match suspension. Where a player is deemed as acting outside the spirit of the policy by failing

to comply with the prescribed program or demonstrating risky behaviour, clubs may also be notified.

These changes were agreed between all parties to reflect the continued evolution of the IDP, acknowledging the complex nature of illicit drug use while striking a balance between protecting the health and wellbeing of players and providing appropriate deterrents and controls to shift player behaviour.

The AFL wishes to restate for the record that AFL-listed players agree to a regime of testing and sanctions for illicit drug taking above and beyond the testing for performance-enhancing drugs, as part of their responsibility as a professional athlete.

The game continues to enact this policy, when many sports have no version of a policy in operation, because the AFL industry understands the threat of illicit drugs to players’ health and wellbeing, and we also believe the privilege of playing AFL comes with a responsibility to the club and to the game.

TRANSITION TO NEW SYSTEM

- Players with one detection more than two years old (with no further positive tests) will enter the new system with no detections.
- If a player is on two detections, his next detection will result in four-week suspension and the \$5000 fine.
- If a player is on one detection, the next detection will be a \$5000 fine, plus the club informed but no suspension.

NAB AFL ACADEMY HEAD COACH

Brenton Sanderson was appointed from a high-quality field of applicants to guide the overall development of the elite teenage players in the country as they prepared for possible AFL careers.

Sanderson played 209 games for the Adelaide Crows, Collingwood and Geelong between 1992-2005, before taking on assistant coaching roles at Port Adelaide (2006) and the Cats (2007-11) and the senior coaching job at the Crows for the 2012-14 seasons.

As the NAB AFL Academy head coach, Sanderson’s primary role was to oversee the development and training path of the elite junior players selected from the NAB AFL Under-18 and NAB AFL Under-16 Championships, with two major priorities

around match-specific coaching to assist the on-field development of young talent and off-field education to ensure they can thrive in an AFL club environment.

LEVEL FOUR SENIOR COACH PROGRAM

The AFL introduced its Level Four Program in 2015 to prepare highly rated assistant coaches for a potential head coach position at an AFL club with concentrated mentoring and development work, beyond the existing Level Three Program.

John Barker (Carlton), Brendon Bolton (then Hawthorn), Blake Caracella (Geelong), Stuart Dew (Sydney Swans), Simon Goodwin (Melbourne), Robert Harvey (Collingwood), Adam Kingsley (St Kilda), Simon Lloyd (then Fremantle) and Matthew Nicks (Port Adelaide) were the leading contenders in a high-quality field of applicants who sought to be part of the program.

The selection process involved an extensive application, peer and senior coach review and an interview conducted by a combination of highly regarded coaches and CEOs. Former AFL coach Peter Schwab and 2006 West Coast premiership coach John Worsfold were joined by Socceroos coach Ange Postecoglou, leading hockey coach Ric Charlesworth and club CEOs Trevor Nisbett (West Coast), Greg Swann (Brisbane Lions), Peter Jackson (Melbourne) and Brian Cook (Geelong).

The course centres around four key components – core coaching modules, an individual learning plan, a program for high-impact leadership and individual coach mentoring. The core modules address areas including rules, regulations, governance, integrity, government relations and the economy of the game. Other modules address quality coaching practice, strategic communications, media training and ethical leadership.

Four mentor coaches are involved with the program – Neale Daniher (football), Ric Charlesworth (hockey), Cliff Mallett (athletics) and John Buchanan (cricket). Worsfold was also involved as a mentor before his appointment as an assistant with the Adelaide Crows.

The current group of coaches will continue into the second year of the program and a new group will start in February 2016.

AFL UMPIRING DEPARTMENT

The 2015 season was a success for the umpiring department. A 14 per cent decrease in error rate, as judged by the umpires' coaches, was a great result. The introduction of a redefining and tighter interpretation of holding the ball was universally applauded by the football world.

A mid-season change in interpretation of the driving with the head rule was challenging, but the result for player safety was a highlight of the year.

A new structure in goal and boundary coaching led to a more national approach, which saw all but one state represented in finals. A greater emphasis on boundary throw-ins led to a marked improvement while goal umpiring across Australia continued to be of a very high standard.

An extensive four-umpire trial saw eight games in the NAB Challenge and seven premiership season games with an extra umpire on the ground. The trial was a success with the system putting umpires in better positions in a less-fatigued state. GPS figures showed a dramatic reduction in high-end running, meaning umpires should not be forced out of the game due to physical limitations were the system introduced.

The need for a far greater number of umpires to be listed has meant the system will not be introduced in 2016. A fast-tracking development program has been introduced for umpires just below AFL level, with a view to them being ready

to fill the required spots were the system to be introduced in 2017.

The Score Review System saw 35 decisions overturned that would have been errors, of which eight were initiated by the score review official. The time taken for each review was reduced from an average of 30 seconds in 2014 to 20.5 in 2015. There were four errors made out of 143 reviews. While the goal is to have no errors, the number of corrected decisions was rated as a success in 2015.

2015 GRAND FINAL UMPIRES

FIELD

Matt Stevic, Jeff Dalglish, Brett Rosebury

Emergency: Ray Chamberlain

BOUNDARY

Nathan Doig, Matthew Tomkins,

Ian Burrows, Chris Gordon

Emergency: Michael Marantelli

GOAL

Chris Appleton, Adam Wojcik

Emergency: Luke Walker

MILESTONES

100 GAMES

Sam Hay (F), Jeff Dalglish (F), Brett Dalglish (B), Cameron Ward (B), Michael Marantelli (B), Tim Morrison (B), Drew Kowalski (B), Dale Edwick (G), Stephen Williams (G), Tristan Symes (G)

200 GAMES

Ian Burrows (B), Nathan Doig (B), Luke Walker (G), Jason Venkataya (G), Chris Appleton (G)

300 GAMES

Justin Schmitt (F), John Morris (B)



GRAND SEASON
Jeff Dalglish capped a memorable 2015, in which he celebrated his 100th game, by umpiring his first Grand Final.

INTERNATIONAL RULES

Australia played Ireland in a one-off Test for the 2015 International Rules Series at Croke Park in Dublin on November 21, with Ireland proving successful by four points in a closely fought contest.

The 2015 series came on the back of last year's successful meeting between the two countries in Perth, which Australia won, before Ireland regained the Cormac McAnallen Trophy on home soil.

Selection for the Australian team was only open to players who had earned All-Australian selection through their AFL career, with the coaching staff led by Alastair Clarkson, Chris Scott and Ross Lyon.

The 2015 Virgin Australia International Rules squad was: Hayden Ballantyne (Fremantle), Eddie Betts (Adelaide Crows), Grant Birchall (Hawthorn), Luke Breust (Hawthorn), Patrick Dangerfield (Adelaide Crows, now Geelong Cats), Dustin Fletcher (Essendon), Andrew Gaff (West Coast), Brendon Goddard (Essendon), Robbie Gray (Port Adelaide), Dyson Heppell (Essendon), Luke Hodge (Hawthorn), Sam Mitchell (Hawthorn), Leigh Montagna (St Kilda), David Mundy (Fremantle), Robert Murphy (Western Bulldogs), Nick Riewoldt (St Kilda), Tom Rockliff (Brisbane Lions), Jarryd Roughead (Hawthorn), Nick Smith (Sydney Swans), Jake Stringer (Western Bulldogs), Harry Taylor (Geelong Cats), Easton Wood (Western Bulldogs).

Harry Taylor won the Jim Stynes Medal as Australia's best player in the 58-54 loss.

LAWS OF THE GAME

The AFL Commission has approved a reduction in the cap on interchange rotations for the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, after a recommendation from the Laws of the Game Committee at the end of the 2015 season.

The use of the substitute player will be removed, returning to four interchange players, while the cap will be lowered to 90 rotations a match. Clubs will also be allowed any changes made at quarter breaks (up to 12 across the three breaks), while forced blood rule, head injury assessment and stretcher changes will not count as part of the rotations.

The interchange cap had been introduced for the 2014 season for an initial two-year trial, set at 120 rotations a match across three interchange players, with one player being used as a substitute in case of injury.

In 2016, the cap will continue to not have any quarter-by-quarter restrictions, with the use of the 90 interchange rotations a match to be managed as each club sees fit across the entirety of a game.

It was the AFL view the interchange cap over the past two years had allowed clubs to transition back to 2010 levels of interchange numbers.

The AFL Commission approved a minor change to the Laws for 2015 whereby the umpires would be able to call for a score review if a goal umpire interfered with a scoring play.

Under the Law as previously written, play-on was the correct call for any instance where the ball hits a goal umpire. This was altered to provide a common sense way of dealing with these rare situations by the umpires halting play and determining whether a goal umpire had prevented a certain score, with the wording allowing the goal and field umpire to determine what score they believe would have resulted had the ball not hit the goal umpire.

The Commission also approved several changes to interpretations around the Laws of the Game for the 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Season:

Dangerous Tackles – Umpires will be giving a stricter adjudication of tackles with a lifting, slinging or rotating technique, while the MRP guidelines will enforce a stricter definition of dangerous tackles which cause forceful high contact.

Protected Area – Size of the protected area around the mark to be increased.

Boundary Line Play – A stricter interpretation of deliberate out of bounds will be enforced.

CONCUSSION

The AFL Injury Survey continues to measure and define concussion as an instance whereby a player is required to miss a match. In 2011 and 2013, the AFL revised its Concussion Management Guidelines to reinforce a more conservative approach to concussion management and the injury data appears to indicate the more conservative approach.



FULL STRETCH
Australia's Nick Riewoldt outreaches Ireland's Gary Brennan in the International Rules Test in Dublin, but the Irish had the last laugh, winning 58-54.

Because of the historical deficiencies of the established concussion data, due to the definition requiring missed games, the AFL also has a separate ongoing concussion incidence project that overcomes this gap and includes all concussion cases from AFL matches whether a game was missed or not.

Results from this study between 2011-14 have shown consistent average concussion rates of 6-7 per club per year. Approximately 30 per cent of these incidents arise from marking contests, contested ball and tackling, with the remaining 10 per cent from bumping. The incidents are evenly spread across the four quarters of a match.

The AFL further updated its concussion protocols with the introduction of the use of a sideline Head Injury Assessment Form, created in conjunction with experts and club doctors. The form provides greater clarity for club doctors to identify symptoms or conditions that automatically exclude a player from returning to a match, such as:

- Loss of consciousness after a heavy hit or fall.
- Tonic posturing (player's arm(s) stiffening after impact).
- An unprotected fall (where the player 'rag-dolls').
- The form also identifies symptoms or conditions that require further assessment to clear a player of concussion before returning to a match.

AFL ANNUAL INJURY SURVEY

The 2014 Injury Survey showed a substantially reduced injury incidence for the 2014 Toyota AFL Premiership Season, compared with the previous year, stating: "Season 2014 was a successful season in terms of injury outcomes, with lower injury incidence and prevalence than in recent years."

There was also a reduced injury prevalence with a higher rate of players available to also play at state league level.

There was a lower incidence of serious ACL injuries in 2014, particularly early in the season, but a higher rate of foot stress



TAKING FLIGHT
AIS Academy youngster Callum Ah Chee soars for a spectacular mark against the Northern Blues at the MCG. The West Australian was drafted No. 8 by the Gold Coast Suns.

AFL INJURY SUMMARY

ALL INJURIES	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Incidence (new injuries per club per season)	34.1	34.8	35.3	34.0	34.6	36.9	37.8	38.7	38.4	38.1	41.5	36.1
Incidence (recurrent)	4.6	3.7	4.8	4.1	5.6	5.4	3.6	4.7	3.6	3.6	5.1	4.4
Incidence (total)	38.7	38.5	40.1	38.2	40.3	42.3	41.4	43.3	42.0	41.7	46.6	40.8
Prevalence (missed games per club per season)	118.7	131.0	129.2	138.3	146.7	147.1	151.2	153.8	157.1	147.7	158.1	146.0
Average injury severity (number of missed games)	3.5	3.8	3.7	4.1	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1	3.9	3.8	4.0
Recurrence rate	14%	11%	14%	12%	16%	15%	10%	12%	9%	9%	12%	12%
Clubs participating	16/16	16/16	16/16	16/16	16/16	16/16	16/16	16/16	17/17	18/18	18/18	18/18
Average players per club	42.2	42.8	43.3	43.9	44.2	44.6	46.1	46.4	46.9	46.7	45.4	45.1
Interchange players	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3/1	3/1	3/1	3/1 (120 cap)

fractures. There were ongoing lower rates of hamstring, quadriceps and groin injuries whereas calf injuries reduced in 2014 compared with the previous three seasons but were still higher than previous seasons.

The injury incidence (number of new injuries per club per season) for 2014 was 36.1, a 13 per cent decrease from 2013. Injury prevalence was 146.0 missed games per season, an eight per cent decrease from 2013 and more in keeping with rates of the mid-late 2000s.

In 2014, the 'average' status of a club list of 45 players in any given week was: 35 players playing with 22 of them in the AFL; 7-8 missing through injury; and 2-3 missing due to other reasons (such as suspension, being used as a travelling emergency, team bye in a lower grade, etc).

dangerous tackles

Through the 2015 season, the Football Operations Department formed a view that a stronger position needed to be taken on sling/dangerous tackles after two high-profile incidents in-season involving a Jay Schulz tackle on Ted Richards and a Bryce Gibbs tackle on Robbie Gray.

The tackles were adjudged differently by the game's judiciary with only Gibbs being suspended and the MRP was then instructed to give greater consideration to the player being placed in a vulnerable position, particularly involving the pinning of the arms. A player retained the opportunity to defend his position at the Tribunal if he did not agree with the assessment of his action.

Dangerous tackling techniques will be further discouraged in 2016 by paying free kicks for lifting, slinging, driving or rotating tackles with excessive force, and further penalising these actions via the Match Review Panel when they result in forceful high contact.

Regarding the Match Review Panel, a stricter adjudication of what constitutes a dangerous tackle is to be implemented. This includes an expansion of the current guidelines to consider forceful rotating tackles or situations where the player being tackled is in a vulnerable position (ie. arms pinned) with little opportunity to protect himself.

stadium safety review

The AFL audited all its stadiums for player safety and conducted a full perimeter check of all venues after an issue involving Hawthorn's Jarryd Roughead in the match at ANZ Stadium against the Sydney Swans.

Roughead came into contact with bolts in the concrete in the drainage area next to the fence after sliding through the goal area during play. The AFL acknowledged this was not acceptable for the players in the match and its inspections of surrounds adjoining the playing surface were immediately upgraded at all venues across the competition.

phil walsh

The tragic loss of Adelaide Crows coach Phil Walsh required sensitivity and strong leadership from the Football Operations staff during a time of shock and grief for the entire competition.

After immediate consultation with the Adelaide Crows and Geelong Cats football clubs (who were due to play that weekend), the players association and the wider industry, the round 14 match scheduled for the Adelaide Oval was abandoned.

This was a decision of the competition, as the AFL held the view that it was not fair to ask the teams to play in these circumstances. It was decided the premiership points would be split between the two clubs, as per the AFL rules, while

the remaining seven games of the round that had not yet been played went ahead.

A move initiated by Hawthorn's Alastair Clarkson, and supported by Collingwood's Nathan Buckley, for the rival teams to come together in the centre circle after the Friday night match at the MCG was then adopted by all other teams who played that weekend, and the following weekend's match in Perth when the Crows returned to the field to play West Coast.

Essendon Football Club
pre-season player concessions

Essendon participated in the 2015 NAB Challenge with revised conditions for its playing list, as a number of players served provisional suspensions at the time relating to the ongoing ASADA case.

Essendon was allowed to use players from its VFL list and players from other state league teams to enable it to field a team. A total of 13 players were given approval to play in matches for Essendon in the NAB Challenge after signing short-term contracts with the club – Mitch Brown (previously listed with the Geelong Cats), Mitch Clisby (previously listed with Melbourne), Josh Freezer (Essendon VFL), Aaron Heppell (Essendon VFL), Clinton Jones (previously listed with St Kilda), Anthony McDonald-Tipungwuti (Essendon VFL), James Magner (previously listed with Melbourne), Marcus Marigliani (Essendon VFL), Sam Michael (previously listed with the Brisbane Lions), Jared Petrenko (previously listed with the Adelaide Crows), James Polkinghorne (previously listed with the Brisbane Lions), Jordan Schroder (previously listed with the Geelong Cats) and Sam Tagliabue (Essendon VFL).

CLUB ACADEMIES – PLAYER DRAFT NOMINATIONS

A total of 25 players were nominated under the provisions of the Club Academies Rule as draft-eligible players for the 2015 NAB AFL Draft, held in Adelaide.

For a player to be included as a draft-eligible Club Academy Player for any of the Brisbane Lions, Gold Coast Suns, GWS Giants or Sydney Swans, the player must have represented either New South Wales or Queensland at any underage national football championships in that year or any other competition as determined by the AFL.

Brisbane Lions – Mabior Chol (Brisbane Lions Academy), Eric Hipwood (Aspley AFC), Ben Keays (Redlands), Corey Wagner (Aspley AFC), Nick Weller (University of Queensland AFC), Reuben William (Wilston Grange).

Gold Coast Suns – Didymus Blanket, Robert Blood (Southport Sharks), Dyson Budarick (Labrador), Jesse Joyce (Palm Beach), Max Spencer (Palm Beach), Connor West (Labrador).

GWS Giants – Jock Cornell (Mangoplah-CUE), Nick Coughlan (Albury Tigers), Matthew Flynn (Narrandera), Harrison Himmelberg (Mangoplah-CUE), Jacob Hopper (North Ballarat Rebels), Jack Irvine (Temora), Matthew Kennedy (Collingullie), Lachlan Tiziani (Albury).

Sydney Swans – Darcy Baron-Hay (North Shore), Lachlan Behagg (Manly Giants), Ryan Hebron (North Shore), Callum Mills (Mosman Swans), Matthew Wilson (Maroubra).

A total of 13 players were subsequently taken at either the NAB AFL Draft or NAB AFL Rookie Draft – Mabior Chol, Eric Hipwood, Ben Keays, Corey Wagner, Reuben William, Callum Mills, Jacob Hopper, Matthew Kennedy, Harrison Himmelberg, Matthew Flynn, Jock Cornell, Nick Coughlan and Jesse Joyce.

UMPIRING DEVELOPMENT

A 15 per cent increase in overall umpiring numbers was the highlight in a year of significant progress for umpiring development. The AFL had a strong focus on implementing initiatives that have led to the increased recruitment and retention of umpires at all levels of the game.

GET IN THE GAME

The new umpiring recruitment campaign was launched during the NAB Challenge, focused on the feeling of being in the centre of the action. A simplification of the umpire registration process ensured massive numbers taking up umpiring for the first time in 2015.

UMPIRING DIVERSITY

Designed to increase the number of indigenous, multicultural and female umpires nationally, an Umpiring Diversity Advisory Council was formed in 2015. These academies introduced the life skills that high school students from diverse backgrounds can learn by being involved in umpiring. In addition, two talented multicultural umpires – Jai Lyons (NSW) and Luca Bisogni (Qld) – were selected to attend the umpiring development program at the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships.

A highlight of the year in umpiring diversity was the appointment of an all-female umpiring crew in a TAC Cup match for the first time.

COACH ACADEMY

The AFL invested significantly in coach education in 2015, starting with workshops nationally and the development of an online coach portal.

NATIONAL UMPIRING CURRICULUM

A National Umpiring Curriculum to aid community umpire coaches in developing and accrediting their umpires was developed with the assistance of State Umpiring Departments and AFL umpires.

This new resource provides umpire coaches with coaching and training guides that are used to educate umpires to be the best they can be.

TALENT PROGRAMS

Talent Pathway umpires had the opportunity to be part of the Youth Girls National Championships in Mandurah (WA), the NAB AFL Under-16 Championships on the Gold Coast and the NAB AFL Under-18 Championships in Melbourne.

Former AFL umpire Stuart Wenn was appointed as the head coach at these championships to assist the fast-tracking of young talent, while umpires from the

NAB AFL Under-18 Championships were appointed to the Toyota AFL Grand Final curtain-raiser match between the AFL Academy and the Allies under-18 team at the MCG.

Thomas Chrystie (Vic), Aaron Langdon (NSW), Alex Whetton (Qld) and Nathan Williamson (WA) graduated from the program that aims to develop Australia's emerging officiating talent, while five state league umpires were invited to the Umpires' Combine in October. South Australian Craig Fleer was promoted on to the AFL field umpires list following the Combine.

NATIONAL UNIFORM SUPPLY PROGRAM

The AFL teamed with high performance apparel supplier BLK to launch the National Uniform Supply Program, with the goal of a standardised umpiring uniform. The aim is to have every umpire officiating a game in Australia to be wearing the green uniform worn by AFL umpires.

NAB AFL RISING STARS PROGRAM

The NAB AFL Rising Stars program identifies and recognises young players, providing a pathway. It comprises the following elements:

- NAB AFL Rising Star
- NAB AFL Draft
- NAB AFL Draft Combine
- NAB AFL Trade Period
- NAB AFL Under-18 Championships
- NAB AFL Academy
- NAB AFL Under-16 Championships

NAB AFL RISING STAR AWARD

Melbourne's Jesse Hogan won the 2015 NAB AFL Rising Star award.

The key forward polled 49 votes to win from Carlton's Patrick Cripps (41) and West Coast's Dom Sheed (27).

Hogan was presented with the Ron Evans Medal, a \$20,000 NAB Private Wealth investment portfolio and access to a dedicated personal banker, courtesy of the National Australia Bank.

NAB AFL DRAFT

The 2015 NAB AFL Draft was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre. The event was broadcast by Fox Sports, ABC Radio, 1116 SEN and FIVEaa. *AFL.com.au* again provided extensive coverage.

It was the 30th AFL National Draft and the second time the event has been held in Adelaide.

RISING SUPERSTAR
Talented Melbourne key forward Jesse Hogan was a worthy winner of the NAB AFL Rising Star award.



2015 NAB AFL RISING STAR NOMINEES

RD	PLAYER	CLUB	VOTES
1	Kamdyn McIntosh	Richmond	
2	Mitch Honeychurch	Western Bulldogs	
3	Isaac Heeney	Sydney Swans	12
4	Patrick Cripps	Carlton	41
5	Adam Saad	Gold Coast Suns	3
6	Cory Gregson	Geelong Cats	
7	Billy Hartung	Hawthorn	
8	Cam McCarthy	GWS Giants	
9	Jesse Hogan	Melbourne	49
10	Angus Brayshaw	Melbourne	8
11	Tim Broomhead	Collingwood	
12	Tom Boyd	Western Bulldogs	
13	Charlie Cameron	Adelaide Crows	
14	Jack Lonie	St Kilda	
15	Dom Sheed	West Coast Eagles	27
16	Touk Miller	Gold Coast Suns	6
17	Jake Lever	Adelaide Crows	2
18	Harris Andrews	Brisbane Lions	
19	Jackson Thurlow	Geelong Cats	1
20	Jordan De Goey	Collingwood	1
21	Darcy Lang	Geelong	
22	Ben Lennon	Richmond	
23	Orazio Fantasia	Essendon	

Victorian Jacob Weitering was the first selection. He was recruited by Carlton from the Dandenong Stingrays and the Mount Martha Football Club.

NAB AFL ACADEMY

The AFL welcomed Brenton Sanderson as NAB AFL Academy head coach in February, joining AFL Talent Football Manager Michael Ablett and assistant coaches

Brad Johnson, Matthew Lloyd, Brad Ottens and Lenny Hayes with the delivery of the program.

Sanderson coaches both Level 1 and Level 2 of the program. Both levels include a number of camps and an international tour over a 12-month period.

The Level 2 squad played two matches against VFL teams in April. The Academy team was soundly beaten by 75 points

against Werribee, but won by nine points against the Northern Blues in a curtain-raiser to the round two match between Richmond and the Western Bulldogs at the MCG.

The 18th intake travelled to IMG Academy in Florida. It was the first time the Academy has toured the United States.

The Level 1 squad toured New Zealand in April and played a match against the



CREAM OF THE CROP
The top 10 selections are presented to the crowd at the 2015 NAB AFL Draft in Adelaide.

2015 NAB AFL DRAFT SELECTION (FIRST ROUND)

NO.	PLAYER	REGION	CLUBS	SELECTED BY
1	Jacob Weitering	Vic Country	Mount Martha/Dandenong Stingrays	Carlton
2	Josh Schache	Vic Country	Seymour/Murray Bushrangers	Brisbane Lions
3	Callum Mills	NSW/ACT	North Shore/Swans Academy	Sydney Swans
4	Clayton Oliver	Vic Country	Mooroopna/Murray Bushrangers	Melbourne
5	Darcy Parish	Vic Country	Winchelsea/Geelong Falcons	Essendon
6	Aaron Francis	SA	Loxton North/West Adelaide	Essendon
7	Jacob Hopper	NSW/ACT	Leeton-Whitton United/North Ballarat Rebels	GWS Giants
8	Callum Ah Chee	WA	Kelmscott/South Fremantle	Gold Coast Suns
9	Sam Weideman	Vic Metro	Vermont/Eastern Ranges	Melbourne
10	Harry McKay	Vic Country	Warragul/Gippsland Power	Carlton
11	Wayne Milera	SA	Ingle Farm/Central District	Adelaide Crows
12	Charlie Curnow	Vic Country	Torquay/Geelong Falcons	Carlton
13	Matthew Kennedy	NSW/ACT	Collingullie-Glenfield Park/GWS Academy	GWS Giants
14	Eric Hipwood	Queensland	Aspley/Lions Academy	Brisbane Lions
15	Daniel Rioli	NT	St Marys NT/East Point/North Ballarat Rebels	Richmond
16	Harrison Himmelberg	NSW/ACT	Mangoplah-Cookardinia United Eastlakes/GWS Academy	GWS Giants
17	Tom Doedee	Vic Country	St Joseph's/Geelong Falcons	Adelaide
18	Jade Gresham	Vic Metro	South Morang/Northern Knights	St Kilda
19	Ryan Burton	SA	PHOS Camden/North Adelaide	Hawthorn
20	Brayden Fiorini	Vic Metro	Greensborough/Northern Knights	Gold Coast Suns
21	Ben McKay	Vic Country	Warragul/Gippsland Power	North Melbourne
22	Kieran Lovell	Tasmania	Kingborough	Hawthorn
23	David Cuningham	Vic Metro	Canterbury/Oakleigh Chargers	Carlton

2015 NAB AFL DRAFTS Where players came from				
	PRIMARY LISTED	ROOKIE LISTED	TOTAL	%
Victoria	35	12	47	42%
South Australia	11	5	16	14%
Western Australia	8	5	13	11.6%
NSW/ACT	6	5	11	9.8%
Queensland	4	7	11	9.8%
Tasmania	4	0	4	3.6%
NT	1	2	3	2.7%
Alternate sports	0	4	4	3.6%
International	0	3	3	2.7%
Total	69	43	112	

INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS ON AFL LISTS IN 2015		
PRIMARY LIST		
Brisbane	Pearce Hanley	Ireland
Carlton	Zach Tuohy	Ireland
Sydney Swans	Mike Pyke	Canada
ROOKIE LIST		
Brisbane	Cian Hanley	Ireland
Carlton	Ciaran Sheehan	Ireland
Carlton	Ciaran Byrne	Ireland
Collingwood	Mason Cox	USA
Essendon	Conor McKenna	Ireland
Fremantle	Sean Hurley	Ireland
Geelong	Padraig Lucey	Ireland
Hawthorn	Kurt Heatherley	New Zealand
Hawthorn	Shem-Kalvin Tatupu	New Zealand
Nth Melbourne	Eric Wallace	USA
St Kilda	Jason Holmes	USA
Port Adelaide	Daniel Flynn	Ireland
West Coast	Paddy Brophy	Ireland
INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP		
Hawthorn	Slope Ngata	New Zealand
St Kilda	Joe Baker-Thomas	New Zealand
St Kilda	Barclay Miller	New Zealand
St Kilda	Giovanni Mountain-Silbery	New Zealand



V FOR VICTORY
Vic Metro claimed the Division 1 title at the 2015 NAB AFL Under-18 Championships.

New Zealand Hawks at Westpac Stadium in Wellington.
Jacob Weitering was awarded the Ben Mitchell Medal in Level 2 while Sam Powell-Pepper was awarded the Cameron Ling Medal in Level 1.

NAB AFL UNDER-18 CHAMPIONSHIPS
The 2015 NAB AFL Under-18 Championships were played in Adelaide, the Gold Coast, Geelong, Perth and Melbourne from May 23 to July 2.
Vic Country won Division 1 and Queensland won Division 2.
Vic Country's Josh Schache won the Larke Medal (Division 1 best and fairest) and Queensland's Ben Keays won the Harrison Medal (Division 2 best and fairest).

NAB AFL UNDER-16 CHAMPIONSHIPS
The 2015 NAB AFL Under-16 Championships were held on the Gold Coast from July 4 to July 11.
Vic Country won Division 1 and Queensland won Division 2.
The Division 1 Kevin Sheehan medallist was Vic Metro's Jack Higgins, while NSW/ACT's Charlie Spargo was awarded the Division 2 Alan McLean Medal.

NAB AFL DRAFT COMBINE
The 2015 NAB AFL Draft Combine was held at Etihad Stadium in Melbourne from October 8-11.
The best young players from throughout the country gathered for testing and interviews with club staff.

State Combines were conducted in Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Sydney and Perth.

INTERNATIONAL COMBINES
International Combines were conducted in Wellington, the IMG Academy in Florida and Dublin under the direction of Michael Ablett and AFL International Talent Co-ordinator Tadhg Kennelly.
AFL club recruiting staff attended each Combine and 55 athletes were tested. In 2015, there were 20 players listed with AFL clubs.