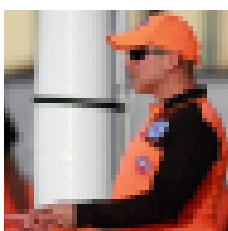
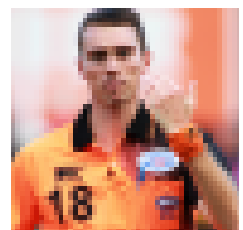
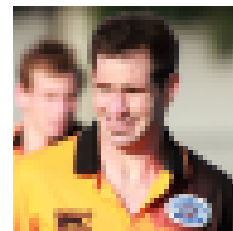




Victorian Football Umpires' Association

Annual report and financial statement 2014



Office bearers



Steve Piperno
President



Daniel Butcher
Vice-president



Peter Kelly
Executive officer



Michael Curtis
Field rep.



Luke McIlroy
Field rep.



Tim Lougoon
Boundary rep. (part)



Lawrence Coop
Boundary rep.



James Scully
Boundary rep. (part)



Corey Brown
Boundary rep. (part)



Callum Leonard
Goal rep.



Luke White
Goal rep.

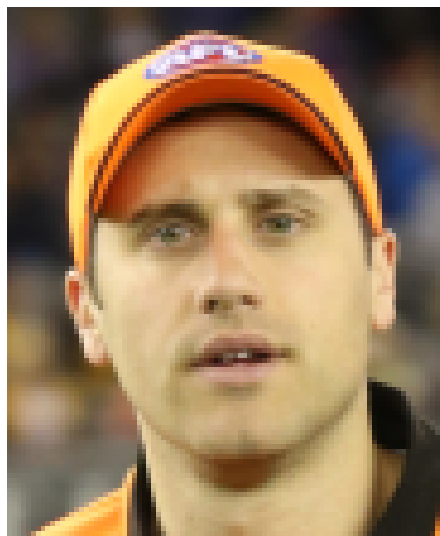


Adam Havelberg
Comm. Officer



David Flegg
Hist. Stat.

President's report



As I sit down to start thinking about my president's report for 2014, I take some time to reflect on the challenges and opportunities that have presented themselves in the last 12 months, along with what we as an association have managed to achieve.

Over the offseason I put a lot of thought into what I wanted my priorities to be and what direction I wanted the VFUA to take. Having been involved in VFL umpiring for almost a decade, I have seen some significant achievements by the association over my time. Therefore, in order to maintain its strength and continue its success, it became my priority to use that experience and knowledge of the umpiring environment to identify which new focus the VFUA was to adopt.

Before finally deciding on my approach for the year, it was important to assess the challenges and opportunities that 2014 would present. The appointment of Cameron Nash to the role of umpire coach, the first year of a new fees and conditions agreement and the administration of the Victorian Women's Football League moving to AFL Victoria were items on the agenda that needed consideration.

The challenge for me and the incoming Executive became identifying which strategies and initiatives could be implemented to best position ourselves to respond.

During my first speech as president at last year's AGM, I mentioned my initial priorities being engagement and re-engagement of members and to not only maintain, but enhance our relationship with AFL Victoria. These became the important messages that my Vice-President, Daniel Butcher, and I emphasised to the Executive Committee throughout the year.

The planning weekend, held in early February, saw the VFUA Executive Committee head to Rye, not only for the team to enjoy some drinks in the sunshine, but more importantly with the purpose of communicating clear messages to the group in order to give a clear understanding of what we wanted the VFUA to achieve in 2014. It was a terrific weekend that incorporated inducting new committee members, outlining expectations and responsibilities and also involved plenty of robust discussion about how we could improve or enhance the way the association performs its duties.

The primary focus of the VFUA in 2014 was to ensure that we developed an even stronger relationship with AFL Victoria and the VFL Umpiring Department. With the future of the AFL Victoria Development League unknown, the introduction of women's football and constantly changing VFL teams, the landscape of Victorian state league football is ever evolving. Therefore, it was important to build on our current relationships to boost the professional profile of the VFUA and ensure we remain a significant stakeholder in the eyes of AFL Victoria. We achieved this by conducting frequent meetings with John Hook (State League and Talent Manager), Cameron Nash and other delegates. This relationship has made correspondence and negotiations with AFL Victoria and the Umpiring Department on a wide range of topics and issues much more effective throughout the course of the year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cam, Angela and John Hook for their ongoing support of and contribution to our members.

Our other focus this year centred on the engagement of our members and therefore we decided to launch initiatives and projects to provide some education to members on association matters. For our new members, we conducted a comprehensive review of our induction program and rolled out a new presentation that better communicated the fundamental purpose and role of the VFUA. For existing members, it was promoting our core principle of enhancing the umpiring experience through our strategic priorities which include; representation by promoting and enforcing our entitlements; enhancing our relationships and communication; and by creating a spirited culture through social functions and recognition of our current and past members' achievements.

Overall, I have learnt a significant amount in my time as leader of this great association. I am proud of what the VFUA Executive Committee has achieved in 2014 and am excited about what else we can achieve in the future. The Executive could not have achieved, nor would it have had as much fun, without such a terrific team.

To vice-president and my close friend, Daniel Butcher, I am so grateful for working with you this year. Whether it was our extremely late nights working away together on our laptops, ridiculously long phone calls or light hearted arguments, your assistance and support was more valuable to me than you realise.

To my unofficial mentor in umpiring and in life, Peter Kelly – the professional working relationship and personal friendship we have developed, in particular over the last three years, has been invaluable. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the VFUA and past and present VFL umpires for the on-going work you have undertaken, the achievements and success you have led and contributed to and for the deeply profound impact you have had on umpiring in this state.

David Flegg, you are an unsung hero of the association and someone from whom I am constantly seeking guidance and counsel. Thank you for your ongoing efforts and the endless amount of work you do that continually enhances the umpiring experience for our members.

To the other executive members, Adam Havelberg, Michael Curtis, Luke McIlroy, Tim Lougoon, James Scully, Lawrence Coop, Corey Brown, Luke White and Callum Leonard, a massive thank you for your efforts of assistance, coordination, preparation, guidance, advice and support. I hope you all recognise your significant contribution to the VFUA's success this year.

As my mind turns to preparing for next year, I wish all our members and life members an enjoyable and safe festive season and I am looking forward to catching up with you all in the new year.

Steven Piperno
President



VFUA presidents at the 2014 Presidents' Dinner. L-R Chris Snell (2001-02), Richard Mills (2010-11), Russell Davidson (1999), Steven Piperno (2014), Steven Stirling (2000), Greg Russo (1998), Rob Findlay (2005-06), Adam Wojcik (2008).

Executive officer's report



On behalf of the VFUA Executive Committee, I am pleased to submit the annual report and financial statement for the 2013/14 financial year to our members and life members.

Season 2014 brought change at a number of levels. After a long and distinguished career, life member and Director of Umpiring for AFL Victoria Kevin Mitchell retired at the end of season 2013 to pursue his interests in fishing and discover a new passion for travelling.

A new umpires' coach position was created with an increased focus on building relationships with local feeder leagues and the newly appointed umpiring team at AFL headquarters. The VFUA was approached to assist with the recruitment to this new role with Cameron Nash appointed to commence in January 2014.

The new fees and conditions agreement for 2014 – 2016 came into effect and the VFUA worked with AFL Victoria to ensure that all new and existing arrangements were transitioned effectively.

The VFUA also welcomed a new and enthusiastic executive team for 2014. The teamwork and camaraderie amongst this team was first rate and I would personally like to thank each member of this team for the

professional approach they took to their respective roles this year. It is pleasing to see, that despite all the extra work done by the committee members, a number featured in grand finals, a sure sign of the calibre of the team as a whole. Congratulations and thank you to all of you.

Some new and ongoing initiatives were undertaken in 2014:

Leadership

The VFUA launched a new strategic plan for the VFUA – Striving for September 2014-2017. Like any organisation it is important that we have plans in place for the future. For the VFUA this is even more important given the transient nature of our membership, the high turnover of executive members and the potential loss of corporate knowledge. This plan builds on the original strategic plan, reflects on the changes that it drove and updates the strategic priorities for the next four years.

As part of its planning activities, the Executive Committee developed an Objectives Plan for 2014 and undertook a two day planning weekend in February 2014. This allowed the committee to induct new members, assign responsibilities and explain expectations for season 2014. The committee also met frequently during the year to monitor progress against the plan and to work on upcoming activities.

Membership

The VFUA also welcomed a number of new umpires in season 2014. Following a review of the content of the induction program, a successful induction night was held in April with Cameron Nash in attendance.

The VFUA also reviewed and streamlined the process for ordering VFUA merchandise which meant a quick turnaround for umpiring gear for members. The VFUA also provided free polo shirts to new umpires for season 2014.

In 2014, 119 umpires joined the VFUA which represented 93 percent. This percentage is consistent with recent years and represents a challenge for future Executive Committees in ensuring the VFUA proactively markets and promotes the services it provides to ensure members see the value-add of becoming a VFUA member. This is particularly difficult for the VFUA given the high turnover of umpires and the association's limited resources.

Representation

One of the more challenging tasks for the Executive Committee is to manage the industrial aspects of its role in representing umpires whilst ensuring the entitlements outlined in the fees and conditions package are adhered to.

As with any new employment arrangement, the VFUA was called upon to intervene on a number of occasions during the year, to either represent an individual umpire, or the collective group on employment and industrial issues. The VFUA also negotiated an addendum to the fees and conditions package to allow umpires to voluntarily umpire in the Victorian Women's Football League for season 2014.

The VFUA also intervened to ensure that umpires continued to be paid weekly, despite pressure from the AFL for umpires to conform to their request to be paid monthly.

A new initiative introduced this year was to use email or surveys to quickly gauge members' input and reactions to proposed changes. This made sure that the Executive Committee were clearly representing the views of the majority of umpires - even in short time frames. This was especially the case with amendments to the finals selection policy proposed by the Umpiring Department late in the season.

The VFUA also held regular meetings with both AFL Victoria, to be kept informed of pending changes to the VFL competitions, and with the AFL Umpires' Association.

Relationship – AFL Victoria

The VFUA welcomed the appointment of Umpires' Coach Cameron Nash. During the course of the year, a number of new initiatives were introduced that will benefit umpiring now and into the future. These initiatives included a meeting of community umpiring coaches; VFL coaches visiting community umpiring leagues; VFL umpires attending AFL umpiring training; the introduction of rookie squads; development squad umpires being appointed to senior football if their performance warranted it; AFL umpires providing coaching and mentoring to VFL umpires; and the introduction of a fourth boundary umpire for the 2014 VFL Grand Final.

The VFUA also maintained dialogue with AFL Victoria, attended VFL Umpiring Department functions and commenced dialogue with other state based associations.

Fees and conditions

With the introduction of the fees and conditions package, the following new arrangements came into place:

- Increased match and final payments
- An increase in appointment of one field umpire and one boundary umpire per round to Development League matches from 2014 onwards.
- In the event that AFL Victoria schedules a night game at Geelong (Simonds Stadium) on a Friday night, post-game accommodation will be provided to each umpire if they so choose.
- Payment of a travel allowance for field umpires appointed to intrastate TAC games.
- Access to match day footage for umpires officiating in TAC Cup games.
- AFL Victoria to provide current umpires and future invite for trial umpires with the choice of a neutral or a stability running shoe for 2014 and beyond.
- Flexibility is granted to match day umpires in regards to dropping off match day paperwork to AFL Victoria headquarters.
- AFL Victoria agreement to increase its grant to the VFUA to \$4,000 per annum.

Social Functions

Mini Olympics – the VFUA in conjunction with AFL Victoria held its major charity fundraiser for the year – the Paul Anderson memorial Mini Olympics, in memory of Paul Anderson a VFUA boundary umpire who succumbed to cancer. Congratulations to the Senior Field Umpires' Squad on winning this year's event! Thank you to the Anderson family for attending the event and to all umpires who helped raise \$1,450 for the Victorian Cancer Council.

Social Functions – a number of social events were held for umpires during the year which are detailed elsewhere in the report. Thank you to Michael Curtis for organising the Lawn Bowls event and to Daniel Butcher for the terrific job he did in organizing the VFL Grand Final function and the VFUA Grand Final Ball.

Past Presidents' Dinner – the VFUA again welcomed past presidents to its biennial Past Presidents' Dinner. The event was held at the Watermark in Docklands and was well attended by former VFUA presidents and current executive members.

Life Members' Function – A function for our life members was held at the Mail Exchange Hotel in June. Life memberships were presented to Michael Blair, Tristan Burgess and Richard Mills with Damien Cusack an apology.



2014 VFL Umpires' Coach Cameron Nash

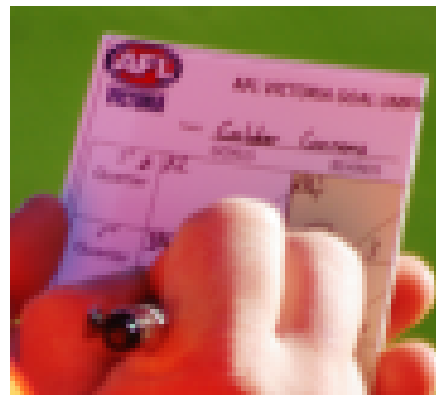
Communication

The VFUA continued to focus on improved communication with members and life members. Squads were kept informed on issues by their respective track representatives, whilst SMS messages and group emails were used to keep all members informed.

The VFUA is currently reviewing its website and will launch a new interactive site later this year.

Quality Assurance Program

The QAP has once again resulted in ensuring VFL Clubs uphold their responsibilities for match day security and facilities whilst ensuring a safe workplace for our umpires. I would like to thank Michael Blair for his contribution in coordinating the VFUA's QAP program for season 2014 and to congratulate him on his recent marriage to Hayley.



Recognition

The VFUA has again had David Flegg working diligently on reviewing and enhancing the association's annual report so that it is a living memory of the 'year just gone' for our members. He has been instrumental in organising photos during the season and during the grand finals. Thank you to David for again coordinating such an enormous task and to the many scribes who contributed to the content of the report.

I would like to congratulate all umpires who achieved personal milestones this year and to our grand final umpires who represented us all so well on the big day. Congratulations to Pat Burns, Andrew Leggo and Simon Plumridge who were voted most improved in their respective categories and to John Howorth, Sam Stagg and Kate Griffiths on winning their squad's 2014 Best First Year Umpire award.

Congratulations to Sam Stagg for being the winner of this year's Frank Leverett Shield – the best first year umpire across all categories.

I would also like to thank Cameron Nash for the role he has undertaken this year. It has been exciting to see some of the new initiatives and personnel he has introduced this year. To Angela, your continued support for the umpiring group has been terrific and I thank you for your efforts. I would also like to thank all the observers, coaches, trainers, physios, dieticians and sponsors who provide such valued support behind the scenes. Our members appreciate your enthusiasm, guidance and support in helping them throughout a long and challenging season.

In closing, I would like to thank the Executive Committee for your hard work, enthusiasm and humour during the year. It has been a pleasure to work with such a united and hard working group and it was especially pleasing to see how many of you featured in the finals this year.

I would especially like to thank Steve Piperno who has provided outstanding leadership to the VFUA in recent years and was rewarded this year with on-field success in his appointment to the 2014 VFL Grand Final. Well done Steve and thank you for your friendship and

the many laughs we have had during the season.

I would also like to acknowledge the work that Daniel Butcher has done behind the scenes. Every event Daniel has organised has been a resounding success. He does it with ease. Thank you Daniel for your support as vice-president of the VFUA.

To my good friends Chris Snell, Rob Findlay, Leigh Keen, Steve Stirling and David Flegg – thank you for your continued support, friendship and guidance during the year.

I would also like to thank all our members and life members and wish everyone good health and safe travelling this festive season.

Peter Kelly

VFUA Executive Officer





Field

2011 Jarryd Barry
 2010 Nicholas Brown (a)(e)
 2013 Patrick Burns
 2014 Sam Burns
 2011 Daniel Butcher
 2009 Tim Carlos
 2011 Tim Carrington (e)
 2014 Jacob Carroll
 2012 Thomas Chrystie
 2011 Mitchell Cole
 2013 Daniel Cumming
 2009 Michael Curtis
 2012 James Davey
 2013 Cai Davies
 2011 Jared Dyson
 2010 Jack Edwards
 2011 Nicholas Finch
 2014 Cameron Fruzynski
 2012 Hayden Gavine
 2009 Shaun Gleeson (c)(f)
 2004 Jamie Grindal
 2012 Heath Grundy
 2011 Tyler Hankinson
 2014 Joe Hartwig
 2012 Adam Havelberg
 2013 Andrew Heffernan
 2014 John Howorth
 2014 Michael Knight
 2010 James Langmaid
 2011 Daniel Lawlor
 2014 Lucinda Lopes
 2014 Nick MacDonald
 2005 Andrew McCoy
 2013 Luke McIlroy
 2003 Richard Mills
 2009 Robert Monk
 2013 Travis Monk
 2013 Jason Moore
 2014 Jack Murfett
 2014 Ben Nicholson
 2010 Haydn O'Connor
 2014 Robert Parker
 2014 Matthew Pryor
 2013 Luke Richardson
 2007 Jason Schilling (c)
 2012 Joshua Schultz
 2012 Rick Taig
 2008 Andrew Talbot
 2012 Scott Vanstone
 2007 Gareth Verberne
 2006 Jarrod Waight
 2013 Brent Wallace

Boundary

2011 Leslie Aldrich (a)
 2013 James Alexander (b)
 2010 Jordan Andrews
 2012 Brynton Ashton
 2012 Rory Ashton
 2009 Adam Bell
 2014 Charles Blanch
 2012 Corey Brown (a)
 2011 Leigh Buwalda
 2012 Chris Cato
 2012 Lawrence Coop
 2011 John Cooper
 2014 Curtis DeWitt
 2012 Patrick Dineen
 2012 Rhys Duggan (a)
 2007 Brendan Elvey (c)
 2013 Kieran Ferguson
 2012 Brendan Gherashe
 2014 Ashley Hawkes
 2014 Thomas Horsten
 2014 Jack Hunter
 2014 Anthony Laughton
 2004 Nick Laurence
 2009 Andrew Leggo
 2008 Ben Macdonald
 2013 Damien Main
 2010 Joshua Maine
 2011 Jake McKinnon
 2012 Jeffrey Miller
 2013 Ryan O'Shea
 2013 Nicholas Phillips
 2014 Daniel Phyland
 2000 Daniel Pieper (d)
 2012 Lachlan Rayner
 2010 Jake Robertson
 2010 Jerome Rowcroft
 2010 James Scully
 2013 Mitchell Smith
 2014 Sam Stagg
 2009 Nicholas Steel
 2011 Travis Taylor (e)
 2011 Declan Veale
 2013 Luke Wilke
 2013 Adam Young

Goal

2001 Peter Balding
 2014 Peter Baldry
 2011 Dylan Benwell
 2008 Michael Blair
 2013 Matthew Dervan
 2006 Chris Doyle
 2012 Matthew Edwards
 2014 Zac Gemenis
 2012 Wes Gilmour
 2014 Kate Griffiths
 2002 Dean Jones
 2008 Anthony Kyrkou
 2011 Callum Leonard
 2005 Darren Mills (g)
 1995 Peter Nastasi (h)
 2006 Steven Piperno
 2011 Simon Plumridge
 2011 Matthew Richardt
 2013 Dylan Smith
 2002 David Wallace (i)
 2012 Sam Walsh
 2010 Luke White
 2008 Cyrus Wong

Notes:

- (a) Off list 2013.
- (b) Field 2013 boundary 2014.
- (c) Off list 2010.
- (d) Off list 2006-07.
- (e) Off list 2012.
- (f) Interstate member 2009.
- (g) Off list 2008-13.
- (h) Off list 2005-12.
- (i) Off list 2003-11.



Mini-Olympics

The running of the 2014 VFUA Mini-Olympics was yet another triumph to the senior field squad. Michael Curtis humbly accepted the plaque on behalf of the squad, thanking sponsors, organisers, PK, his mum... the whole time flashing that expensive smile of his.

It was a tight contest – for spots 2-5. The winning margin for senior field was 16.25 points. However it was all up for grabs going into the final event with three squads in the hunt. Not surprisingly the showpiece bouncing was dominated by the field squads and the goalies. Actually, it was dominated by the controversy of the president's clear "2" being called "5" by judge Steve Stirling.

Senior field were deserved winners. They won or tied four of the seven events. They were physical and robust in the soccer, strong through the sit-ups, and their egg-and-spoon skills were world class.

Development boundary burst out of the blocks with a sensational result in the hotly contested 4x200m relay. They jostled with the field squads over the last few hundred metres to win a thriller. Suddenly nobody complained about handicaps. Oh, except for the senior boundary members. "We're not sprinters", they claimed, with the goalies countering with "isn't 200m long-distance?" Their fade out makes this comment understandable.

Senior boundary may need Leading Teams for next year's Olympics, having come last. Their performance in the relay was followed up by last place in the throw-ins. The throw-ins - consider that.

But credit where credit is due. It is clear the VFUA's Communications Officer has some great leadership skills. He led development field to victory in 2013, before being part of 2014's senior field victory. It is understood that under free agency rules he may be approached by other squads to be signed for future seasons.

Of course, the Mini-Olympics is about more than just a night of fun and games. It is important to acknowledge the following:

- The VFL Umpiring Department for allowing the event to be held
- The VFUA executive for staging the event
- The trainers for assisting with the BBQ
- The umpires for their generosity and great spirit
- The coaches for their assistance in judging and scoring
- The Anderson family, whose commitment to attend is an inspiration

Lawn Bowls

The historic City of Melbourne Bowls Club located within the picturesque Flagstaff Gardens, was the setting for the VFUA lawn bowls afternoon. Sunny weather saw 25 people in attendance for a drink and a roll. A little down on numbers but a great afternoon for those who attended. Even with the small numbers, the association made a small profit of \$30. Overall an easy function to arrange that doesn't cost a lot to put on.

Thanks to all that attended and Steve P for helping out on the BBQ.

Nick Brown, Daniel Butcher, James Davey



Life Members' Dinner

On Sunday 18 May, around 30 guests attended the annual VFUA Life Members' Dinner at the Mail Exchange Hotel in the city. The attendees, made up of VFUA life members and current VFUA executive, shared a meal and a drink to celebrate the contribution by those who have been recognised by their peers as having provided outstanding service to the association.

After welcoming all in attendance, vice-president and host for the night, Daniel Butcher, thanked Judi Elliott for her ongoing support for the association after she recently donated a magnificent Easter hamper raffled off at our first association meeting this year. Leigh Keen was also presented with his Courage Award, a reward that Leigh was nominated for in 2013 for his battles with cancer as well as recovering from extensive shoulder surgery. Leigh also happened to be the door prize winner of two medallion club tickets to an AFL match to see his beloved Demons.

After dinner, the most recent inductees to life membership, Tristan Burgess, Michael Blair and Richard Mills were presented with their certificates and badges from President Steve Piperno. Damien Cusack was unable to attend. Each new life member then gave a unique insight into what umpiring and the VFUA meant to them.

It was pleasing to see such a well attended event and was a great opportunity for current executive members to mix and socialise with life members from all walks of the VFUA's history. Massive thanks to Daniel Butcher for organising and hosting such a successful event as well as all life members in attendance.



Russell Davidson, Dan Beard



Presidents' Dinner 2014

On a balmy Sunday evening in late March, the VFUA held the Presidents' Dinner. The current VFUA Executive Committee hosted eight of the association's past presidents over a beautiful Docklands setting to recognise the contribution and influence these past leaders have had in making the VFUA what it is today.

The past presidents in attendance were Greg Russo (1998), Russell Davidson (1999), Steve Stirling (2000), Chris Snell (2001-02), Stephen Evans (2004-05), Rob Findlay (2006-07), Adam Wojcik (2008) and Richard Mills (2010-11), who shared their stories of their time as president along with some of their umpiring experiences. It was a fantastic opportunity for the current executive members to surround themselves with these key VFUA figures and to recognise and appreciate the history of the association.

Current VFUA President, Steve Piperno, provided a comprehensive update of the current environment of the VFUA, including the nature of the state league competitions, our relationship with AFL Victoria, the current fees and conditions and subsequent representation of the members and the position we hold in the football community. The past presidents also heard about the most recent initiatives and activities of the association and were pleased to hear about the planning, strategy and direction in place to ensure its continued strength.

Steve Stirling provided a response to the opening welcome on behalf of the presidents in attendance. Steve acknowledged the hard work of the Executive Committee and commended the leadership group on their great working relationships with AFL Victoria.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable night for those in attendance and we are already looking forward to the next Presidents' dinner in 2016!



*Top: Greg Russo, Tim Lougoon, Peter Kelly
Bottom: Steve Stirling, Peter Kelly, Rob Findlay*

Grand Final After-party

It felt like only yesterday that we were back at the Watermark in the Docklands for a second consecutive year for the after grand final function, and a success it was.

The night began with a few drinks shared amongst friends and family. The attendance was great, with over 100 people celebrating the year's end.

VFUA Executive Officer Peter Kelly welcomed the 2014 VFL Grand Final umpires and, as executive members worked tirelessly selling off the remaining special effort raffle tickets (mainly purchased by Paul Dimartino), a variety of savouries were enjoyed by all.

Then came the business end of things for the night, the \$1000 Special Effort raffle ticket draw. 2013 crowd favourite Dan Lawlor didn't make the final 10, but that didn't stop the involvement of the crowd. This year it was chants of "L-RIP" (Tom Chrystie's mother) which would have been heard from back at Etihad stadium. Field umpire Lucinda Lopez was the eventual winner of the prize, unfortunately Lucinda wasn't at the function to receive the prize but a massive congratulations goes out to her.

Again, a great function to celebrate the hard work and to recognise the umpires that reached the absolute pinnacle for their hard work over 2014.

Thanks to all that attended and helped make such a great function, one that will continue for many years to come.

Grand Final Ball

It was AFL Grand Final eve and another VFUA Ball was upon us. This year, rewind 24 hours and due to popular demand the inaugural Friday night running of the ball was under way.

Etihad Stadium was again the venue; this year the Laureate Room provided a more intimate yet contemporary and stylish ambiance.

As the guests began to arrive from seven o'clock, all enjoyed drinks and a laugh before being seated for welcoming.

Dual masters of ceremonies Dan Lawlor and Tyler Hankinson welcomed everybody before opening the previously successful Twitter feed with "Who will be best on at tonight's #VFUAball?"



2014 VFL Grand final field umpires Jack Edwards, Brent Wallace and Nick Brown. All three were promoted to the AFL for 2015.

VFUA President Steven Piperno welcomed all guests, including life members, Executive members, trainers, umpires, umpire's partners and friends and family.

Entrees were served before the presenting of the 2014 TAC Grand Final trophies. After main meals, the 2014 AFL Vic. Development League Grand Final umpires were presented with their trophies.

The best first year umpires were then presented with their awards. The winners, John Howorth (field), Sam Stagg (boundary) and Kate Griffiths (goal) becoming eligible for the Frank Leverett Shield, the best first year umpire across all categories.

As the first time MC pair, Lawlor and Hankinson, warmed to the crowd, the vibe in the room from all created an exuberant atmosphere. Next up on Twitter "Who is the least improved for the 2014 season?" This was sure to cause some discussion.

A Facebook timeline was collated as a video and shown on the large screen for the crowd to observe. It will remain unknown whether some of the posts were fictitious but we won't let the truth get in the way of a good story.

The timeline reached out to nearly all members, from the Tinder lovers James Davey, Adam Havelberg, Thomas Chrystie and Nick Brown to those whose status' couldn't help but be ignored, but we won't mention names. Jacob Murrells. Jarryd Barry called bluff on Haydn O'Connor's mid-zone check in as Hayden Gavine's phone battery ran flat. A great job organised by the MC pair that everyone enjoyed a light hearted laugh over.

Grand Final photos were presented as a video to the group in celebration of a job well done.

It was time for the presentation of the 2014 VFL Grand Final Umpires who each had the opportunity of a brief interview

Dessert was served, thank you speeches were said, formalities were concluded and the DJ was warmed up. A great night made possible by over 130 guests and an extremely committed VFUA Vice-President Daniel Butcher for putting together the evening.

2014 squad reports

Field Umpires squad

2014 was the year of the “clean slate”. It brought the introduction of Cameron Nash as the new head of umpiring, with Damian 'shopping for love' Anderson as his right hand man and Kym Brockhoff running the track.

As umpires arrived at Vic. Park on 14 January, the field umpires were seemingly perplexed with the new training environment. Who was this hipster looking bloke called Kym and why had he littered the track with cones? The majority of pre-season training involved team building and communication in an attempt to navigate our way through Kym's originally complicated drills.

February came and Nick Finch was feeling a little more at home at the oval track. A lazy 5:45 from the man himself, with a mediocre 6:06 for father Michael Curtis saw them setting up deck chairs and sinking stubbies while waiting for the rest of us.

March saw the welcoming of Sam 'loves a selfie' Burns, Jacob 'can I borrow a vacuum?' Carroll, Cam 'Fullysickjetski' Fruszynski, Joe 'come to Turf club Big Dog' Hartwig, Johnny 'guess how many dev games I've done' Howorth, Michael 'Day' Knight, Lucy 'did you see me on TV' Lopes, Nick 'mumma's boy' MacDonald, Jack 'Ellen' Murfett, Benny 'missed a goal in the goal square' Nicholson, Rob 'batting above his average' Parker, and Matty 'the librarian' Pryor.

Relief from Ash 'the body shop' Bedford, Timmy 'Caro's Arrow' Carrington, Mitch 'Mad Monday' Cole, Dan 'Franga' Cumming, Cai 'Zuckerberg' Davies, Heath 'DJ' Grundy, James 'Langas' Langmaid, Luke 'Rory' McIlroy, Travis 'Nun' Monk, Jason 'Alamein train' Moore, Matt (what happened to that bloke?) Piper, Luke

'How's ya missus?' Richardson, Josh 'lawn bowls' Schultz, Rick 'pay ya fines' Taig, and Scotty Vanstone who all kept their spot on the development panel.

Congratulations go to Patrick 'Boo-urns' Burns, Tom 'T-rip' Chrystie, Jared (have you seen that bloke's new haircut?) Dyson, Adam 'Havel (insert any word here)' Havelberg, Andrew 'Heff' Heffernan and Dan 'Stawell Gift' Lawlor on elevations to the senior panel.

The remainder of the senior panel consisted of Jarryd 'biceps' Barry, Nick 'tinder' Brown, Daniel 'President' Butcher, Tim 'TC' Carlos, Michael 'nice guy' Curtis, James 'Doul' Davey, Jack 'cramp in the granny' Edwards, Nick 'best bouncer' Finch, Hayden 'left my phone on the freeway' Gavine, Shaun 'Gleeso' Gleeson, Jamie 'Dos' Grindal, Tyler 'MC' Hankinson, Andrew McCoy, Richard 'topknot' Mills, Rob 'Monkey' Monk, Matthew 'Oaks' Oakley, Haydn (can't believe he backed Matty Priddis) O'Connor, Jason 'intimidating frame' Schilling, Andrew 'Talbo' Talbot, Gareth 'Garth' Verberne, Jarrod Waight, Brent 'Where's Wally?' Wallace, and Rob 'give me a game before Europe' Young.

Unfortunately for the reigning champions of the Mini Olympics, the senior list took much of last year's talent away from the dev squad and proved too strong on the day, however controversy remains around how much bend is required at the elbow to classify as a 'pushup'...

Boo-urns, Brown, Heff, Havelbeer, T-Rip, Lawlor, and Rory all debuted in the ones throughout the year, with DJ Heath Grundy taking advantage of an injured Stuart Wenn at Visy Park to snag a second pay check for the day. Not even a post match "I've bath" could stop him pulling up sore.

The milestones continued with Carlos, Edwards and O'Connor all notching up 50 VFL games, with the big framed Schillo scratching up 50 in the Dev. League. Veterans Gleeson, McCoy, Oakley and Talbot all notched up the ton in the ones, with the AFL rookie moving into triple figures during a preliminary final; almost as good as running onto Docklands after an AFL injury!

Jack Edwards and Nick Brown added to their already huge years with an appointment to the state game, while Tim Carlos officiated in the Under 18 National Championships, and both Luke's jetted off to the Gold Coast for the Under 16 Champs. Rumour has it that 'Birdz' Richardson participated in some morally questionable activities. Anything goes in Queensland, with Carlos and Butcher both participating in the NEAFL exchange, where Dan had a "quiet Friday night before the game" and TC had "dinner with a friend" after being dropped off at the wrong hotel.

Congratulations must go to Rick Taig and John Howorth (awarded Best First year Field Umpire), who officiated the Herald-Sun Shield granny, and Sam Burns and Rob Parker who ran the AFL Victoria School Sport Grand Final. Well done to Pat Burns and Brent Wallace who froze their nips off in the Foxtel Cup final and who are probably the luckiest blokes in Victoria, having clocked up two grand finals in the same year.

Speaking of, big efforts by Tim Carlos, Haydn O'Connor, James Davey and Jarryd Barry; Tom Chrystie, Pat Burns, Daniel Butcher and Adam Havelberg; and Jack Edwards, Nick Brown, Brent Wallace and Shaun Gleeson who umpired the Reserves, TAC, and Senior grand finals respectively. Fantastic season lads. Big boy Edwards stole the spotlight, claiming the 2014 Umpire of the Year award.

Lastly, a special mention to James Langmaid, Lucy Lopes and Dan Cumming who helped out consistently with the Victorian Women's Football League games throughout the year and were rewarded with the Premier, Division 1 and Division 2 grand finals respectively.

All in all, 2014 was a successful year for the fieldies, and with the newly initiated Rookie Squad hungry for opportunities, it is a timely reminder to work hard over the pre-season in order to come back and achieve your 2015 goals.

On a final note, thank you to Cameron, Damien, Angela, Kym and the trainers for all your support throughout the year, and we look forward to the challenges you set us for 2015.



Jake McKinnon

Boundary Umpires Squad

2014 saw a change in the hierarchy and with it, a new scope on umpiring. With Cam Nash as our new head of umpiring and one of our much loved trainers Steve Davies leaving us, we had different faces casting their eyes over the training regimen. Thankfully Doug Armstrong was able to accompany Andrew Scott and provide the boundary umpires with great fostering and conditioning to take on the season's challenges.

The season itself started with a heat wave, with three of the first four training sessions cancelled due to extreme temperatures. That didn't help when we needed some conditioning for the fitness testing that was nearing quite quickly. The night of the testing, it was still 31 degrees when we commenced our four kilometre runs at roughly six-thirty in the evening. Nevertheless, the cream rose to the top and we were underway. Our guru and senior coach Matthew Vitiritti providing many words of wisdom, encouragement and experience at each and every hurdle that we came across.

Once again our Mini-Olympics campaign was rather benign in results but still enjoyed by all with the entirety of both squads contributing to a great cause. It is proposed that next year the boundaries will actually prepare weeks in advance specifically for events such as push-ups, sit-ups and people who are fair dinkum when it comes to the egg and spoon race. It was worth a mention that some already did take it seriously in the 4x200m with Lawrence Coop and Travis Taylor bringing their racing spikes to utilise any extra pace they could muster. Who could blame them with the ridiculous handicap set up for the boundaries? If it was a 4x400m then it would be justified but we don't wish to give any of the goalies heart failure, especially during pre-season.

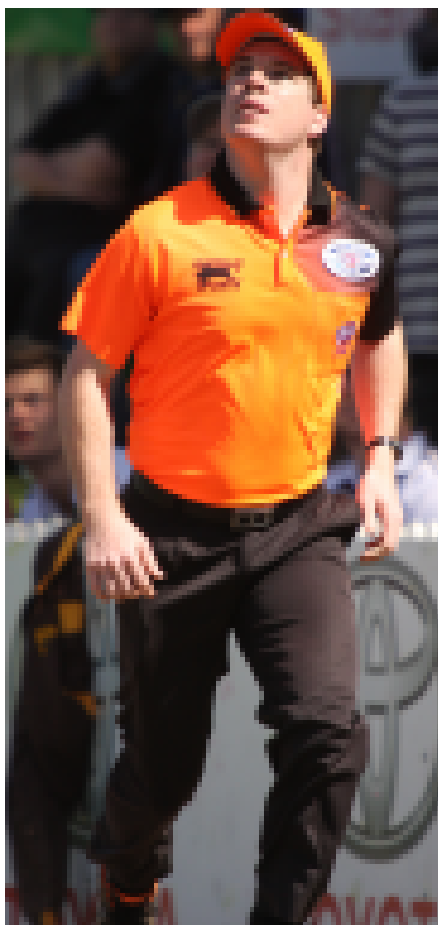
On the eve of round 1, we were at a cause for celebration as our own Tim Lougoon had been elevated to the AFL with a spot on the list becoming vacant. After officiating in two senior grand finals in 2012 and 2013, his aspiration and dream finally came true. We wish him all the very best in his future

endeavours. This meant a rejig for the VFUA executive with James Scully and Corey Brown joining Lawrence Coop as track reps to the executive. Another appointment saw popular cult figure, night-out antagonist and all round good guy Andrew Leggo as the captain of the senior squad. In the Development Squad, their captain was also appointed with the hardworking, skilled yet endlessly injury-prone Brynton Ashton selected by Thommo to keep the new additions to the ranks in line.

As the season began there was a widespread approval of the new conditions pertaining to the addition of a second three-umpire appointment in the TAC. Along with the two extra sides in the seniors, this gave more opportunities for umpires to perform and demonstrate their skills especially Sam Stagg and James Alexander who were both given the opportunity to umpire their first senior games. Well done boys and hopefully bigger and better things come your way in 2015.

Notable achievements during the season included Ben Macdonald and James Scully being appointed to the state game in the middle of the year. Jordan Andrews and Mitch Smith saluted their great seasons by officiating the 2014 Foxtel Cup Grand Final. Another proud moment culminated when it was mentioned with the eventual grand final appointments that a majority of the umpires were doing their first grand finals. A massive achievement and they all did exceptionally well.

All in all, another great year from a boundary perspective. A massive thank you to the trainers, training staff (Scotty, Dougy and Steve) for the outstanding training sessions set out week by week and the coaches, Thommo and Vitters for their endless understanding and patience in whatever we have to discuss over the course of the year. Last but not least, to all the umpires, senior and development on their hard work throughout the year. You blokes are a credit to yourselves and give it 110% week in week out. Happy training and we shall see you all in 2015.



Goal Umpires Squad

What a year 2014 has been for the goal umpires. It feels like only yesterday the squad was running onto Victoria Park for their first training session back on January 15. The goal umpires had strong numbers on the track at the start of the year but they soon fell off the wall like flies. This year we welcomed five new umpires: Zac Gemenis, Peter Baldry, Kate Griffiths, Chris Roberts and Paul Trotter.

2014 was a year of milestones for the goal umpires. Four umpires made their senior debuts: Matthew Dervan, David Wallace, Wes Gilmour, and Matthew Edwards. Simon Plumridge, Luke White and Dylan Benwell all racked up 50 VFL senior games. Cyrus Wong officiated in his 50th AFL Victoria Development League match. Dual VFL grand final umpire and ex-VFUA executive member Anthony Kyrkou notched up 100 VFL senior matches. VFUA president and 2014 VFL Grand Final umpire Steve Piperno officiated in his 150th senior game. Finally, to top and trump the milestones, was Peter Balding umpiring his 200th senior game and moving into second position for most games umpired in the VFL. 2013

VFL grand final umpire Michael Craig was promoted to the AFL list in 2014. Well done to all umpires on their milestones in 2014.

Darren Mills returned to the VFL after umpiring in the AFL to help mentor other umpires. The goal umpires said goodbye to Alistair Kyrkou and Sam Booth who both left to progress their professional careers.

The VFL goal umpires were well represented this year with Sam Walsh umpiring the state game against rivals South Australia at North Port Oval early in the year. Later on in the season Steve Piperno umpired the Foxtel Cup grand final at Simonds Stadium in Geelong between Williamstown and West Perth.

AFL grand final umpire Peter Nastasi has waved the flags for the last time after an outstanding career. Peter started in the VFL before being promoted to the AFL in 2002, umpiring 158 games. Peter returned to the VFL at the start of 2013 to help mentor umpires and to continue to do what he loves, umpiring. After 129 VFL games Pete has called it a day. As everyone knows Pete is one of the nicest blokes around and all the umpires have enjoyed umpiring with him the past two years and will be sad without him around.

Thank you to David Flegg who took up the fitness coach role this year and did a fantastic job training the goal umpires throughout the year, even joining in at times and keeping up with some of the umpires.

Congratulations to the six grand final umpires in season 2014 which included four grand final debuts. Senior grand final umpires Steve Piperno and Matt Dervan (first), TAC Cup grand final umpires Sam Walsh and Simon Plumridge (first) and Development League grand final umpires Luke White (first) and Chris Doyle (first). First year senior umpire Matt Dervan also took out the prestigious award of Umpire of the Year. Kate Griffiths won the Best First Year Umpire in 2014.

Thank you to the coaching staff panel Steve Stirling, Leigh Keen and David Flegg for their tireless work throughout the season, pushing each umpire to achieve and reach their goals. A thank you must also be extended to all the goal umpires observers who help out the coaching panel throughout the season.

Last but not least thanks to all the umpires for their work and efforts in the 2014 season and we look forward to seeing you all again in season 2015.



Top left: Luke White
Above: Chris Doyle

Obituary - Graham Danne

When fruitlessly searching for stories about Graham Danne to incorporate into his eulogy his great mate Bob Gilham came to the conclusion that Graham was always 'the laughing witness, never the villain'. In the close-knit and prank-ridden VFL goal umpiring group he never started anything but was always there enjoying the results.

In a 30-season on-field career he reached the highest level as a goal umpire and plied his trade as far afield as London and Miami and as locally as the Ovens and Murray during his time in central Victoria. Through it all he remained a humble, courageous man concerned as much with helping others as with being the best umpire he could be.

Graham Vallancey Danne was born on 8 January 1944 the eldest of three brothers and grew up in East Malvern. As a young man he was deeply involved in sport. In summer he was an opening bowler and handy bat at cricket. In winter he played football at school and later for Ashburton Methodists. Here he played in two South Suburban Churches premierships and represented the league on five occasions. The loss of half a kidney as the result of an indiscriminate knee finished his playing career and he immediately took up umpiring to stay involved with the sport.

Beginning on the boundary with the VFL Reserve Grade in 1965 Graham remained on the boundary until he took up the goals in 1973. It was from this point that he progressed rapidly through the ranks.

Reserve Grade finals in 1975 and 1976 led to emergency positions in the Reserve Grade grand final in both those years. When four new goal umpires were required for the VFL list in 1977 Graham was called up.

On 2 April 1977 Graham became the 167th VFL goal umpire when he officiated at Victoria Park in Collingwood's 11-point win over Footscray. His first two finals featured Collingwood and Fitzroy in the 1979 and 1981 first semis.

In 1982 Graham reached the ultimate. After 'warm-up' grand finals in the North Central and Ovens and Murray leagues he was appointed to the 1982 VFL Grand Final.

The ferocious start, end to end football, bursts of scoring intermingled with fights and defence and Carlton's third quarter five goal burst are often overshadowed by the appearance of exotic performer Helen D'Amico but it was a great game of football.

Of the eight further finals Graham would umpire few were more remarkable than the 1990 Qualifying Final. With the West Coast kicking to Graham's end in the last quarter Collingwood led a see-saw affair in time-on when a Langdon snap drew the Eagles within two points. A narrow miss to Waterman from the angle made it a point and with 30 seconds left Peter Sumich marked 15 metres out on a tight angle. Sumich was not the only man under pressure as he came in and kicked but Graham was cool under pressure, signalled the behind and the game was consigned to a draw.

Following the 1984 season Graham retired to fight cancer, a battle he won. While he recovered he continued umpiring locally following a move to Shepparton. In 1988 he returned to the VFL list and took up where he had left off – no fuss, no drama, just got back into it. In 1989 he was selected to represent the VFL in overseas exhibition matches at London and Miami. The trip awakened a love of travel that would never leave him.

As the local VFL changed into the national AFL Graham celebrated 200 matches in 1991 and 250 as the season drew to a close in 1994. Aged 50 he

finished his career with two finals at the WACA and a position on the bench for the 1994 AFL Grand Final. It was the end of that unique, stiff, elbows tight-in signal that had graced the VFL/AFL for 253 matches, including 11 finals, over 15 seasons.

Unwilling to sever ties with football completely Graham continued as an AFL goal umpire observer from 1995-97. As a grand final umpire and AFLUA life member (1989) he was a regular attendee at functions celebrating those achievements until he moved to the United States. Even then he returned regularly and made a special effort to be at the 2009 AFLUA centenary celebrations.

As he had been in such good health for many years following his original bout with cancer it was a shock to many of his umpiring colleagues when they heard then news that the melanoma had returned. Tragically it took his life in South Carolina on 20 February 2014.

Vale 'Dannie', VFUA foundation life member, the laughing witness, never the villain, never forgotten.



Life members 2013

Damien Cusack

Since first making the VFL list in 2002 Damien, like many umpires, has committed thousands of hours both at training and on match day to his pursuit of umpiring.

Damien's hard work and persistence has lead to great on field success having being appointed to the VFL grand final and selected as the Boundary Umpire of the Year in 2012.

With the AFL not promoting any boundary umpires for season 2013 Damien returned for his 12th season on the VFL lists hoping to have the chance to emulate the previous year.

Along the way to a second VFL grand final in a row he broke the boundary umpire senior games record of 130 matches, previously held by VFUA life member Stephen Gloag, finishing the season on 138 senior games.

In 12 seasons Damien has been a strong supporter of the VFUA and has also committed his time and energy to serving on the Executive as a Track Rep in 2005 and more recently being selected by the VFUA as one of the representatives to attend regular meetings with AFL Victoria to further enhance the working relationship between the VFUA and AFL Victoria. This recent appointment in particular demonstrates the respect that Damien has earned from both his peers and the VFUA executive over a long career.

Richard Mills

Richard has been a member of the VFUA since joining the VFL Development Squad (Field) in 2003. Richard has umpired 152 VFL, 34 VFL reserves and 35 TAC Cup matches. He has umpired 13 senior finals, and officiated in the 2006 TAC Cup and 2011 VFL Reserves Grand Finals.

In his time as a member of the VFUA, Richard has been an enthusiastic and active contributor to the umpiring group, both in relation to activities relating to on-field duties, as well as the social side of umpiring.

In 2010 Richard took on the role of president of the VFUA. Having not served on the executive before, this was indeed a challenging task and a steep learning curve for Richard as he also had a number of new members on the Executive Committee. In addition to the normal ongoing work of the Executive, Richard was also responsible for taking a lead role in preparing and negotiating the Fees and Conditions Agreement for 2011-2013. After wide consultation with members, Richard was responsible for ensuring the package was finalised and submitted to AFL Victoria.

In addition, under Richard's leadership, the VFUA implemented a number of new initiatives in 2010 including a revamped social program, a new-look 'Man In White', text message communication to members and investigations into more efficient payment methods.

Richard continued in the role of president in 2011 where he researched and made available new merchandise for VFUA members. Richard has also developed a number of season highlight presentations which have proven to be the highlight of the grand final balls.

Richard has always been a solid supporter of the association. He is always quick to offer advice and support. In 2013, he developed a moving tribute in memory of Anthony Hunter for the 2013 Grand Final Ball.

Michael Blair

Michael Blair joined the VFUA in 2008. Since that time he has umpired 53 VFL reserves and 71 TAC Cup matches.

Michael joined the VFUA Executive Committee in 2010 and served that season as the track representative for the Development Squad goal umpires a role that encompassed communicating between the Executive Committee and the squad, organising subscription payments and generally encouraging the squad to take an active role in association affairs. He continues to set an excellent example by being a regular attendee at both social function and association meetings

From 2011-13 Michael has taken responsibility for coordinating the feedback from the Quality Assurance Project. This is a time consuming process that involves collating and recording the feedback provided on the submitted forms, deciding what is urgent, what is already known and then communicating breeches to John Hook at AFL Victoria. Michael is prompt with his reports making sure the project is up to date and clubs are informed of breeches as soon as practicable.

Record keeping for the project is vital and Michael has improved the recording in the years he has been involved with the project and has provided suggestions for its improvement and better dissemination of the data collected.

As a member who is committed to the VFUA and who has shown that commitment with his actions by taking on an Executive role and working on a project for the betterment of all umpires conditions, Michael Blair is a worthy recipient of honorary life membership of the VFUA

Tristan Burgess

Tristan has been a member of the VFUA since he was accepted onto the VFL Development Panel in 2005 from the Bendigo Football League. Right from the outset, Tristan's professionalism, commitment and will to improve was evident. He did the long commute from Bendigo down to Melbourne twice a week for training plus match day for several years, before permanently relocating to Melbourne. He worked hard on the track from the outset and with improvement came a promotion to the Senior Panel in 2007.

Tristan's commitment to his umpiring did not finish on the field or track. He was always a strong supporter the VFUA. Tristan would rarely miss a social function or meeting. His passion for the association saw him nominated for executive level in 2008 where he performed the role of track rep. for the Senior Squad. From here he moved through the ranks at executive level and in 2010 he was promoted to vice-president.

Throughout this time at executive level of the association, there were many faces that came and went – both on the executive and running members. One thing we could confidently say is that Tristan's approach to all roles and responsibilities that he was assigned was low-key, low-fuss, but always highly effective and very reliable. He is the type of person who would do anything for anyone, and never expect anything in return. This manner in which Tristan operates is very selfless – and it demonstrates a great deal about the character of the person. It would be very fair to say that he who operates in this fashion does it for the love of what they are doing – nothing more and nothing less.

Tristan's dedication to his umpiring paid off in 2011 when he was appointed to the VFL grand final as emergency umpire. After a successful trial at that level, he was elevated to AFL Rookie status. The following year, he again improved and this time he got his spot on the field in the 2012 VFL Grand Final. The ultimate success was imminent – and within six months he was officially an AFL field umpire – an honour that he thoroughly deserved.



Top right: Damien Cusack

Above: L-R Richard Mills, Michael Blair, Tristan Burgess

VFUA Life members

Darren Agnew (1995)	David Dixon (2004)	Peter Kelly (1996)	Gary Ramm (1999)
Peter Allsop (1992)	Mikel Donsen (1993)	Greg Kennedy (1998)	Denis Rich (Found.)
Jason Armstrong (2006)	Gavin Dore (1993)	Hayden Kennedy (1993)	Michael Richardson (2006)
Peter Balding (2010)	Brendan Dye (2004)	Colin Larter (1999)	Linton Roe (2000)
Dan Beard (2004)	Judi Elliott (1997)	Matthew Leppard (2009)	Greg Russo (1999)
Gary Best (1994)	Stephen Evans (2006)	Richard Leslie (2002)	John Russo (Found.)
Anthony Black (1998)	Ray Fergie (1993)	Stephen Luckman (1992)	Paul Saville (Found.)
Michael Blair (2013)	Rob Findlay (2007)	Andrew Malcolm (2002)	Rowan Sawers (Found.)
Michael Boss (2011)	Lloyd Fisk (2003)	Wes Mann (1999)	Graeme Scherger (1992)
Alan Brewer (1996)	David Flegg (1997)	Shane Mason (2003)	Colin Segota (1996)
Graeme Brewer (1993)	Rob Frampton (1999)	Dean Maxwell (1995)	Roger Selwood (1992)
Tristan Burgess (2013)	Joy Gelly (2005)	Peter McDonald (1998)	Michael Sexton (1998)
Keith Callaghan (1997)	Stephen Gloag (2005)	Anton McKernan (1993)	Bryan Sheehan (1993)
Peter Cameron (Found.)	Darren Goldspink (1993)	Scott McLaren (1999)	Michael Sneddon (Found.)
Mark Canning (2000)	Peter Gonis (2005)	Richard Mills (2013)	Chris Snell (2003)
Peter Carey (1992)	Doug Gourlay (1994)	Chris Mitchell (Found.)	Harry Stamatopoulos (2003)
Brendan Carland (Found.)	Doug Gower (1993)	David Mitchell (Found.)	Justin Stephenson (2001)
Barry Carmichael (Found.)	Ian Green (1993)	Kevin Mitchell (2006)	Steven Stirling (1998)
Geoff Caulfield (1995)	John Hall (1997)	Geoff Morrow (Found.)*	Brad Strachan (2000)
Craig Clark (1996)	Michael Hammond (2003)	Geoff Mowat (1992)	Terry Suitryk (1993)
Andrew Clifton (2005)	Lindsay Hardman (2000)	Peter Nastasi (2004)	Phil Sutton (Found.)
Andrew Coates (1994)	Shane Harris (1992)	Ben Naughtin (2008)	Simon Tursi (2008)
Alan Cook (1993)	Darren Holt (2003)	John O'Leary (1993)	James Van Beek (1994)
Damiel Cusack (2013)	Colin Hood (1997)	Malcolm Owen (1993)	Jason Venkataya (2005)
Graham Danne (Found.)*	David Howlett (Found.)	Laurie Page (1994)	Michael Viney (1993)
Russell Davidson (2000)	David Humphries (2001)	Brian Philp (1994)*	Matthew Vitiritti (2000)
Rod Davies (1995)	Steele Irish (2007)	Mark Powell (1998)	Phil Watson (1993)
Andrew Dempster (2001)	Ben James (2006)	Mark Prince (1993)	Andrew Wheeler (1998)
Greg Denison (2012)	Michael Jennings (2010)	Doug Purss (Found.)	Graeme Williams (Found.)
Frank Dicosmo (2006)	Leigh Keen (Found.)	Frank Raiti (1994)	Adam Wojcik (2007)

* = deceased (Found.) = Foundation life member



Michael Jennings, Greg Denison, Tristan Burgess

VFL grand final umpires

	Field			Boundary		Goal	
1993	D.Agnew	M.Nash		S.Leslie	A.Pizaro	J.Moore	L.Page
1994	K.Nicholls	G.Caulfield		D.Perry	J.Summers	P.Herrick	D.Humphries
1995	S.Hanley	V.Sercia	M.Sexton	P.Bradford	J.Fleming	B.Strachan	M.Russell
1996	A.Malcolm	T.Shearer	M.Sexton	P.Bradford	A.Duncan	A.Letson	H.Stamos
1997	M.Vozzo	W.Mann	M.James	R.Frampton	B.Crossett	F.Raiti	D.Dixon
1998	R.Kelsey	C.Rowe	M.James	R.Leslie	B.Crossett	M.Russell	P.Gonis
1999	K.Nicholls	K.Callaghan	S.Jeffery	S.Smith	K.McCarthy	C.Evans	D.Holt
2000	A.Malcolm	S.Jeffery	G.Twitt	S.Smith	J.Wilson	J.Venkataya	R.Read
2001	J.Quigley	A.Davis	S.Grun	M.Payton	C.Steinman	J.Stephenson	C.Appleton
2002	S.Grun	M.Nicholls	S.Ryan	G.Gibson	C.Morrison	A.Little	C.Appleton
2003	S.Grun	S.Meredith	M.Stevic	R.Haala	S.Irish	J.Bennison	L.Walker
2004	C.Donlon	C.Kamolins	D.Sully	A.Coote	M.Foster	M.Lefevre	L.Fisk
2005	J.Armstrong	M.Jennings	D.Sully	I.Burrows	G.Large	M.Lefevre	M.Hammond
2006	J.Mollison	H.Ryan	S.Stewart	G.Large	M.Lefevre	C.Roberts	A.Clifton
2007	M.Jennings	J.Mollison	S.Stewart	C.Hay	G.Large	N.Woods	B.Letson
2008	R.Findlay	M.Jennings	T.Pannell	C.Gordon	S.Jones	N.Woods	P.Balding
2009	M.Jennings	A.Mitchell	B.Ritchie	G.Bergroth	D.Kowalski	M.Marantelli	C.Lai
2010	M.Brown	M.Leppard	B.Ritchie	D.Kowlaski	M.Marantelli	P.Tongue	A.Kyrkou
2011	D.Harris	B.Hosking	A.Mitchell	C.Esler	M.Jenkinson	M.Tomkins	A.Kyrkou
2012	T.Burgess	S.Gleeson	D.Harris	D.Cusack	T.Lougoon	B.Macdonald	M.Craig
2013	S.Gleeson	R.O'Gorman	B.Ritchie	D.Cusack	T.Lougoon	J.Mather	D.Benwell
2014	N.Brown	J.Edwards	B.Wallace	J.Andrews	B.Elvey	M.Dervan	S.Piperno
				J.Robertson	J.Scully		

2014 VFL Grand Final Footscray v. Box Hill



L-R: Matt Dervan, Jake Robertson, Jordan Andrews, Brent Wallace, Nick Brown, Jack Edwards, Brendan Elvey, James Scully, Steve Piperno

VFL Reserves grand final umpires

	Field			Boundary			Goal	
1993	M.Sexton	W.Mann		J.Stephenson	A.Wilkinson		C.Davenport	M.Russell
1994	S.Hanley	A.Malcolm		L.Crettenden	D.Walsh		A.Jensz	G.Ray
1995	N.Thornton	G.Twitt		A.Crettenden	S.Williamson		P.Sly	G.Ray
1996	J.Pascoe	A.Davis		T.McNamara	G.Muir		P.Sly	A.Insana
1997	J.Cook	B.Carter		G.Sinclair	P.Anderson		D.Humphries	S.Caple
1998	N.Ashton	S.Ryan		L.O'Sullivan	M.Kent		L.Fisk	C.Evans
1999	D.Jakymczuk	D.Paulin		J.Wilson	S.Harper		A.Insana	C.Chalmers
2000	G.Murphy	D.Sully		P.Curtis	S.Irish		P.Nastasi	M.Tippett
2001	C.Donlon	S.Meredith		C.Morrison	S.Gilbert		A.Clifton	J.Tyrrell
2002	A.Davis	S.Mason	D.Sully	R.Haala	D.Pieper		M.Berkhout	B.Manion
2003	R.Chamberlain	C.Kamolins	S.Mason	A.Coote	M.Foster		A.Clifton	A.Wojcik
2004	B.Dye	R.Findlay	C.Nash	I.Burrows	C.Roberts		B.Letson	M.Richardson
2005	D.Beard	R.Findlay	C.Nash	D.Lambourn	A.McLean	N.Woods	P.Balding	D.Jones
2006	M.Jennings	S.Mason	A.Mitchell	D.Kowalski	D.Lambourn	M.Marantelli	F.Dicosmo	B.James
2007	M.Brown	T.McCarthy	B. Ritchie	D.Card	D.Kowalski	S.Neal	P.Balding	A.Clifton
2008	C.Capell	J.Grindal	W.Hoskins	D.Cusack	S.Gloag	N.Laurence	S.Evans	M.Palm
2009	J.Krull	M.Leppard	B.Pawley	M.Jenkinson	P.Tongue	N.Woods	P.Balding	M.Richardson
2010	D.Craig	J.Grindal	A.McCoy	S.Gloag	N.Laurence	M.Tomkins	D.Jones	M.Richardson
2011	D.Anderson	R.Mills	R.O'Gorman	B.Crow	B.Macdonald	D.Pieper	P.Balding	M.Palm
2012	M.Curtis	J.Grindal	J.Waight	J.Andrews	N.Laurence	J.Robertson	P.Balding	D.Benwell
2013	J.Edwards	H.O'Connor	B.Wallace	B.Macdonald	J.Scully	N.Steel	D.Jones	S.Piperno
2014	T.Carlos	J. Davey	H.O'Connor	P.Dineen	K.Ferguson	A.Leggo	C.Doyle	L.White

2014 AFL Victoria Development League Grand Final Williamstown v. Box Hill



L-R: Luke White, Kieran Ferguson, Andrew Leggo, Tim Carlos, James Davey, Haydn O'Connor, Pat Dineen, Chris Doyle

TAC Cup grand final umpires

	Field			Boundary			Goal		
1994	G.Deller	J.Kanizay		S.Jansen	C.Scott		P.Gonis	S.Murray	
1995	S.Nelis	J.Quigley		K.Colegrave	S.Rock		A.Henry	H.Stamos	
1996	B.Irvin	D.Reid		D.Crettenden	C.Morrison		P.Gonis	G.Ray	
1997	A.Davis	S.James		M.Kent	S.Nathan		A.Galea	D.Holt	
1998	S.Meredith	T.Pannell		J.Formosa	S.Smith		R.Condon	J.Venkataya	
1999	C.Donlon	D.Jakymczuk	J.Zampatti	M.Foster	P.Munro		R.Read	M.Tippett	
2000	M.Stevic	C.Blanchard	J.Armstrong	A.Little	J.Neavan		M.Richardson	D.Wilson	
2001	C.Nash	S.Ryan	D.Sully	J.Kenley	S.Neal		M.Read	L.Walker	
2002	B.Dye	C.Kamolins	M.Stevic	I.Burrows	J.Bennison		D.Page	A.Wojcik	
2003	C.Donlon	C.Nash	D.Sully	I.Burrows	N.Woods		M.Craig	B.Letson	
2004	A.Irvin	M.Jennings	H.Ryan	D.Cusack	L.Stephenson		A.Gardner	M.Lafite	
2005	M.Brown	A.Mitchell	B.Pawley	P.Ashmore	M.Marantelli	N.Liparota	E.Malpas	D.Mills	
2006	T.McCarthy	R.Mills	B.Ritchie	C.Gordon	J.Robinson	P.Tongue	F.Brady	S.Piperno	
2007	T.Burgess	J.Grindal	J.Krull	G.Bergroth	S.Jones	P.Tongue	C.Lai	S.Williams	
2008	T.Burgess	A.Mitchell	T.Saunders	D.Kowalski	M.Marantelli	S.Neal	C.Lai	R.Thwaites	
2009	T.Burgess	D.Harris	A.Talbot	D.Card	T.Morrison	S.Neal	M.O'Donnell	S.Piperno	
2010	M.Curtis	B.Hosking	R.Young	G.Bergroth	A.Masterman-Smith	T.Morrison	M.O'Donnell	S.Piperno	
2011	N.Brown	M.Curtis	M.Oakley	J.Andrews	A.Masterman-Smith	G.Bergroth	M.Maclure	M.O'Donnell	
2012	T.Carlos	J.Edwards	H.O'Connor	B.Elvey	J.Scully	N.Steel	A.Kyrkou	C.Wong	
2013	M.Curtis	A.Talbot	R.Young	J.Andrews	N.Laurence	J.Robertson	P.Balding	S.Walsh	
2014	P.Burns	D.Butcher	T.Chrystie	N.Laurence	B.Macdonald	L.Rayner	S.Plumridge	S.Walsh	

2014 TAC Cup Grand Final Calder v.Oakleigh



L-R: Sam Walsh, Lachlan Rayner, Daniel Butcher, Tom Chrystie, Pat Burns, Nick Laurence, Ben Macdonald, Simon Plumridge

2014 major milestones

Andrew McCoy

From a young age Andrew McCoy was fascinated by umpiring and initially wanted to be a basketball referee.

While McCoy played basketball, his elder brother Michael and friends were umpiring football so he decided to "give it a try".

"The officiating side of things always interested me," said McCoy who has recently umpired his 100th VFL match.

McCoy started umpiring 16 years ago at Essendon District Football League.

"From the moment I went down there I found it was something that I was passionate about," McCoy said.

"I'm not sure what made me take up field umpiring. When I started I was 11 going on 12 and I was too young to be a boundary umpire and they were always looking for a field umpire."

"Once I got into the training, understood all the rules, I've never looked back." After eight seasons in the EDFL, McCoy was invited to train with the VFL squad, where he spent five seasons on the development panel.

Six years ago he was elevated to the VFL panel and along the journey he's umpired the 2010 VFL Development League Grand Final and five VFL senior finals.

While football can be a mesmerising, magnetic potion for some, McCoy said he's not someone who's consumed by the game.

"I'm passionate about what I do, but I'm not somebody that needs to know every player and what they've done. That's not me," McCoy said.

"Some weekends I don't even know the results of the AFL. I come into the office on Monday and go 'what happened on the weekend?'" Comments fly thick and fast in football, from both sides of the fence, but McCoy said he doesn't take them personally.

He's heard some "crackers" from some diehard female supporters from one particular club, but uses them more as something to dine out on than taking them to heart.

"Some of them you stand back and think 'wow', but I don't let it worry me," he said.

"It's not a personal attack. It's just that you are doing a job." McCoy said because he's umpired at the VFL level for so long now he's able to enjoy banter with players.

He said Coburg captain Nick Carnell and he have had some good laughs.

"I don't mind having a joke with the players out on the field," McCoy said.

Reaching the game's elite level is something that McCoy would like to achieve, but he wonders at his age (28) if time may be against him.

"I'll be pretty happy to walk away when I'm finished and say I've done 100 VFL games," McCoy said.



Anthony Kyrkou

When Anthony Kyrkou attended his first training night he was given the choice of being a boundary or goal umpire. Kyrkou, seeking something to do during winter, ventured down with some of his cricketing buddies from St Andrew's, Gardiner. As more of his mates were goal umpires, Kyrkou chose this facet of umpiring. It's a decision that's led him to joining the ranks of goal umpires with 100 VFL games to their credit.

"It's been filled with highs and lows. With anything there have been some disappointments, but that only serves to make the highs and achievements greater once you get there," Kyrkou said.

"It's been a bit of a roller coaster." Certainly, Kyrkou's rise through the ranks can only be described as meteoric. He began in 'D' section in the Victoria Amateur Football Association in 2005, but by the end of the year he was umpiring in 'A' grade.

Kyrkou said his youth (he was 15) was seen as a real positive and thanks to the guidance of some experienced umpires he made the rapid transition. After three seasons with the VAFA umpiring panel, Kyrkou moved to the VFL in 2008 after he completed his Year 12 studies.

The ascension continued. Within three seasons he had reached the ultimate at VFL level.

Kyrkou officiated in the last of North Ballarat's premiership three-peat in 2010 and followed up a year later to be one of the goal umpires in Port Melbourne's historic undefeated season.

He has no regrets in choosing goal umpiring. "When I see all those boundary umpires running around and realise how you have to be a freak athlete, I'm happy with my choice," Kyrkou said.

But, there's more to goal umpiring than just waving a couple of white flags and entering goals or behinds into a small note pad. Kyrkou noted umpires are judged each and every week by a panel of observers on accuracy, positioning, presentation, composure and, yes, flag waving. Each goal umpire receives a score every week and by the end of the season that score equates to a ranking and that determines whether you participate in finals.

While those two Grand Finals were undoubted 'highs', Kyrkou would have liked to graduate to the game's elite level.

He notes with goal umpiring it can be a case of being in the right place at the right time, and he hasn't.

"You have to be lucky. A spot has to open up at the time you happen to be doing the grand final," Kyrkou said.

"In 2010 I finished (ranked) No 2 and there was one spot and then in 2011 I finished (ranked) No 1 and there was no spot.

"You have to be very lucky, but you have to keep putting yourself there and one day it will open up.

"I suppose it can still happen if I push hard enough. It is certainly achievable."

Shaun Gleeson

Milestones are building up for Gleeson, who has umpired the past two VFL Grand Finals as well as a number of NAB Cup games.

His introduction to umpiring began by running the boundary line in local competitions in Launceston in 2000.

After two years as a boundary umpire, Gleeson switched to field umpiring.

"I just enjoyed it more and there was a little more money and less running," Gleeson recalled.

And, that's from someone who now says he runs between 12-14 kilometres a match and endures a pre-season that is as demanding as it is torrid as you would wish. Following a couple of years working through the ranks in the Tasmanian Football League, Gleeson was elevated to the VFL panel in 2008.

When Tasmania exited the VFL, Gleeson was thought highly enough of for him to be flown to Melbourne to umpire games. He umpired one VFL final in 2008.

After umpiring in the new TSFL in 2010, Gleeson decided to move to Victoria in November to pursue his dream of making it to the elite level of umpiring, the AFL.

Gleeson's talent was readily evident. He was named as emergency for the 2009 VFL Grand Final, he umpired two VFL finals in 2011 and was one of the three umpires that officiated at the past two VFL Grand Finals.

For three years, Gleeson was on the AFL umpire's rookie list, but he declined an offer to be on the list this year as he plans to concentrate on umpiring in the VFL.

About a half dozen times Gleeson was named as an emergency for an AFL game and umpired seven NAB Cup games.

"I just didn't quite make it unfortunately," Gleeson said.

Gleeson described as "unbelievable" the standard in the VFL.

"That was half the reason I moved over to Victoria the difference in standard between the TSL and the VFL," he said.

"I thought if I was going to have a decent crack to make the AFL list I knew this is where I had to be. Even if it's the bottom two teams it is always a close contest.

"Some of the teams are AFL stand alone and the aligned teams can half AFL listed players. The game is quick and a good standard."

"There is not much more you can ask for." Shaun Gleeson can reflect favourably on his latest milestone and accomplishments as an umpire.

Brendan Elvey

Brendan Elvey has many people to thank after posting his 100th match as a VFL boundary umpire last weekend, but none more so than his brother Damian. It was Damian who suggested to Elvey when he was just 13 that he should try out as a boundary umpire. Like most little brothers, Elvey looked up to his elder sibling and decided it was a pursuit worth following. More than 10 years later he has no regrets.

"I played footy at Under 10s and Under 12s, but I was more suited to running," Elvey said. "Seeing my older brother umpiring I thought I would give football away and start umpiring." While his brother now lives in Sydney, he still umpires and Elvey constantly seeks him out for advice.

Elvey began running the boundary as a 12-year-old in the Essendon District Football League and within five years was selected to tryout with the VFL. For his first year on the VFL panel, Elvey umpired the Reserves and TAC Cup games, but after one season he was promoted to the senior squad - aged 18.

Elvey officiated in his first VFL match in 2008 when he ran the boundary in the Box Hill Hawks v Essendon match at Box Hill.

Underscoring Elvey's consistency is that he's missed very few matches over the past six seasons. Along the way, Elvey has officiated in a 2012 VFL Preliminary Final and the TAC Cup Grand Final. It hasn't come by chance, but more a commitment to a strict training regimen. Just one month after the football season ends, Elvey begins training for the next season with regular visits to the local athletics track at Essendon.

Those training sessions include repetitive 800m and 1500m sprints, as well as 12 km runs. There is also running sessions around the Tan with other members of the VFL umpires squad.

"Pre-season is pretty tough," Elvey said.

Each Tuesday and Thursday, Elvey trains with the other members of the VFL senior panel, but then he does his "own thing" on a Monday and Wednesday whether that's spin class at a gym or another run. And, after a Saturday match he will 'blow out the cobwebs' with a six kilometre run on a Sunday.

It's the base training that a boundary umpire needs given, as Elvey noted, that he can run anywhere between 15-16km on game day. At times it's grueling, but Elvey, 24, said what continually motivates him is the love of the game and the camaraderie of his colleagues.

"It's the people I umpire with, the people I train with. There's is such a great feel down at training with all the coaches, staff and umpires," he said. "That's what makes it so enjoyable each year."

Ben Macdonald

Ben Macdonald's umpiring career with the VFL got off to a flying start when he joined the VFL in 2008. That same year he debuted in the VFL at Williamstown in round 13.

He recalls, "My school friend Brenton Crow convinced me to umpire local football with him back in 2004, and we both joined the VFL together, pushing each other along the way. I don't think that there was a particular moment when I decided I wanted to umpire at state level. I always wanted to do my best, improve and get to the best standard I could."

In 2009 and 2010 the progress continued culminating in a VFL final and a reserves preliminary final.

Of course the next goal was a VFL grand final but after being appointed to reserves and TAC cup finals in 2010 a health setback put a spanner in the progression works.

Despite doing the 2011 VFL Reserves Grand Final it was only the support and understanding of VFL boundary umpires' coach, Matthew Vitiritti that kept Ben from leaving umpiring.

"Not many people know that I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease in 2011. I struggled through the end of that season and I was still struggling in early 2012. I spoke to Matt and told him I was going to give umpiring away. He stopped me, gave me the weeks off I needed and now I am 100% and can't thank him enough."

For his part Vittiritti was very happy recalling, "I broke a habit and told Ben he was ranked highly and that if the season stopped then, he would be umpiring senior finals. I'm so glad he took the break and came back. Ben is a fantastic umpire and great bloke. I wish all my umpires were like him when it comes to attitude and feedback on their games."

Getting the health issues sorted out led to more success. Three VFL finals in 2012 were followed by the 2013 campaign that culminated in the 2013 VFL Grand Final.

Performing at the high standard demanded of VFL umpires is time consuming

but has its compensations.

"Between full time work, games, group training and finding time for my girlfriend things are pretty busy. During the season on nights without group training sessions, I like to go for longer slow runs."

"I don't believe that match day is the hard part of our job. Match day is what we all love and it is why we are here. I think that the hard part is training on my own and working hard over summer. Match day is a reward for that work."

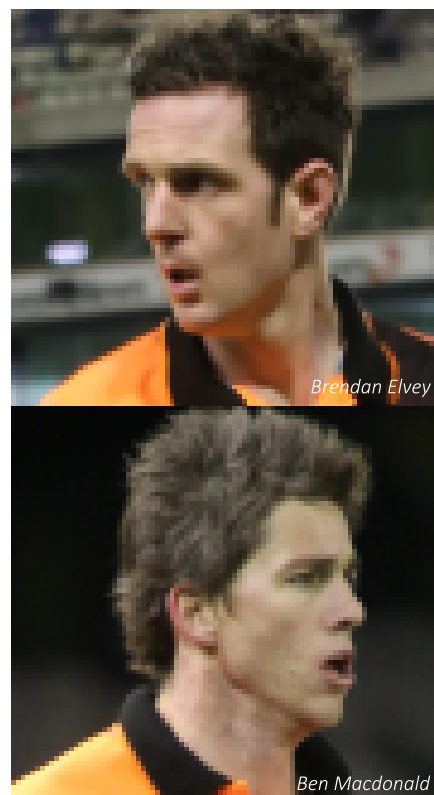
So after 100 matches what's different in boundary umpiring?

"After umpiring VFL seniors with the old two boundary umpire system, the change to three umpires was really needed. It took a few games for everyone to get their heads around it, but it is the best change that I have seen in my time here."

"On a personal level I think that the main difference is that I am relaxed and more confident in myself."

And the future?

"The obvious goal has always been AFL. And that is still the dream for the future."



Steve Piperno

Steve Piperno arrived at the VFL as an 18 year-old from the Ammos – a familiar beginning for many young men making their way in umpiring. He recalls a senior practice match in his first year, and being blown away by the standard of the football he was being involved in. But more importantly it was a time where AFL and VFL umpires trained together, giving him the opportunity to mould his style on guys “who could really umpire”.

He learned quickly – making his senior debut in his second season, and umpiring senior finals that same year. He acknowledges not ever imagining at that early stage that he would go on to umpire 150 games of state league football.

It certainly has been a journey full of ups and downs. Steve umpired his first VFL grand final in 2011 having not made the most of his opportunities in 2010. But along with his 150th match, 2014 will be long-remembered as a fulfilling season, umpiring the VFL grand final for the second time in a year where he believes “the goal umpiring list is so strong”, and is grateful that his coaches still had faith in him despite previous disappointments. Tellingly, his coach Steve Stirling rates his mental toughness, and the ability to respond resiliently to setbacks.

Steve’s career at the VFL took an interesting twist when in 2012 he joined the VFUA Executive. His passion for the association grew as strong as his passion for umpiring and in 2014 he assumed the role of president. He says that he views his work with the VFUA quite separately from his umpiring, which has no doubt allowed him to succeed in both.

It seemed appropriate that he should umpire his milestone match at Victoria Park – the ground where he’d toiled for hours and hours over numerous years. It was Collingwood vs. Essendon, and although Pip is a Magpie devotee there could be no question of his priority – getting the job done. He umpired the match with Pete Balding, a man with whom he has shared many experiences along a similar journey and who believes that Steve’s professionalism enabled him to reach

150 VFL games and makes him capable of many games at AFL level.

In his nine years at the VFL, Steve remembers most famously being appointed to Nathan Buckley’s injury comeback for Williamstown in 2007. In fact, his coach at the time sent him to Williamstown’s games six weeks in a row just to make sure Steve was there when Buckley eventually played.

But Steve has many more stories to tell of his experiences – the only question is, how long you got?

Andrew Talbot

Late in the season Cam Nash wrote on the whiteboard in the coaching room “Failure to prepare is preparing to fail”. That is no concern for 100 game field umpire Andrew Talbot, preparation is his key.

Much of that preparation is routine, Talbot notes, “Keeping my routine when travelling can be hard. when you could be travelling anywhere between 10-90 minutes to get to the ground.”

“Since I started I’m much more tuned in to how I can best prepare to ensure I perform at my best. Knowing what I can and can’t eat, when I should eat, how much fluid I should put into my body and which types of drinks are better for me. I also spend more time during the week reading about the teams and how they went the previous week. I try to have a greater knowledge of the teams playing and the key players.”

It was that preparation that held him in such good stead for his biggest career moment so far - coming on in an AFL match. Talbot was an AFL rookie and appointed as emergency umpire for the North Melbourne-Port Adelaide match at Docklands in round three.

He recalls, “It is probably the best way to umpire your first game. You’re sitting on the bench watching and umpiring ensuring that you are ready when something happens, but you don’t expect it to. Then when it does, you don’t have time to think about it. You just have to take your tracksuit pants off and get out there.”

“I had my Supplementary Squad Coach, Vince Sercia, on the bench as an interchange steward so he was talking to me as I prepared to come on at the next break. Once I was out there, the adrenaline was just pumping and the effects from my VFL game the day before had no influence on me. Stuart Wenn and Rob Findlay didn’t protect me. They let me get involved which showed their confidence in me. The game was amazing. It was so loud, I could hardly hear anything in my ear piece.”

It was great that Andrew’s parents and fiancée were present as his Dad, Murray, has had a huge influence on his development.

“He has nothing to do with umpiring but he has always pushed me to get better to achieve my goals. He shares a lot of motivational stories and quotes with me to ensure I’m still driven.”

Talbot has only had a few coaches and recalls, “I learnt the basics under Steve Luckman at the Diamond Valley. At the VFL I really enjoyed being coached by Adam Davis and Damien Sully. Along with Kevin Mitchell, they were honest and never sugar coated any feedback.”

Now with 100 VFL matches, a TAC Cup grand final and AFL rookie contract and an AFL game under his belt the long-time dream of an AFL career is on the near horizon. Andrew will undoubtedly be prepared.

Peter Balding

He may be referred to by his colleagues as the 'fossil', but Peter Balding reckons he can still teach the young upstarts a thing or two. Balding certainly has the experience on his side. He recently officiated in his 200th VFL match - the first goal umpire in the modern era to reach such a plateau. The only umpire to officiate in more VFL games is former field umpire Dan Beard, who controlled 224 games.

Balding, 38, umpired his first VFL senior match at Simonds Stadium in 2003 and ironically that's where he bought up his milestone match.

"I was a late bloomer, they're all young kids now," he said. "When I started there was a heap in our high 20s and a few in their 30s, now they're 17, 18 and 19 year-olds who are going to uni."

And here I am married with three kids. I'm in a totally different generation, but there's nothing more I enjoy than showing the young kids I've still got it.

"They're starting to nickname me 'fossil', which I am not impressed with."

While he is the senior figure in the umpiring fraternity, Balding believes he's never umpired better.

"The way I'm umpiring is the best I've umpired. I keep improving so why would I retire, it's the best I've umpired," Balding said.

"I won't go too long, I'll know when it's time, but I'm not going to stop when I'm performing and I'm still enjoying it."

"Just say you were a mature footballer like Chris Judd and still winning Brownlows, you are not going to stop."

"I'll know when it comes to a pre-season and it's a nice sunny day and instead of going for a run, I'll go to the fridge. That's when I'll know it's time. I'm enjoying everything about umpiring. I enjoy watching young kids develop."

So, how does a goal umpire know he is on top of his game? "You just keep getting the decisions right," Balding said.

"For goal umpires it is accuracy in decision making and positioning. We get rated every game so that we know if we are tracking okay or whether we are getting knocked off for stuff we could improve on."

Is he tracking okay to feature in the finals?

"Yeah, I'm tracking okay."

Last season Balding umpired a VFL preliminary final and then got the TAC Cup grand final.

Balding is aiming at a tenth successive year of umpiring a grand final - he did the 2008 VFL Grand Final, five Development League grand finals, a TAC Cup grand final and sat on the bench for another couple of VFL grand finals.

There's plenty of life in the not-so-old fossil.

The VFUA is grateful for the recognition shown to milestone umpires by Adrian Dunn and the *AFL Victoria record*.

The above articles appeared as follows:

Andrew McCoy, *AFL Victoria record*, round 19, 16-17 August, 2014

Anthony Kyrkou, *AFL Victoria record*, round 19, 16-17 August, 2014

Shaun Gleeson, *AFL Victoria record*, round 5, 3-4 May, 2014

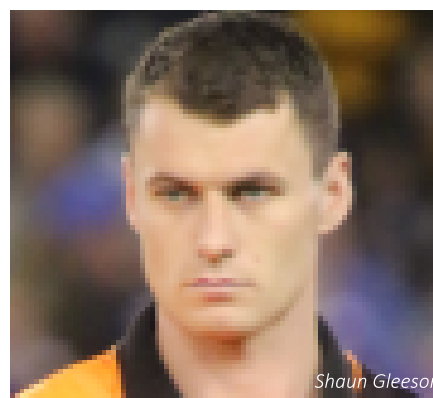
Brendan Elvey, *AFL Victoria record*, round 15, 19-20 July, 2014

Ben Macdonald by David Flegg

Steve Piperno by Luke White

Andrew Talbot by David Flegg

Peter Balding, *AFL Victoria record*, Finals week 1, 30-31 August, 2014



Shaun Gleeson



Andrew Talbot



Peter Balding



VFUA awards

John Russo Trophy

*In recognition of on-field
excellence and off-field
commitment to the association*

1997 - Russell Davidson	2003 - Daniel Wilson	2008 - Stephen Gloag
1998 - David Flegg	2004 - Rob Findlay	2009 - No award
1999 - Anthony Black	2005 - Jason Armstrong	2010 - Richard Mills
2000 - No Award	2005 - Adam Wojcik	2011 - No award
2001 - Chris Snell	2006 - David Flegg	2012 - Daniel Butcher
2002 - No award	2007 - No award	2013 - Michael Curtis

Frank Leverett Shield

For the best first year umpire

1992 - Alan Letson	2000 - John Neavan	2007 - Graham Bergroth
1993 - Adam Skidmore	2001 - Luke Walker	2008 - Matt Maclure
1994 - Steven Hanley	2002 - Rob Haala	2009 - Brendan Hosking
1995 - Adam Bastin	2003 - Neil Woods	2010 - Luke White
1996 - Gordon Muir	2004 - Matthew Lafite	2011 - Daniel Butcher
1997 - Glenn Guzzo	2005 - Jacob Mollison	2012 - Hayden Gavine
1998 - Matthew Tippet	2006 - Chris Gordon	2013 - Matthew Dervan
1999 - Matt Stevic		2014 - Sam Stagg

Best First Year Umpire

Field	Boundary	Goal
2012 - Hayden Gavine	Lachlan Rayner	Sam Walsh
2013 - Pat Burns	Kieran Ferguson	Matthew Dervan
2014 - John Howorth	Sam Stagg	Kate Griffiths

Special Award

*For outstanding contribution by
a life member*

2004 - David Flegg	2008 - Peter Kelly
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Courage Award

*Recognising significant battle
during the year*

1994 - Darryl Hammond	2004 - Peter Balding	2013 - Leigh Keen
1995 - Andrew Malcolm	2005 - Bruce McCorkell	2013 - Josh Mather
1996 - Dan Beard	2011 - Bruce McCorkell	
1998 - Sam Nathan	2011 - Matthew Sanders	
2001 - Paul Anderson	2012 - Damien Cusack	

VFUA awards

Most Improved Trophy

Senior squad

1992	Brett Allen	Tim Anderson	Craig Clark
1993	Scott McLaren	Matthew Vitiritti	Graeme Billing
1994	Kieron Nicholls	Sean Williamson	David Humphries
1995	Vince Sercia	Shane Jansen	Mark Harrison
1996	Tim Shearer	Steven Davies	Michael Russell
1997	Wes Mann	Robert Frampton	Alf Galea
1998	Geoff Twitt	Sam Nathan	Clayton Evans
1999	Scott Jeffery	Matthew Vitiritti	David Dixon
2000	Adam Davis	Gerard Boland	Peter Gonis
2001	Chris Donlon	Stephen Smith	David Flegg
2002	Chris Kamolins	-	Chris Appleton
2003	Matt Stevic	-	Alf Galea
2004	Rob Findlay	-	Peter Nastasi
2005	Jason Armstrong	-	Luke Walker
	Andrew Mitchell		
2006	Troy McCarthy	-	Jason Venkataya
2007	Brett Ritchie	-	-
2008	Richard Mills	Shane Jones	Richard Thwaites
2009	Andrew Mitchell	Tim Morrison	Ben James
2010	Michael Curtis	Mathew Tomkins	Anthony Kyrkou
2011	Brendan Hosking	Jordan Andrews	Matthew Maclure
2012	Tim Carlos	Tim Lougoon	Cyrus Wong
2013	Robert O'Gorman	Josh Mather	Sam Walsh
2014	Pat Burns	Andrew Leggo	Simon Plumridge

Most Improved Trophy

Development squad

1992	Michael Sexton	Matthew Bellizia	Brad Strachan
1993	Dean Goodridge	Sam Leslie	Peter Herrick
1994	Michael Vozzo	-	-
1995	Simon Nelis	-	-
1996	Jason Pascoe	-	-
1997	Jason Cook	-	-
1998	Shaun Ryan	-	-
1999	Chris Donlon	Stephen Smith	Robert Read
2000	Damien Sully	Aaron Little	Scott Murray
2001	Damien Sully	Matthew Payton	Michael Read
2002	Jason Armstrong	Aaron Little	Adam Wojcik
			Lloyd Fisk
2003	Daniel Wilson	Justin Bennison	Brett Manion
			John Robinson
2004	Richard Mills	Chris Roberts	Peter Balding
		Gerard Large	
2005	Troy McCarthy	David Lambourn	Dean Jones
2006	Brad Buyck	Drew Kowalski	Ben James
2007	Paul Trotter	David Card	Steven Piperno
2008	Jarrod Waight	-	-
2009	Adam Pottenger	Anthony Hunter	Cyrus Wong
2010	Damien Devincentis	Jordan Mayston	Ashley Crawford
2011	Nick Brown	Tinashe Nyatsanga	Chris Doyle



L-R John Howorth, Kate Griffiths, Sam Stagg



Pat Burns



Andrew Leggo



Simon Plumridge

2014 statistics

Boundary	VFL	AFLVDL	TAC Cup
Leslie Aldrich	0 (15)	13 (21)	1 (10)
James Alexander ¹	2 (2)	6 (11)	8 (16)
Jordan Andrews	17 (79)	1 (11)	0 (10)
Brynton Ashton	0 (0)	5 (16)	9 (21)
Rory Ashton	13 (21)	1 (9)	0 (12)
Adam Bell	15 (50)	1 (27)	0 (24)
Charles Blanch	0 (0)	6 (6)	10 (10)
Corey Brown	0 (0)	5 (26)	8 (29)
Leigh Buwalda	9 (10)	8 (33)	1 (18)
Chris Cato	14 (14)	1 (9)	1 (10)
Lawrence Coop	10 (10)	3 (16)	1 (15)
John Cooper	16 (48)	2 (11)	3 (16)
Curtis DeWitt	0 (0)	7 (7)	8 (8)
Patrick Dineen	17 (32)	2 (10)	0 (8)
Rhys Duggan	0 (0)	4 (9)	10 (18)
Brendan Elvey	23 (109)	0 (28)	0 (20)
Kieran Ferguson	15 (15)	3 (7)	0 (8)
Sean Geaney	0 (0)	3 (3)	0 (0)
Brendan Gherashe	11 (25)	4 (12)	0 (9)
Ashley Hawkes	0 (0)	5 (5)	7 (7)
Thomas Horsten	0 (0)	4 (4)	8 (8)
Jack Hunter	0 (0)	8 (8)	5 (5)
Anthony Laughton	0 (0)	7 (7)	8 (8)
Nick Laurence	19 (146)	0 (39)	2 (21)
Andrew Leggo	18 (57)	1 (21)	1 (29)
Ben Macdonald	21 (119)	0 (15)	1 (12)
Damien Main	16 (16)	0 (5)	0 (6)
Joshua Maine	7 (7)	6 (24)	7 (43)
Jake McKinnon	15 (15)	2 (20)	2 (18)
Jeffrey Miller	14 (16)	3 (24)	2 (12)
Ryan O'Shea	16 (16)	2 (9)	0 (6)
Nicholas Phillips	0 (0)	8 (11)	9 (15)
Daniel Phyland	0 (0)	6 (6)	9 (9)
Daniel Pieper	12 (133)	2 (54)	2 (34)
Lachlan Rayner	18 (34)	1 (5)	1 (14)
Jake Robertson	20 (68)	0 (14)	0 (12)
Jerome Rowcroft	18 (26)	0 (17)	2 (24)
James Scully	16 (74)	0 (8)	1 (12)
Mitchell Smith	16 (16)	0 (4)	1 (8)
Sam Stagg	3 (3)	3 (3)	9 (9)
Nicholas Steel	4 (55)	12 (35)	3 (18)
Travis Taylor	18 (29)	0 (15)	1 (16)
Declan Veale	0 (0)	4 (16)	8 (29)
Luke Wilke	16 (16)	1 (3)	1 (10)
Adam Young	7 (7)	5 (9)	7 (15)

Field	VFL	AFLVDL	TAC Cup
Jarryd Barry	18 (26)	1 (21)	0 (21)
Nicholas Brown	23 (23)	0 (12)	0 (23)

Field	VFL	AFLVDL	TAC Cup
Tristan Burgess	4 (108)	0 (27)	0 (33)
Patrick Burns	18 (18)	1 (5)	3 (14)
Sam Burns	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (12)
Daniel Butcher	18 (27)	1 (21)	3 (27)
Tim Carlos	16 (58)	2 (23)	0 (29)
Tim Carrington	0 (0)	6 (18)	9 (25)
Jacob Carroll	0 (0)	0 (0)	11 (11)
Thomas Chrystie	14 (14)	6 (14)	3 (24)
Mitchell Cole	0 (0)	10 (27)	10 (39)
Daniel Cumming	0 (0)	0 (4)	4 (13)
Michael Curtis	20 (95)	0 (12)	0 (21)
James Davey	20 (35)	2 (12)	0 (11)
Cai Davies	0 (0)	0 (5)	11 (21)
Jared Dyson	0 (0)	13 (35)	1 (22)
Jack Edwards	21 (54)	0 (18)	0 (22)
Nicholas Finch	17 (19)	3 (27)	1 (20)
Cameron Fruzynski	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (10)
Hayden Gavine	17 (30)	2 (11)	1 (15)
Shaun Gleeson	21 (117)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Jamie Grindal	19 (133)	0 (42)	0 (43)
Heath Grundy	1 (1)	11 (23)	6 (20)
Tyler Hankinson	8 (13)	9 (42)	0 (27)
Joe Hartwig	0 (0)	6 (6)	8 (8)
Adam Havelberg	18 (18)	3 (14)	2 (23)
Andrew Heffernan	17 (17)	0 (7)	3 (6)
John Howorth	0 (0)	5 (5)	9 (9)
Michael Knight	0 (0)	0 (0)	11 (11)
James Langmaid	0 (0)	8 (32)	4 (35)
Daniel Lawlor	6 (6)	11 (28)	3 (32)
Matthew Leppard	4 (104)	0 (54)	0 (48)
Lucinda Lopes	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (10)
Nick MacDonald	0 (0)	0 (0)	11 (11)
Andrew McCoy	14 (102)	5 (45)	0 (42)
Luke McIlroy	2 (2)	7 (12)	6 (16)
Richard Mills	18 (170)	1 (35)	0 (35)
Robert Monk	0 (4)	10 (42)	1 (29)
Travis Monk	0 (0)	6 (14)	8 (15)
Jason Moore	0 (0)	1 (7)	11 (19)
Jack Murfett	0 (0)	0 (0)	11 (11)
Ben Nicholson	0 (0)	0 (0)	13 (13)
Haydn O'Connor	17 (51)	6 (26)	0 (20)
Robert Parker	0 (0)	2 (2)	10 (10)
Matthew Pryor	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (12)
Luke Richardson	0 (0)	6 (7)	9 (11)
Jason Schilling	0 (26)	16 (59)	0 (33)
Joshua Schultz	0 (0)	0 (4)	10 (34)
Rick Taig	0 (0)	6 (21)	10 (27)
Andrew Talbot	22 (100)	0 (16)	0 (18)
Scott Vanstone	0 (0)	4 (16)	11 (27)
Gareth Verberne	0 (3)	2 (56)	2 (55)
Jarrold Waight	1 (68)	6 (49)	0 (33)
Brent Wallace	21 (37)	0 (4)	0 (1)

2014 statistics

Goal	VFL	AFLVDL	TAC Cup
Peter Balding	14 (201)	4 (48)	2 (36)
Peter Baldry	0 (0)	13 (13)	9 (9)
Dylan Benwell	21 (61)	1 (9)	2 (15)
Michael Blair	0 (0)	10 (63)	12 (83)
Matthew Dervan	22 (22)	3 (17)	0 (11)
Chris Doyle	18 (31)	3 (95)	5 (68)
Matthew Edwards	7 (7)	7 (29)	5 (23)
Zac Gemenis	0 (0)	14 (14)	10 (10)
Wes Gilmour	13 (13)	6 (27)	4 (22)
Kate Griffiths	0 (0)	10 (10)	12 (12)
Dean Jones	15 (128)	4 (68)	4 (61)
Anthony Kyrkou	20 (104)	2 (28)	2 (19)
Callum Leonard	11 (27)	5 (25)	3 (21)
Darren Mills	16 (71)	0 (16)	4 (20)
Peter Nastasi	16 (129)	2 (23)	3 (36)
Steven Piperno	23 (156)	0 (20)	1 (21)
Simon Plumridge	22 (57)	1 (13)	4 (19)
Matthew Richardt	10 (16)	6 (35)	5 (28)
Dylan Smith	0 (0)	15 (27)	9 (20)
David Wallace	13 (13)	4 (36)	6 (34)
Sam Walsh	22 (42)	0 (11)	3 (13)
Luke White	17 (57)	3 (23)	4 (29)
Cyrus Wong	15 (67)	3 (50)	4 (26)

Figures in parenthesis indicate career totals.

¹ James Alexander umpired 5 AFL Vic. Dev. League and 8 TAC Cup matches as a field umpire in 2013.

For VFUA members and life members statistics see e-version on accompanying disc.

Photo credits

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AFL Victoria: pages 5, 26, back cover

Danne family: page 15

100 VFL matches

Matches		Matches	
Dan Beard	224	Ben Macdonald*	119
Peter Balding*	201	Jason Quigley	118
Michael Richardson	194	Shaun Gleeson*	117
Shane Mason	188	Glenn Gibson	116
Andrew Clifton	181	Andrew Malcolm	116
Lloyd Fisk	177	Adam Wojcik	115
Ben James	172	Steven Neal	115
Richard Mills*	170	Chris Donlon	114
Matthew Brown	163	Neil Woods	113
Michael Jennings	162	Robert Findlay	112
Steven Piperno*	156	Geoff Twitt	110
Michael Hammond	155	Brendan Elvey*	109
Brendan Dye	150	Michael Palm*	108
Andrew Mitchell*	148	Tristan Burgess*	108
Nick Laurence*	146	Russell Davidson	106
Damien Cusack	138	Scott Murray	104
Frank Dicosmo	137	Drew Kowalski	104
Daniel Pieper*	133	Matthew Leppard*	104
Jamie Grindal*	133	Anthony Kyrkou*	104
Stephen Gloag	130	Chris Morrison	103
Damien Sully	129	Jason Armstrong	102
Peter Nastasi*	129	Andrew McCoy*	102
Steele Irish	128	Rob Frampton	101
Dean Jones*	128	Mark Foster	101
Cameron Nash	125	Matthew Oakley*	101
Stefan Grun	123	Andrew Talbot*	100
Brett Ritchie	122		

* = umpired 2014

10 VFL finals

Finals		Finals	
Peter Balding	20	Damien Cusack	12
Michael Jennings	19	Rob Findlay	12
Steven Piperno	18	Michael Hammond	12
Shaun Gleeson	17	Andrew Malcolm	12
Neil Woods	17	Shane Stewart	12
Brett Ritchie	15	Graeme Bergroth	11
Mark Foster	14	Andrew Clifton	11
Drew Kowalski	14	David Harris	11
Gerard Large	14	Anthony Kyrkou	11
Brad Letson	14	Courtney Lai	11
Michael Marrantelli	14	Michael Richardson	11
Richard Mills	14	Tristan Burgess	10
Steven Neal	14	Lloyd Fisk	10
Damien Sully	14	Stefan Grun	10
Matthew Brown	13	Ben James	10
Mitch Lefevre	13	Ben Macdonald	10
Shane Mason	13	Troy McCarthy	10
Andrew Mitchell	13	Michael Palm	10
Jordan Andrews	12	Andrew Talbot	10

2014 Umpires of the Year



Matt Dervan
Goal

Jack Edwards
Field

James Scully
Boundary

2014 Interstate Match VFL v. SANFL



L-R: Sam Walsh, Ben Macdonald, Jack Edwards, Nick Brown, Curtis DeBoy (SA), James Scully, Jason Moore (SA), Steve Paunovic (SA)