

Victorian Football Umpires' Association

Annual report & financial
statement 2016



Office bearers



L-R: Lachlan Harty, Tom Chrystie, Jared Dyson, Callum Leonard, Michael Curtis, Luke McIlroy, Peter Kelly, David Flegg, Tim Carlos, Tyler Hankinson, Kate Griffiths, Ryan O'Shea, David Miles.

President

Michael Curtis

Vice-president

Callum Leonard

Executive officer

Peter Kelly

Track representatives

Luke McIlroy (Senior Field)

Jared Dyson (Development Field)

Ryan O'Shea (Senior Boundary)

Anthony Laughton (Development Boundary - part)

Lachlan Harty (Development Boundary - part)

Kate Griffiths (Senior Goal)

David Miles (Development Goal)

Historian-statistician

David Flegg

Communication officer

Tim Carlos

Social/Events officers

Tyler Hankinson, Pat Burns

Project officer

Tom Chrystie

President's report



The 2016 season was a big year for the VFUA full of many successes and challenges. As I reflect on my first year as president, I think back 12 months to where it all began.

Planning the year ahead

Leading up to the AGM in December 2015 I put a lot of planning into the appropriate strategy for the 2016 season.

The key areas important for me were three pillars - communication, inclusiveness and culture/leadership. I felt this would help shape the year ahead to achieve the best success for our association.

The off-season months are some of the busiest for the VFUA. There is a lot of hard work and effort put into the planning stages of each season.

To help drive the three pillars, I put in place a strong team with particular emphasis on both the communications and inclusiveness areas. The 2016 team also had a mixture of new and returning Executive members which was really important as it allowed for a balance of past experience with fresh ideas from new faces.

We held our yearly planning weekend in February 2016 down the coast at Rye. The weekend allowed the team to review the members' survey from 2015 with a view to capitalising on our strengths and working on areas identified by members as requiring improvement. The team identified key strategies in a number of areas to implement throughout the year as well as highlighting key roles and responsibilities of our entire Executive.

3 pillars – Communication, Inclusiveness and Culture/Leadership

Communication was the first area that I felt was important as engagement with our members is vital. Key areas of communication included improving our engagement with members, identifying and utilising the right communication channels to use and to assign tasks to ensure it was completed. With the help of our new Communication Officer Tim Carlos, we were able to implement a revised social media strategy. Throughout the 2016 season, we saw our Facebook page updated on a regular basis with news, events and achievements. The VFUA also tweeted regularly and our website was enhanced. Our thanks also to Rob Giese whose photographic coverage of the VFL regularly includes umpire images.

We also continued to use our existing communication channels such as email communication with the members, verbal communication via track representatives and association meetings. In my role as president, I also made the effort to speak to individual disciplines at training on a number of occasions during the season to make sure members were kept up to date on important matters. All these communication

channels helped to better connect with our members and I think we can continue to build on this in the coming season.

The second area of importance was Inclusiveness. For our group of young adults at the VFL it was really important that our association provide a strong inclusive environment. With the help of our Inclusiveness Project Officer Tyler Hankinson and his assistant Patrick Burns, their first important assignment was to identify an appropriate social program for 2016. Assisted by Tim Carlos, the group completed an online survey with our members to identify what the members wanted as part of a social program. The survey provided some great information so, after some analysis, the inclusiveness team were able to present a social events program to the VFUA Executive for endorsement.

This program contained some fantastic events which again attracted a good number of attendees. For me, seeing our members come together and enjoy social functions collectively is really important for our association. Our inclusiveness program finished on a real high with another great series of end of season functions - the grand final after party and VFUA ball. A special thank-you to Tyler and Patrick for managing and executing a fantastic social program and to Daniel Butcher for putting on one of the best VFUA balls in years, an amazing way to end our 2016 season.

The final and probably the most important pillar for 2016 was Culture and Leadership. With a changing football landscape and a growing group of umpires at the VFL, culture and leadership needed to be strong and have continued focus from our executive team. From my first speech as president at the AGM to my last speech at the VFUA ball the year was full of successes and challenges that required strong culture and leadership from myself and the executive team. These successes and challenges I will touch on further below.

Successes and challenges of season 2016

The 2016 season saw a vast number of successes for our association. One of the first important wins was the agreement with AFL Victoria of additional benefits for our members. As a result of an issue that affected field umpires in 2015, we were able to negotiate the implementation of a trial four-umpire system for field umpires in nine VFL games.

The VFUA were also successful in negotiating the implementation of three field umpires going forward in all TAC Cup and AFL Development League games and Sherrin footballs at training at Victoria Park for the first time. In 2016, for the first time, four boundary umpires were appointed to VFL preliminary finals.

Season 2016 saw the introduction of a members' benefits program. From the hard work of our Executive Officer Peter Kelly we were able to provide our VFUA members with a number of product benefits and services from our partnership organisations.

With success also comes challenge. This season was not without its own trials. One of the biggest challenges for our association was the changing football environment we continued to experience.

The introduction of a pathway goal umpires' program presented the association with its biggest challenge in 2016. Despite an agreement with AFL Victoria, the administration of the program did not go as originally planned and agreed resulting in great concern and frustration amongst our members. We, as an association, continue to support these programs but at the same time continue to be challenged by their administration. As an association, we continue to make our members our number one priority and seek through negotiations to achieve the best outcomes for them. In 2016, we have learnt a lot as a result of multiple confrontations. As we move forward in 2017 we look to continue to improve the communication channels with AFL Victoria to ensure that even with a changing football environment we are still seeking the best outcomes for our members.

As we finalise the 2016 season, we are currently working with AFL Victoria on the next employment agreement for seasons 2017-2019, given our current agreement expires in December 2016.

Furthermore, to ensure the VFUA is best equipped to meet the changing football landscape, I have commissioned a review of the VFUA structure and service delivery model which I hope to finalise before the end of the calendar year.

Our great VFUA Executive team

Season 2016 was another great year for our association. I have learnt so much leading this great association and I am very proud of what our VFUA executive team has achieved. Our success was due to their hard work and dedication behind the scenes.

Firstly, to Peter Kelly, one of the most reliable and hardworking executive officers for which we could wish, thank you for your continued guidance and support during 2016. We appreciate all your hard work and everything you do for the VFUA and all our VFL umpires. Your service to the VFUA now covers in excess of 23 years, a remarkable commitment for which we are very thankful. Your passion for the VFUA has ensured the VFUA remains a respected organisation with which all our members can be proud to be involved.

Special thanks to David Flegg who has also continued to support the VFUA in excess of 23 years. Your hard work and guidance behind the scenes is something for which we are most thankful. You continue to do such a terrific job preserving the history of the association through the maintenance of members' statistics, the recording of milestones, ensuring published records are accurate and providing timely advice and guidance to our executive group.

Thank you to my Vice-president Callum Leonard for your support through season 2016 as well as helping to assist the Fees and Conditions Working Party and engagement with our life members.

Thank you to my Executive Committee for their terrific support and enthusiasm during the year. Having a good team to work with makes the role of president a lot easier and more enjoyable and I would like to thank each of you for your contribution. The track

representatives - Luke McIlroy, Jared Dyson, Ryan O'Shea, Anthony Laughton, Lachlan Harty, Kate Griffiths, David Miles for the way they represented the members of their respective squads. Kate and David in particular faced a turbulent year in their goal umpire squads as they managed divergent expectations of both umpires and the Executive Committee in a charged atmosphere. In their first year as track representatives they handled their roles and represented their squads in an exemplary manner. Tim Carlos, for your amazing work behind the scenes in pulling together a fantastic communication platform. Tyler Hankinson and Patrick Burns, for the numerous hours and chase ups which saw a year full of fantastic social functions. Tom Chrystie, for your support in areas such as the fees and conditions.

A final thanks to my previous past presidents Daniel Butcher and Steve Piperno for their invaluable advice and support in my first year as president. Having the ability to call you and seek advice during the year was something I really appreciated. In addition, your continued support of the association has been greatly appreciated with Steve taking the lead on the Fees and Conditions Working Party this year and doing an amazing job, and Daniel leading the way organising our end of season functions. It just goes to show the amazing character you both have in always willing to help and put others first. Thanks so much to you both.

Wrapping up

Finally, as I look back over the past 12 months and season 2016, I reflect on being involved in such a great association, filled with amazing people and great members. Our association is only as strong as our members. When you look at the culture of our membership group, it is stronger than ever. We hold fantastic events such as the Mini-Olympics which saw 150 people come together to enjoy a bit of friendly competition but at the same time raise money for the Victorian Cancer Council. We celebrate together through enjoying social functions and having a few laughs together. Most importantly, we look out for each other on the field during the season and at the end of the year, congratulate our mates who achieve the ultimate success of doing a grand final. Our VFUA members are stronger than ever and it is great to see so many friendships continue to grow.

One key learning this year has been that while the Executive strives to do its best and work towards various goals on behalf of the members, the only way that the VFUA will succeed in any future challenge is to act united as one. I ask each of you to continue your support of the VFUA. We are a great association which continues to learn, grow and support all of its members.

As I look to season 2017, I wish all our members a happy and safe festive season, enjoy the offseason break and I look forward to catching up with you soon.

Michael Curtis
VFUA President

Executive officer's report



On behalf of the VFUA Executive Committee I am pleased to present the annual report and financial statement for the 2015-16 financial year to our members and life members.

Michael Curtis stepped up to the president's role in 2016 with Callum Leonard taking on the role of vice-president. Luke McIlroy

returned as senior field track representative and was joined by a number of new track representatives in 2016 - Jared Dyson (development field), Ryan O'Shea (senior boundary), Anthony Laughton and Lachlan Harty (development boundary - part), Kate Griffiths (senior goal) and David Miles (development goal).

The executive team was bolstered this year by additional resources in Tyler Hankinson and Patrick Burns who devoted their energies to developing and administering a comprehensive social program for our members. Daniel Butcher returned to organise the two end of season functions – the VFL Grand Final after party and the VFUA Grand Final ball. A full report of the social season begins on page 10.

Tim Carlos took on the important office of communications officer and expanded the role to include various forms of social media to keep our members and life members informed and entertained during the year.

Some new and ongoing initiatives were undertaken in 2016:

Leadership

The Executive Committee comprises a strategy team consisting of the president, vice-president, executive officer and historian-statistician. The broader Executive Committee includes the strategy team, the communications officer, track representatives and special projects officers.

As part of its planning activities, the Executive Committee developed an Objectives Plan for 2016 and undertook a two-day planning weekend in February 2016. This allowed the incoming president to outline his vision for the upcoming season, with a particular focus on culture, communication and inclusiveness, to induct new members, assign responsibilities and explain expectations for season 2016. The committee also met frequently during the year to monitor progress against the plan and to work on upcoming activities.

Membership

In 2016, 154 umpires joined the VFUA out of a total of 154, which represented 100% membership. This is the first time in the history of the VFUA that every eligible umpire has joined the association.

The VFUA also welcomed 50 new umpires in season 2016. An induction night was held for new umpires in April and umpires who joined the VFUA were presented with a free VFUA polo shirt.

Representation and Advocacy

There was a significant rise in the number of issues requiring VFUA involvement during the season. Some of these were simply due to changes in the football environment which required discussion and deliberation and possible changes to the VFUA – AFL Victoria Employment Agreement 2014-2016. The VFUA was pleased to see the following changes made to the current agreement:

1. Introduction of three field umpires for all TAC and AFL Victoria Development League matches
2. Introduction of four boundary umpires for VFL preliminary finals
3. The trial of a four umpire system for 9 matches at the start of the season
4. Administrative arrangements for the AFL Player to Goal Umpire program
5. Introduction of payments for finals in the Victorian Women's Football League.

The VFUA also represented a number of umpires in issues they had raised with us. Issues ranged from answering industrial type questions to full representation of umpires in a more formal manner.

Umpires experienced a number of issues with practice match payments including non-payments, incorrect payments, non-issuing of pay slips within the required legal time and overpayment procedures which did not comply with Fair Work Australia guidelines.

The VFUA was also involved in a formal dispute with AFL Victoria over the administration of the AFL Player to Goal Umpire pathway program.

Despite having a written agreement and understanding on how this program would be administered, which was agreed to by both parties in February 2016, AFL Victoria did not uphold their side of the agreement which led to unrest amongst the goal umpires' squads and the broader VFUA membership. Despite numerous requests and meetings with AFL Victoria, the VFUA was concerned and disappointed at the approach AFL Victoria took to addressing the issue. On numerous occasions, AFL Victoria did not respond and when they did, they did not adequately or proactively address the issues raised. This understandably led to members' frustration and anger at the lack of progress in resolving the issue.

It is important to note that the VFUA is not against pathway programs. The VFUA is against poorly thought out and administered programs which have a detrimental effect on the traditional umpiring pathway and where pathway umpires are afforded entitlements and benefits not available to other umpires.

It was disappointing that AFLV did not support the

wishes of their umpires and take a stronger stance on how the program was being administered within their competitions. It seemed to the goal umpires that looking after one umpire in the pathway program was more important than their careers and aspirations, which was very disappointing.

As a result, the dispute led to a further impact on the level of trust between the association and AFLV, which then impacted on the working relationship and communication channels. This ultimately led to the resignation of two great umpiring personnel at the end of the season – Leigh Keen as Development Goal Umpires' Coach and David Flegg as Goal Umpires' Observer/Fitness Coach. Their departures are a significant loss to goal umpires' development coaching.

This dispute, and the one that occurred in 2015, resulted from AFLV not abiding by agreements they had signed with the VFUA. This is of concern given employment agreements serve as the mechanism for employment pay and conditions as agreed between two parties – AFLV and the VFUA.

The VFUA will be meeting with AFL Victoria, the AFL Umpiring Department and the AFL Umpires' Association during the off-season to work through some outstanding issues. The dispute also highlights the need for the VFUA to include an agreed dispute resolution process in the upcoming agreement to force both parties to the table.

The dispute also highlighted the need for the VFUA to review its current structure and operating model. The VFUA has not been established to handle full-on disputes such as the two we have encountered in recent years. The time imposition on executive members was significant during the two most recent disputes, which makes balancing secular employment and umpiring responsibilities extremely difficult. In addition, the VFUA has no direct access to timely legal advice on employment matters. These matters must be addressed to ensure the VFUA is equipped to address future issues.

The VFUA also worked closely with the AFL Umpires' Association and met with its Chief Executive Officer Peter Howe on a number of occasions and would like to thank Peter for his advice and support throughout the season.

Relationship – AFL Victoria

The VFUA continued to work with the AFL Victoria Umpiring Department, both in day to day operations and in the application of the current employment agreement.

The above-mentioned dispute tested this

relationship and the level of trust between parties, which is something that will require rebuilding in the months ahead.

The VFUA also maintained dialogue with AFLV Head Office, attended VFL Umpiring Department functions and continued dialogue with other state based associations. This included dialogue with associations in Western Australia, South Australia, NSW and Queensland.

David Flegg, in his role as historian - statistician, maintains umpiring statistics and milestones which are provided to the department on a weekly basis.

I would like to acknowledge Cameron Nash's efforts as VFL umpires' coach during the year and to welcome Peter Mair, who joined the AFL Victoria umpiring team following Angela Lindsay's resignation last year. 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.

Fees and Conditions - New Employment Agreement

Early in season 2016, a working party comprising Steve Piperno, Tom Chrystie, Callum Leonard, Ben Macdonald, Dylan Benwell and Alex Turner began the job of canvassing members input and to prioritise items for the executive to consider for the next agreement. I would like to thank each member of this working party for the work they did, and especially to Steve Piperno for the thorough job he did in finalising the documentation and to Ben Cheever for his legal advice and input into the content of our upcoming agreement.

The VFUA has begun a series of meetings and discussions to advance the new fees and conditions arrangements with John Hook and Cameron Nash which will continue in the months ahead until a new agreement is finalised.

Communication

The VFUA continued to focus on improved communication with members and life members. Communications Officer Tim Carlos further enhanced the VFUA website and introduced a VFUA Facebook page. Track representatives also developed group email accounts for regular messaging to squads whilst regular emails, SMS messages, association meetings, verbal briefings and website updates were provided to keep members informed during the course of the year.

VFUA Partners

For the first time, the VFUA welcomed a number of partners including Musashi, Nike, Goodlife Health Clubs, Winning Sports Nutrition and Virus who provided discount products and services to our members. For the first time, all members were issued with membership cards which enabled them to access these products and services.

Quality Assurance Program

There was an increased focus on reporting and feedback for the QAP in 2016. Facilities at certain new VWFL grounds remained of concern, however improvements due to constant follow up and reporting seemed to have the problem under control by season's end. The VWFL, through Jess Smith are as concerned about player facilities as the VFUA is for its umpires. Special thanks to David Flegg for coordinating and managing a busy flow of communications and to Michael Blair for his contribution in coordinating the VFUA's QAP for season 2016.

Annual Report

David Flegg has continued ensuring the annual report is professionally done and this year is no exception. Thank you to David for again coordinating such an enormous task and to the many scribes who contributed to the content of the report.

Conclusion

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. Congratulations to John Howorth, Damien Main and Matt Edwards who were voted most improved in their respective categories and to Cameron Dore (field umpire), Patrick Dwyer (goal umpire) and Chris Williams (boundary umpire) on winning their squad's Best First Year Umpire awards for 2016.

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

Thank you to the Executive Committee for your hard work, enthusiasm and humour during the year and for the extra work you undertook during the difficult times experienced by the association and it's members. It has been a pleasure to work with such a united and hard working group.

Thanks to Michael Curtis for the terrific job he has done as president during the year. The demands of the job in 2016 have been like no other year and you have risen to the occasion, often sacrificing yourself and time with your family to try and get the best result for the VFUA and its

members. With membership numbers up by 23% in the last two years, it is becoming harder to keep tabs on everything that is required.

David Flegg, thank you again for the great work you have done for the VFUA again in 2016. A quiet, unassuming individual who seeks no limelight, David has again been a tower of strength during what has been a difficult year. I would like to thank you for remaining positive and for providing candid feedback where required during the year.

Thank you to Daniel Butcher on organising two fantastic end of season functions – the VFL grand final after party and the VFUA grand final ball. To do this, whilst featuring at the business end of the season is testament to your organisational ability and passion for the association.

To my good friends Chris Snell, Rob Findlay, Leigh Keen, Daniel Butcher and Steve Piperno – thank you for your continued support, friendship and wise counsel 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



Members 2016

Field	
2016	Jack Abrehart
2016	Tom Abrehart
2015	Michael Anderson
2016	Peter Bailes
2011	Jarryd Barry
2015	Stefan Bjelosevic
2005	Tristan Burgess (a)
2013	Patrick Burns
2011	Daniel Butcher
2009	Tim Carlos
2015	Ben Cheever
2012	Thomas Chrystie
2016	Matthew Clinton
2009	Michael Curtis
2012	James Davey
2013	Cai Davies (b)
2016	Ben Dickson
2016	Cameron Dore
2016	James Downing
2016	Tom Downs
2011	Jared Dyson
2012	Hayden Gavine
2016	Andre Gianfagna
2004	Jamie Grindal
2011	Tyler Hankinson
2013	Andrew Heffernan
2014	John Howorth
2016	Nicholas Jankovskis
2016	Jarryd Kingsbury
2014	Michael Knight
2016	Aaron Langdon
2011	Daniel Lawlor
2014	Lucinda Lopes
2016	Zac Martin
2015	Peter McCaw
2013	Luke McIlroy
2016	Annie Mirabile
2014	Jack Murfett
2014	Ben Nicholson
2014	Robert Parker
2016	Daniel Patrick
2016	Ben Pearson
2016	Michael Pell
2015	Daniel Philp
2015	Matthew Pongracic
2016	Luke Porter
2014	Matthew Pryor
2015	Nathan Quattrucci
2016	Paul Rebeschini
2013	Luke Richardson
2015	Ryan Robertson
2016	Jacob Rockwell

Field	
2015	Martin Rodger
2015	Leighton Rowe
2002	Heath Ryan (c)
2015	Jack Spencer
2005	Shane Stewart (d)
2008	Andrew Talbot
2016	Nathan Toner
2015	Libby Toovey
2015	Alex Turner
2007	Gareth Verberne
2015	Matthew Young
2009	Robert Young (e)
Boundary	
2016	Blake Anderson
2012	Brynton Ashton
2012	Rory Ashton
2009	Adam Bell
2016	Josh Blain
2015	Simon Blight
2016	Trent Bowes
2016	Cameron Brick
2016	James Brown
2011	Leigh Buwalda
2012	Lawrence Coop
2011	John Cooper
2015	Patrick Damato
2016	Jake D'Angelo
2014	Curtis De Witt
2016	Brenton Dickson
2012	Patrick Dineen
2016	Daniel Ebbott
2007	Brendan Elvey (f)
2013	Kieran Ferguson
2015	Kyle Fisher
2015	Joshua Furman
2015	Patrick Galea
2012	Brendan Gherashe
2016	Harry Green
2015	Jaymee Guy
2015	Lachlan Harty
2014	Ashley Hawkes
2014	Thomas Horsten
2015	Stuart Huddle
2016	Patrick Jackson
2015	Mitchel Jones
2014	Anthony Laughton
2004	Nick Laurence
2009	Andrew Leggo
2008	Ben Macdonald
2013	Damien Main
2013	Ryan O'Shea
2015	Liam Pain

Boundary	
2007	David Park (g)
2016	Paul Parker
2013	Nicholas Phillips
2014	Daniel Phyland
2000	Daniel Pieper (h)
2010	Jerome Rowcroft
2016	Melissa Sambrooks
2015	Lewis Spiker
2014	Sam Stagg
2011	Travis Taylor (i)
2016	Daniel Urbans
2016	Shaun Weise
2013	Luke Wilke
2015	Jesse Wilkie
2016	Chris Williams
Goal	
2001	Peter Balding
2014	Peter Baldry
2011	Dylan Benwell
2008	Michael Blair
2016	Nick Bridges
2016	Liam Cuthbert
2006	Chris Doyle
2016	Patrick Dwyer
2012	Matthew Edwards
2015	Julian Ensink
2015	Josh Forner
2016	Jackson Griffiths
2014	Kate Griffiths
2015	Joshua Hickman
2002	Dean Jones
2008	Anthony Kyrkou
2011	Callum Leonard
2015	Kirsty Lord
2008	Matthew Maclure (a)
2016	Brett McArthur
2016	Jordan McMillan
2015	David Miles
2015	Cam Milich
2016	Brendan Moloney
2016	Luke Monea
2011	Simon Plumridge
2015	Josh Prince
2010	James Richardson (j)
2015	Brad Standfield
2016	Kelly Tellam
2006	Paul Trotter (k)
2016	John Varker
2012	Sam Walsh
2016	Jarred Walson
2008	Cyrus Wong
2015	Joon-Yip Wong

Notes: (a) Off list 2013-14. (b) Off list 2015. (c) Off list 2008-15. (d) Off list 2006-14. (e) Off list 2012-15. (f) Off list 2010. (g) Off list 2008-14. (h) Off list 2006-07. (i) Off list 2012. (j) Off list 2011-15. (k) Off list 2007-14. Field 2006-07. Goal 2014-15.

2015 life memberships

Steve Piperno

Steve was a member of the association for nine years from 2006-2014 before he was promoted to the AFL in 2015. He joined the Executive in 2012 and served as vice-president for two years and as president in 2014.

Steve's passion for the VFUA is well known and during his time on the executive committee Steve demonstrated outstanding leadership and project management skills during a period of constant change. He has been involved in or led a number of projects whilst also ensuring the association continued to provide valued services to its members. Since his promotion to the AFL, Steve has continued to provide valued support and advice to current members of the VFUA Executive.

As president in 2014, Steve focused on forging a good working relationship with Cameron Nash in his new role as umpires' coach and enhancing closer relationships with senior personnel at AFL Victoria and with other State League associations. He also proactively managed and led a new executive team and was responsible for technology innovations to better communicate with members.

He was also responsible for the launching of the VFUA's strategic plan, Striving for September 2014-2017, for the delivery of the planning objectives for 2014 and for ensuring the executive team completed their assigned projects during the year. Steve hosted a life members' dinner, a past-presidents' dinner and played an active role in the successful running of the grand final ball. He also managed merchandise sales and introduced a revised induction program for new umpires.

In addition to his normal responsibilities as vice-president in 2013, Steve project managed a working party to develop a new agreement to cover employment conditions from 2014-2016 and was involved in negotiating new arrangements for the introduction of women's football as part of AFL Victoria.

Steve's VFL career is outstanding encompassing 18 VFL finals including 6 grand finals – 2 VFL, 1 Reserves and 3 TAC Cup. He has officiated in 161 VFL senior matches, 20 AFLV Development/VFL Reserves matches and 21 TAC Cup matches as a goal umpire.

It is for all these reasons that Steven is an outstanding candidate for honorary life membership of the VFUA.

Nick Laurence

Since joining the VFUA in 2004, Nick Laurence has gone on to have a long and fruitful VFL career. During his time as a boundary umpire, he has officiated in 165 VFL, 39 Development League and 20 TAC Cup matches. He is also no stranger to finals football, having been appointed to 13 VFL senior finals, as well as 3 AFL Victoria Development League, 2 TAC Cup grand finals and more recently reaching the pinnacle, the 2015 VFL Grand Final.

Nick has always been a strong advocate for the VFUA and always had a concern for the welfare of umpires.

He joined the VFUA Executive Committee as boundary umpire track representative, a position he held in 2010 and 2011. He was also instrumental in providing a strong voice for the boundary umpires as an integral member of the 2014-2016 Fees and Conditions Working Party. His strong stance on umpiring related matters forged the way for ever increasing conditions for boundary umpires, including the continuing addition of boundary umpires appointed to matches at all levels of state league football, as well as other improvements such as improving the footwear entitlement received by all umpires.

Aside from his direct involvement in the VFUA executive, Nick has always been a massive supporter of the association, attending most social functions and providing assistance where he could.

Nick is also the VFL boundary umpire record holder, having notched up his 150th match in 2015 and is now eyeing off 175 VFL games for VFL life membership. With such experience and continued success over a long career, he finds himself as one of the senior umpires on the list, providing mentoring, feedback and leadership to the younger members within the group. His opinions are extremely valued and his overall contribution to the group is cherished.

Nick is an example to his peers of the value of discipline, commitment, resilience and sacrifice. This passion for umpiring, coupled with his outstanding service he has provided to the association and to fellow VFUA members makes him a worthy nomination for honorary life membership of the VFUA.

VFUA life members

Darren Agnew (1995)	Gavin Dore (1993)	Greg Kennedy (1998)	Frank Raiti (1994)
Peter Allsop (1992)	Brendan Dye (2004)	Hayden Kennedy (1993)	Gary Ramm (1999)
Jason Armstrong (2006)	Judi Elliott (1997)	Colin Larter (1999)	Denis Rich (Found.)
Peter Balding (2010)	Stephen Evans (2006)	Nick Laurence (2015)	Michael Richardson (2006)
Dan Beard (2004)	Ray Fargie (1993)	Matthew Leppard (2009)	Linton Roe (2000)
Gary Best (1994)	Rob Findlay (2007)	Richard Leslie (2002)	Greg Russo (1999)
Anthony Black (1998)	Lloyd Fisk (2003)	Stephen Luckman (1992)	John Russo (Found.)
Michael Blair (2013)	David Flegg (1997) †	Andrew Malcolm (2002)	Paul Saville (Found.)
Michael Boss (2011)	Rob Frampton (1999)	Wes Mann (1999)	Rowan Sawers (Found.)
Alan Brewer (1996)	Joy Gelly (2005)	Shane Mason (2003)	Graeme Scherger (1992)
Graeme Brewer (1993)	Stephen Gloag (2005)	Dean Maxwell (1995)	Colin Segota (1996)
Tristan Burgess (2013)	Darren Goldspink (1993)	Peter McDonald (1998)	Roger Selwood (1992)
Keith Callaghan (1997)	Peter Gonis (2005)	Anton McKernan (1993)	Michael Sexton (1998)
Peter Cameron (Found.)	Doug Gourlay (1994)	Scott McLaren (1999)	Bryan Sheehan (1993)
Mark Canning (2000)	Doug Gower (1993)	Richard Mills (2013)	Michael Sneddon (Found.)
Peter Carey (1992)	Ian Green (1993)	Chris Mitchell (Found.)	Chris Snell (2003)
Brendan Carland (Found.)	John Hall (1997)	David Mitchell (Found.)	Harry Stamatopoulos (2003)
Barry Carmichael (Found.)	Michael Hammond (2003)	Kevin Mitchell (2006)	Justin Stephenson (2001)
Geoff Caulfield (1995)	Lindsay Hardman (2000)	Geoff Morrow (Found.)*	Steven Stirling (1998)
Craig Clark (1996)	Shane Harris (1992)	Geoff Mowat (1992)	Brad Strachan (2000)
Andrew Clifton (2005)	Darren Holt (2003)	Peter Nastasi (2004)	Terry Suitryk (1993)
Andrew Coates (1994)	Colin Hood (1997)	Ben Naughtin (2008)	Phil Sutton (Found.)
Allan Cook (1993)	David Howlett (Found.)	John O'Leary (1993)	Simon Tursi (2008)
Graham Danne (Found.)*	David Humphries (2001)	Malcolm Owen (1993)	James Van Beek (1994)
Russell Davidson (2000)	Anthony Hunter (2014)*	Laurie Page (1994)	Jason Venkataya (2005)
Rod Davies (1995)	Steele Irish (2007)	Brian Philp (1994)*	Michael Viney (1993)
Andrew Dempster (2001)	Ben James (2006)	Steven Piperno (2015)	Matthew Vitiritti (2000)
Greg Denison (2012)	Michael Jennings (2010)	Mark Powell (1998)	Phil Watson (1993)
Frank Dicosmo (2006)	Leigh Keen (Found.)	Mark Prince (1993)	Andrew Wheeler (1998)
David Dixon (2004)	Peter Kelly (1996) †	Doug Purss (Found.)	Graeme Williams (Found.)
Mikel Donsen (1993)			Adam Wojcik (2007)

Found. = Foundation life member. * = deceased. † = Special Award recipient



Social report



Mini-Olympics

On Thursday 3 March the VFUA held the annual Mini-Olympics and this year we witnessed the senior boundary umpires secure the Paul Anderson Shield. The weather played its role with the sun out on what proved to be a beautiful Melbourne night.

Restrictions on the use of the track saw the first ever indoor start to the night. The pushups and situps played out in front of a large crowd in the change rooms with development goal umpire Kirsty Lord impressing early and easily winning the sit-ups. As always the 4 x 200m relay was hotly contested but the Development Field took out the race from a close second Senior Boundary and third-placed Development Boundary. The race was fierce with a slight clash in the final leg between Senior and Development Field, causing a baton drop.

Once again the soccer was a big hit for everyone with the field umpires taking out the event on the back of some clinical finishing by Thomas Chrystie. The boundary throw in contest proved that the skill is not as easy as it looks with a number of missed throws from the field and goal umpires resulting in boundaries taking out the title. The bouncing contest was the final event of the night and saw a tight contest. The senior goalies rose above the pressure to take out the event without missing a bounce.

As the numbers were slowly crunched to determine the winning team, President Michael Curtis presented the Anderson family with flowers and thanked them for their ongoing support to the association, in particular the great night that can be shared amongst all members and the Anderson family, in memory of

Paul Anderson who tragically passed away in 2001 fighting cancer. This year's event raised \$1,480 for the Victorian Cancer Council.

Following the announcement of the victors Senior Boundary Track Representative Ryan O'Shea accepted the 2016 Paul Anderson Shield, and impressed all in attendance with his victory speech.

Of course, the Mini-Olympics is about more than just a night of fun and games. The VFUA would therefore like to acknowledge Cam and Peter for allowing the event to be held, the executive team for staging the event, the trainers for assisting with the BBQ, the umpires for their generosity and great spirit, Leigh Keen for scoring, Kym Brockhoff for running the events and not least, the Anderson family, whose commitment to attend each year makes the event worthwhile.

Life members' dinner

The VFUA's annual life members' dinner was held on Sunday 29 May at the Mail Exchange Hotel.

One of the most anticipated events on the social calendar, the dinner provides the VFUA with an opportunity to continue to recognise the contribution of our most esteemed members. It is always a great opportunity to discover what old friends are up to, with most still retaining a connection to umpiring in some form or another. Conversation more often than not found its way to footy – with discussions ranging from the state of the game today, to tales of yesteryear.

The group also noted the tragic passing of VFL field umpire observer Greg Sidebottom earlier this year. Greg's contribution to both umpiring and the careers of VFUA members was considerable, and he will be sorely missed.

The formal side of the evening included an update on the current operation of the VFUA as well as the induction of two new life members by President Michael Curtis. Steve Piperno and Nick Laurence were both presented with honorary life membership recognising their contributions to the VFUA over a number of years, all of which are documented in their life membership nominations on page 8.

Steve and Nick are both thoroughly deserving of this recognition, and the VFUA wishes both of our new life members all the best as they continue on their umpiring journey.

The VFUA would like to thank both the Mail Exchange Hotel and our fantastic life members for an excellent evening, and we are looking forward to our next dinner in 2017!

Lawn bowls day

Sunday 3 April, dawned warm and sunny perfect conditions to head to the Fitzroy Gardens to enjoy a cheeky snag and a bowl with your fellow VFUA members at the 2016 VFUA lawn bowls day. And that's just what 31 members did.

An improvement on last year's attendance, it was a picturesque day of low-key banter with an abundance of good company. With good representation from all disciplines, people came from far and wide. It was quite literally on for young and old with El Presidente Michael Curtis and Anna bringing their little ones along as did Michael Blair.

Organisers Tyler Hankinson and Patrick Burns were cooking up an absolute storm on the barbie, with help from Jackson Griffiths, so there was plenty to go round. After labouring over the hot six-burner BBQ, it was time for a little competition, a 'between the jacks' challenge. Two jacks first set up the regulation 6.4m apart and contestants required to put the bowl between them. As the gap narrowed players fell away one by one.

Timmy Carlos looked strong and I'm not referring to the countless hours he spends working on his biceps. But seemingly out of nowhere, someone who was thought to have been knocked in the second round, Michael Blair, with baby Hannah in hand took away the win while simultaneously earning a "Father of the Year" nomination.

All in all, the day itself was a success. The VFUA wishes to thank all who made it possible and the members who came down, definitely not a bad way to kick off the year.

Golf day

The annual VFUA golf day teed off on Sunday 24 May at the Ivanhoe golf course. The weather turned it on and produced a cracking day for a hit. For some, egos were on the line and winning was everything. For most, simply making contact with the golf ball and not losing it over the fence was success enough.

The format was two-man Ambrose. This involved pairing up and playing off whoever had the 'best hit' out of the two. Luckily for Daniel Philp, he was paired up with Tristan Burgess who certainly knows his way around a golf course. Some chose their pairs wisely, such as the experienced duo of Thomas Chrystie and newcomer Aaron Langdon. Their master plan was somewhat ruined, however, after they found out they would be teeing off with the worst golfers in the VFUA – the combination of Lukes; Richardson and McIlroy, who were more interested in how fast the golf cart could go than their golf shots. It wasn't all bad, with the Luke



duo taking out the 'best (worst?) dressed' prize at the end of the day. A controversial result as rumour has it that Richo just wore his normal Sunday afternoon attire.

The likes of Matthew Young, the Main/Maine duo, and Chrystie/Langdon combination appeared to be the best hitters on the day, but none could outclass VFUA life member John Hall, who took it to the young fellas and won the 'closest to the pin' competition on the 4th hole.

After three hours, nine holes, and a few mishaps including Jarryd Barry's wallet (which was conveniently found in Daniel Butcher's back pocket after 30 minutes of searching), the group of 35 retired to the club house for a well-deserved feed, drink and to witness the legendary Jamie Grindal umpire his 150th on Channel 7.

The announcement of the winning combination wrapped up the formalities, with Damien Main and Joshua Maine taking out the win over Chrystie and Langdon. Both pairs finished on 32.5, but a strong finish from the Main(e) duo saw them take the win on count back.

Thanks go to John Howorth for organising the day. Everything ran flawlessly and from all accounts everybody had a great time. Get your name down for the 2017 VFUA golf day.

Trivia night

Do you know the six tallest currently listed AFL players? How about the first team to win three consecutive premierships? Sixty umpires took on the challenge at the VFUA trivia night on Saturday 18 June at Cooper's Inn.

After ten rounds of footy, music, general knowledge, family feud and cryptic puzzles, it was a very close, tough-fought competition. The lead switched several times through the night (unlike the dull footy playing in the background - Freo vs. Power & Australia vs. England in the rugby).

There was plenty of smack talk from the goal umpires. But ultimately it was the field umpires that came out on top. First prize went to the development field team Turner 53. Second prize went to the senior field Juiced Life team and third prize went to the senior goal umpires. Unofficial prizes: most drinks - Luke McIlroy; most confused - Leigh Keen (on winning various technological gadgets).

Honourable mentions to the raffle prize winners Daniel Butcher and Leigh Keen. A dishonourable mention to Yippy Wong for his attempts to sell a chocolate bar. I doubt anyone in the room would have eaten the chocolate afterwards, but there'll be queues out the door for his next stand-up gig.

Cooper's Inn was an excellent venue providing space, screens, and most importantly, up to scratch parmas. Big thanks to Trivia master Tony Hales for running the night and to all the sponsors and individuals who donated prizes - \$850 was raised for the end of season function! And finally a shout out to the VFUA social crew of Tyler Hankinson and Pat Burns for organising another fantastic trivia night!

Presidents' Dinner

Sunday 14 August saw the gathering of former VFUA presidents at the fifth biennial Presidents' Dinner. This year the event was held at L'altro Mondo restaurant, Albert Park.

A good turnout of both presidents and current Executive members meant space was at a premium but created a vibrant atmosphere where old acquaintances were renewed and memories shared among the 12 former presidents: Steven Stirling (2000), Chris Snell (2001-02), John Russo (1993), Steven Piperno (2014), Russell Davidson (1999), Greg Russo (1998), Rob Findlay (2006-07), Greg Kennedy (1996), Richard Mills (2010-11), Adam Wojcik (2008) and Daniel Butcher (2015).

In the absence of 2016 VFUA President Michael Curtis, immediate past President Daniel Butcher introduced Executive Officer Peter Kelly who laid out various aspects of association affairs.

From the positive 100% membership and the beginnings of partnerships with different companies to the disappointing difficulties around the association's relationship with AFL Victoria and recent industrial issues.

Anthony Black responded on behalf of the presidents expressing their thanks for the opportunity to remain involved and providing best wishes for on-going activities.

The dinner gives the current Executive a chance to chat with those who have held offices before them and perhaps glean some insight into where the association has come from in an administrative sense and conversely it gives a great chance for the presidents to get an idea of where the VFUA is going.

An indication of the importance the former presidents place on their involvement in umpiring is that almost without exception they are or were involved in some sort of umpiring or football commitment well after their direct involvement at VFL or VFUA level - although Richard Mills is still waiting for any post-retirement offers.

Our thanks go to the staff at L'altro Mondo and to the presidents for their on-going support.

VFUA Poker Night

On the 27 August the Cooper's Inn played host to the second annual VFUA poker night. A big crowd was in attendance to determine who was the finest umpire on the felt, and also to raise funds for the end of year grand final after-party and the VFUA ball.

After a quick tutorial the night kicked off and the bluffs and banter took over. After nearly two hours of play the field was dwindled down to just ten players who were left to compete for an exciting array of prizes, the highlight of which was a trip for two to Bali!

The final table presented an eclectic mix of characters; with life members, goal, boundary and field umpires all represented. After some tense hands and heartbreaking eliminations, the night came down to a battle between Heath Ryan and WRFL boundary umpire Amador Bermejo.

Despite sporting one of the finest leather jackets ever seen on Exhibition Street, Ryan was unable to overcome his younger opponent, with Amador taking home the Bali trip and the coveted VFUA Poker Night champions trophy.

- 1st - Amador Bermejo (Guest)
- 2nd - Heath Ryan (F)
- 3rd - James Davey (F)

The VFUA would like to thank all members who attended the night, especially those who brought guests. In addition, we would like to thank Paul and the team at Poker Deluxe who facilitated a great evening.

VFL grand final after party

Berth was the new venue for the post-VFL grand final function. A hop, skip and/or stagger from Etihad Stadium the space was ideal and had a terrific outlook over the Dockland precinct. Umpires, trainers, friends and, eventually, the umpire coaches celebrated a successful day.

The drawing of the Special Effort is always a raucous highlight of the evening. Congratulations go to Daniel Philp on taking out this year's raffle.

Whether it was the beginning of a big night for some or the end of a long day for others the event continues to grow and we all look forward to Grand Final Day 2017.

VFUA ball

The annual VFUA ball was held at the Lincoln of Toorak on 29 September. Those in attendance were fortunate enough to be hosted by Jason Bennett of Channel 7 who played significant role in the broadcasting of VFL football throughout the year. As is often the case on this night, the room was abuzz with excitement as season 2016 finally came to a close. It was great to see so many umpires from all three disciplines enjoying themselves with family, partners and friends. If anyone needed a reminder as to how tight knit the VFUA is, then this night was a prime example.

Whilst we had the privilege of hearing from this year's VFL grand finalists, the highlight for many in the room was listening to the humble words of Peter Balding. The way in which Peter described his journey through umpiring was not only inspiring but could be related to by so many other umpires. As touched upon by Steve Piperno, Peter exhibited strong leadership and unrivalled professionalism throughout his career. His commitment to umpiring was second to none yet he still managed to always stay true to his family and friends. There is no doubt that with his retirement, Peter leaves a great legacy as an umpire who constantly strived for success and made the most of everything available to him.

As the night unfolded, footage from the VFL grand final after party was shown which provided a laugh for everyone in the room. As expected, many umpires were enjoying themselves a little too much that night and shared a few things we didn't need to hear! From there the formal proceedings of the night came to an end and it was great to see everyone huddled up on the dance floor for the final song of the night.

Special thanks must go to Daniel Butcher and his team for their tireless work to ensure the night flowed smoothly without interruption and it would be remiss not to mention the way in which the room was beautifully decorated to suit the casino theme.



Squad reports

Senior goal umpires

Three fresh new faces cemented their places in the Super Squad and an umpiring legend wrote himself into the record books and retired on a grand final.

Meanwhile, one of our best was put to the ultimate test with a season-ending injury (and showed what a true champ he is rocking up to training for the rest of the season to support the group). Injuries don't have to be career-ending though – as Maclure's impressive comeback has showed.

There could hardly have been a hotter contest for most improved this year with both Matts, Doyley and Sparkles all in the mix (to name only a few) – but it was Edwards who took the cake (ah, if only there was cake...). Meanwhile, Doyley landed the much-coveted Coach's Favourite award and Maclure did ok with the VFL GF, but it was Sparkles who earned the ultimate bragging rights as MVP in the goal umpire football match for the second year running.

One umpire spent the year on the rather elaborate, masochistic quest of running all of Melbourne's train routes. New records were broken for most outrageous umpiring conditions (Sunday night anyone?). #itiswhatitis became #TeamYann. And the squad managed yet another unmemorable mini-Olympics performance...

But it wasn't all highs. 2016 took umpire abuse to a whole new level – thanks to the league rather than the crowd #GoalieLivesMatter. And goal umpiring accreditation now consists of being 'a bloody good bloke' + the worm. Spirits and self-respect floundered along with a late campaign to get D-Rod elected to the leadership group.

Turning to the key stats of season 2016...

Home Ground Advantages

Box Hill Battler: Wong (4)

Count of Coburg: Standfield (3)

Frankston's Flagwaver: Leonard (3)

King of Kardinia: Trotts (3)

Port Melbourne Punter: Edwards (4)

Prince of Preston: Forner (4)

Sandringham Stalwart: Krykou (4)

Werribee Warrior: Blairy (4)

Williamstown Wanderer: Griffiths (3)

Windy Hill Watchman: Milich (3)

Popular pairings

1. Milich and Walsh (5)

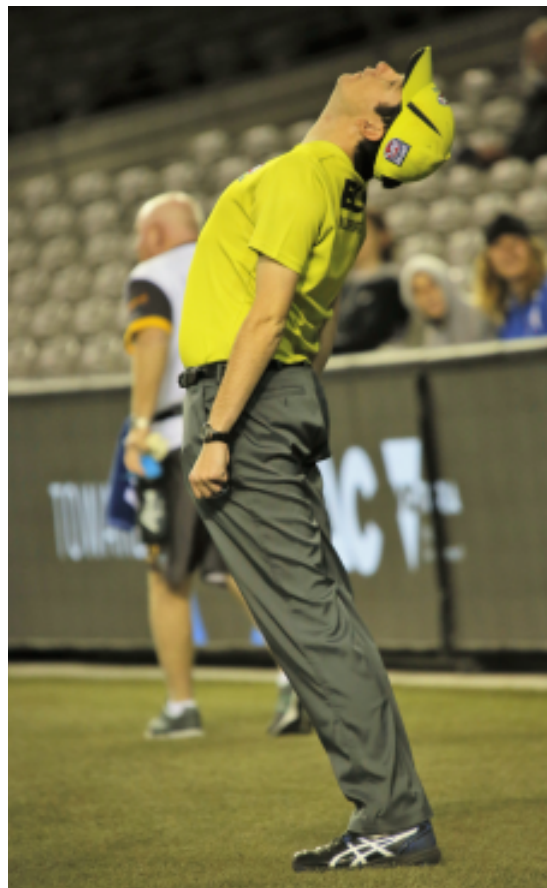
2. Balding and Wong (4)

3. Leonard and Jones (4)

4. Benwell and Doyle (4)

5. Maclure and Trotts (4)

At the end of season ball it was PB who got the last word – telling us we're all selfish and telling Crystal "it's over" (*gasp*). Well that's a wrap. Obama out.



Development goal umpires

Wowee! Season 2016 has flown by, it only seems like yesterday we were sweating it out at Victoria Park in searing heat and dodging lightning strikes, only to be directed off the track by Coach Leigh Keen deeming it too dangerous. To be honest, marking a stab-pass from Player to Umpire Pathway participant David Roden was more of an OH&S issue than a little lightning, ouch!

From the 2015 squad, we congratulated the promotion of three members joining the Senior Squad for 2016, a great achievement after just one season. Together with David Roden's participation, we welcomed twelve new umpires to the Development Goal squad in 2016, joining the remaining crew from the season prior, making a panel of 19 umpires.

It was a season that took its toll in more ways than one, umpire promotion went to a whole new level; Peter Baldry did his best sushi impression by slicing himself on an exposed pipe at the Bob Rose Stand end; the group had a poor showing at the Mini Olympics including a terrible final baton change in the relay that cost the Dev Goalies a surprise victory. Yippy was constantly dodging footys trying not to get hit while Brendan Moloney was just trying to remember his game day trousers.

The one thing that kept the group together was the thing that we all love the most, footy! Not just umpiring the best game in the world, but also playing it. The annual Goal Umpire's Footy Game was again a huge highlight for everyone, with the Development Squad Lightning handing the Senior Squad Dragons an old fashioned pasting. After a slow start, a new game plan was put in to action with immediate impact, Brett was fantastic in the ruck and the mid-zone ran riot. Julian and Princey chimed in with a number of majors and Milesy always looked dangerous up forward with numerous score assists and two goals. The backs were the key to victory though, repelling almost every forward entry by the Dragons, keeping them almost goalless for the second half, a great team effort all round.

A number of umpiring related highlights were also well-earned throughout the season and at finals time, congratulations to the umpires listed in the appointments below:

- Dreamtime Curtain Raiser: Pat Dwyer, Brendan Moloney
- National U16s Champs: Pat Dwyer, Luke Monea
- Herald Sun Shield GF: James Richardson, Brendan Moloney
- Girls Herald Sun Shield GF: Nick Bridges, Yippy Wong
- TAC Cup Finals: Yippy Wong, Pat Dwyer, James Richardson, Brendan Moloney, Nick Bridges, John Varker



- Women's Exhibition Match: Kelly Tellam, Luke Monea
- NAB Rising Stars Match: John Varker, Luke Monea

A terrific season was capped off by announcing Pat Dwyer as best first year umpire, Pat had an outstanding season and was deservedly rewarded for his efforts.

A big thank you to Leigh Keen and the coaching panel for their guidance, patience and words of wisdom throughout the season, and to the observers who also provide their time and guidance. Lastly, a massive thanks to all the Goalies for your patience, friendship and efforts in season 2016, enjoy the off-season and let's look forward to a productive, joyful and successful 2017.

Senior boundary umpires

Tuesday 12 January saw the start of the 2016 preseason with Scotty straight away implementing some longer sessions to find out who had put in the work over the offseason! It was Leigh Buwalda who appeared to have had a big preseason evidenced by his 4km time trial win at the Collingwood athletics track.

With the boundary umpires putting in countless kilometres, many were looking forward to a lighter night at training and this came in the form of the Mini Olympics. This is not to say that the senior boundary squad took it easy by any means! There was a lot at stake with many engaging in a war of words with other coaches and umpires from different disciplines; it was time to walk the talk. On what was a great night in raising money for the Cancer Council in honour of the Anderson family, the senior boundary group were good enough to take out first place, a feat that hadn't been achieved by the group in years! It was a proud moment for all involved particularly Andrew Leggo (captain) and Ryan O'Shea (track representative).

The following boundary umpires were nominated onto the senior list for 2016:

- Anthony Laughton
- Ashley Hawkes
- Curtis De Witt
- Dan Phyland
- Liam Pain
- Patrick Jackson

Whilst not nominated to the senior list, the following boundary umpires made their senior debuts in 2016:

- Blake Anderson (first year)
- Chris Williams (first year)
- Patrick Damato
- Kyle Fisher





The end of season 2015 saw Lachlan Rayner nominated to the AFL and all his fellow umpires at the VFL were ecstatic to see him debut in round 1 on the MCG for Melbourne vs GWS. It was an experience Lachlan described to the VFL group as a highlight of his career and the moment in which it really set in that he had achieved his goal of AFL umpiring.

There were significant milestones reached within the VFL group however, as Daniel Pieper and Ben Macdonald notched up 150 games together in the latter part of the year. Whilst Nick Laurence went onto achieve life membership with 175 games. Ben Macdonald also represented the group with great pride when officiating in the state game between Victoria and South Australia at Adelaide Oval.

Season 2016 was one that will go down as a year in which the boundary umpires really evolved into a diverse list that was able to build upon a strong existing culture and improve at every opportunity. Many thanks must go to Matthew Vitiritti and Jeff Thompson. Jeff leaves us this year after years of service to the VFL Umpiring Department. The impact he has had on many careers often goes unrecognised but for those who have had the privilege of being coached by "Thommo", he is often the person attributed to their vast improvement. So that's it for 2016, we look forward to a return to the BLK centre in mid-January 2017.

Field umpires

Pre-season started with the normal confusion of complex training drills and a heap of new names to remember with some 40+ invite for trial umpires in white singlets.

During pre-season, the Senior Squad was predicted to remain relatively unchanged as there were only three from season 2015 who retired; Richard Mills, Nick Finch and Matt Leppard. Those who predicted that AIS scholarship holder Tom Chrystie, following his high flying year of development of 2015, would be promoted to the AFL list as a rookie were sadly mistaken. Instead, these spots went to Daniel Butcher and Shane Stewart.

However those who predicted a small turnover in the Senior Squad were right, as there were only three new additions in 2016; Leighton Rowe (promoted from the development squad), Heath Ryan (returned from AFL) and Rob Young (returned from injury). Many were surprised that Cameron Dore did not get a spot on the list when announced in March however this was quickly rectified when he took Jarryd Barry's spot in the seniors mid year.



The Development Squad was increased to 39 umpires. This was due to the fact VFL umpires were to cover the Victorian Women's Football League matches and all AFL Vic Development League and TAC Cup matches were to have three field umpires per match.

The new umpires to join the VFL in 2016 were: Jack Abrehart, Tom Abrehart, Peter Bailes, Matthew Clinton, Cai Davies, Ben Dickson, Cameron Dore, James Downing, Tom Downs, Nick Jankovskis, Jarryd Kingsbury, Zac Martin, Annie Mirabile, Daniel Patrick, Brenton Pearson, Michael Pell, Luke Porter, Paul Rebaschini, Jacob Rockwell and Nathan Toner. Ben Manassah was also down for three weeks. Make sure you all remember these names; there are a number of names in here who will become VWFL Hall of Fame members in years to come. Whilst this group does not have a great deal of umpiring ability, they do have one thing in common..."the love of the game"

By the time round 1 came around, many of the umpiring nerds loved the fact we had new uniforms courtesy of BLK. The putrid orange outfits were retired after the practice games and the new lime green allowed us to look a lot more like the AFL umpires – there were even suggestions several umpires were telling their family and friends they were "AFL umpires" and some even wore the tracksuits to work looking for more attention.

2016 saw a new arrangement for our fitness coaching with collaboration between Jake Stack (joining us from the AFL Umpiring Department) and the evergreen Kym Brockhoff. Surprisingly, Zac Martin was not offered a spot as fitness coach however, with the launch of his new Facebook Page (Zac Martin Fitness), we are sure this will change in 2017.

2016 also saw a new arrangement within the Development Squad which saw Jarrod Waight and Brent Pawley take over. With Jarrod's teaching background and Brent's really average haircuts, scores on the Development Squad had never been lower.

Wellness data questionnaires on a Tuesday became the norm, with a self-assessment of a score from 1 – 5 required to be sent to Stacky each week (some only realized they had the rankings in reverse by the end of the season).

Training was well planned out, but often short and concise due to council restrictions limiting access to the ground.

The days of local dog owners being too scared to walk their pooches on the hollowed turf of the Buffalo Centre (courtesy of former Director of Umpiring) have well and truly passed. Canine owners have made up for lost time by instructing their pets to desecrate the oval, and this was an issue throughout the whole season.

Coaching sessions were split between Tuesday



(Development Squad) and Thursday (Senior Squad) which often presented the opportunity for the guys on Thursday to get a heads up courtesy of a Daniel Philp slip up.

The group as a whole really bonded in season 2016. It didn't matter if you were top of the senior squad in Hayden Gavine or bottom of the development squad; everyone just clicked and could eat each other's cheese and bacon rolls.

To those who are going onto bigger and better things in 2017 (Cameron Dore will no doubt be an AFL rookie), we wish you the very best of luck. Never forget where you came from. To everyone else, we look forward to seeing you down at the BLK Centre in early January for the first ADF test of season 2017!

Development boundary

2016 has finally come to a close and overall it was a pretty successful year for the Dev. crew, with plenty of great opportunities arising for development umpires during the year.

Unfortunately it wasn't a great start to the year however. We said goodbye to some absolute champs. The great man Jacob Murrells, Beer Mile king Charlie Blanch, Lachie Beamish, Shannessy Adams and Kyle Griffin unfortunately all withdrew from the squad early in the season.

Being under-manned didn't stop the Dev. Squad cleaning up during the year in our scratch matches versus the Senior Squad. With a potent forward line of Nick Phillips and Lewis Spiker (a combo similar to Walker and Betts) and the endless, lace out supply from "Mirrors", Blake Anderson, the Dev. Squad were a tough bunch to knock off. The Senior Squad boys managed to claim a few wins along the way, but overall I'm sure the Dev. Squad had the upper hand.

All in all, it was played in good spirit most of the time, and the Mirrors vs Squeak matchup was one for the ages.

We were lucky enough to have a number of Development Squad boundaries debut in the seniors toward the end of the year. A huge shout out to those guys, Kyle Fisher, Lewis Spiker, Lachlan Harty, Patty Damato, Blake Anderson and Chris Williams.

Also to Chris Williams, massive congratulations on winning the Best First Year Boundary Umpire award. Great achievement, thoroughly deserved mate.

A few other shout outs to guys and girls who had the opportunity to run in special games outside of regular season games.

Brenton Dickson, Daniel Ebbott and Lachlan Harty, were lucky enough to umpire the Herald Sun Shield final on the MCG before the Collingwood v West Coast match. Dicko also was selected to do the Young Guns game on Prelim final day with Mitch Jones and Trent Bowes.

Jonesey was the surprise inclusion after “tearing his quad” to bits during a routine 5-star kicking drill. He somehow managed to turn a four week injury into a one week injury. Love to know the secret Mitch!

Bowesey managed to finish the year off real strong after a small hiccup earlier in the year at Williamstown. Launched a huge throw, height was good, distance was good... direction was a bit of a problem though. Threw it into the crowd. All good Trent, we’ve all been there!

The women’s All-Star game at Whitten Oval was a huge success for all involved and we were well represented there. Jaymee Guy, Mel Sambrooks and Jesse Wilkie absolutely killed it. Just like your hairdresser Wilks, who nailed the haircut for your national TV debut. Over a million people tuned in to see that haircut.

Prior to that was a Youth Girls game, which Paul Parker, Shaun Weise and Cameron Brick umpired.

Mel Sambrooks and Chris Williams also got some time on the ‘G, umpiring the Melbourne vs Brisbane women’s game. Willo was the only male on the field - good ratios!

Mirrors Anderson and Pat Damato got to travel up to the GC to umpire the National Under 16’s championships. Great effort boys, and Mirrors, I’m sure a better effort than your drinking efforts that weekend #GC17.

Lastly, on grand final eve was the Under 18’s all stars match at Punt Road. Well done to Harry Green, Josh Blain and Jake D’Angelo for getting that gig and doing a great job!

Overall a great year from the Dev. Squad, plenty of friendships have been made, and I’m sure everyone will come back bigger and better next year. Especially Dan Urbans who I’m sure has a big offseason of bulking planned.

On a final note, it is with great sadness that we say goodbye to the great man Jeff Thompson as development coach. Always up for a chat, and always flying the flag for his Development crew, enjoy retirement Thommo!





Most Improved - Senior Squad

	Field	Boundary	Goal
1992	B.Allen	T.Anderson	C.Clark
1993	S.McLaren	M.Vitiritti	G.Billing
1994	K.Nicholls	S.Williamson	D.Humphries
1995	V.Sercia	S.Jansen	M.Harrison
1996	T.Shearer	S.Davies	M.Russell
1997	W.Mann	R.Frampton	A.Galea
1998	G.Twitt	S.Nathan	C.Evans
1999	S.Jeffery	M.Vitiritti	D.Dixon
2000	A.Davis	G.Boland	P.Gonis
2001	C.Donlon	S.Smith	D.Flegg
2002	C.Kamolins	-	C.Appleton
2003	M.Stevic	-	A.Galea
2004	R.Findlay	-	P.Nastasi
2005	J.Armstrong	-	L.Walker
	A.Mitchell		
2006	T.McCarthy	-	J.Venkataya
2007	B.Ritchie	-	-
2008	R.Mills	S.Jones	R.Thwaites
2009	A.Mitchell	T.Morrison	B.James
2010	M.Curtis	M.Tomkins	A.Kyrkou
2011	B.Hosking	J.Andrews	M.Maclure
2012	T.Carlos	T.Lougoon	C.Wong
2013	R.O'Gorman	J.Mather	S.Walsh
2014	P.Burns	A.Leggo	S.Plumridge
2015	H.Gavine	L.Buwalda	C.Leonard
2016	J.Howorth	D.Main	M.Edwards

Frank Leverett Shield

Best first year umpire



1992	Alan Letson	2009	Brendan Hosking
1993	Adam Skidmore	2010	Luke White
1994	Steven Hanley	2011	Daniel Butcher
1995	Adam Bastin	2012	Hayden Gavine
1996	Gordon Muir	2013	Matthew Dervan
1997	Glenn Guzzo	2014	Sam Stagg
1998	Matthew Tippet	2015	Leighton Rowe
1999	Matt Stevic	2016	Cameron Dore
2000	John Neaven		
2001	Luke Walker		
2002	Rob Haala		
2003	Neil Woods		
2004	Matthew Lafite		
2005	Jacob Mollison		
2006	Chris Gordon		
2007	Graham Bergroth		
2008	Matt Maclure		

Best first year field umpire

2012	Hayden Gavine
2013	Pat Burns
2014	John Howorth
2015	Leighton Rowe
2016	Cameron Dore

Best first year goal umpire

2012	Sam Walsh
2013	Matthew Dervan
2014	Kate Griffiths
2015	Cameron Milich
2015	Brad Standfield
2016	Pat Dwyer



Best first year boundary umpire

2012	Lachlan Rayner
2013	Kieran Ferguson
2014	Sam Stagg
2015	David Park
2016	Chris Williams

John Russo Trophy

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

Daniel Butcher

In only his second year on the senior panel, Daniel had a very successful year officiating in 21 VFL matches, including 3 VFL finals and the 2015 VFL Grand Final. Daniel's improvement and consistency during the year was acknowledged with the 2015 AFL Victoria Field Umpire of the Year award.

Season 2012 was his first year as part of the executive of the VFUA. That year he served as a track representative and then communications officer (2013), vice-president (2014) and took over as president in 2015.

As the VFUA President, Daniel took to his role with great enthusiasm. In addition to providing leadership and direction to the association, he was instrumental in driving cultural change by providing a more targeted and enjoyable social program. This resulted in three additional events for members this year, all successful and profitable. He also provided oversight to the grand final working party which provided two very successful grand final functions all whilst umpiring VFL finals and the grand final itself.

Daniel provided leadership during the year in the dispute between the VFL senior field umpires and AFL Victoria. This was made all the more difficult given the executive officer was overseas requiring Daniel to communicate via emails and Skype in an attempt to resolve the issue. To Daniel's credit a compromise was reached and industrial action averted. He also oversaw the launching of a new VFUA website, improved usage of technology for communicating with members and life members and the conducting of the VFUA biennial survey.

Daniel has again proven that you can get involved in association affairs whilst enjoying on-field success. As a recipient of the John Russo Trophy in 2012 he remains an invaluable asset to the VFUA and along with a successful year on field a worthy recipient of this award in 2015.

Lachlan Rayner

Lachlan Rayner was appointed to the VFUA Executive Committee in 2015 as senior boundary umpire track representative. He began his umpiring career with AFL Victoria in 2012 and was appointed to the VFL Senior Boundary Squad in 2013.

In only his first year on the Executive, Lachlan has proven his capacity to balance on-field performance with his role as track representative. On field, he enjoyed a successful year officiating in 18 VFL games including 3 senior finals and the 2015 VFL Grand Final. He was also named as Boundary Umpire of the Year for 2015.

To date, Lachlan has officiated in 52 VFL, 5 AFL Development and 14 TAC cup games.

As track representative, Lachlan's role was to keep boundary umpires informed on association affairs whilst encouraging their involvement in social functions and grand final events. Lachlan's hard work and enthusiasm was rewarded with boundary umpires showing an improved attendance at social functions and for the first time in a long time, 60 boundary umpires and their partners attending the grand final ball. He also provided valuable input to the VFUA planning process, provided thoughtful input to issues that arose during the year and represented boundary umpires in a professional and timely manner.

Lachlan did an excellent job keeping members informed whilst motivating boundary umpires to attend social and grand final functions. This, along with a successful year on-field makes Lachlan a worthy recipient of the John Russo Trophy for 2015.

John Russo Trophy recipients

1997	R.Davidson	2006	D.Flegg
1998	D.Flegg	2008	S.Gloag
1999	A.Black	2010	R.Mills
2001	C.Snell	2012	D.Butcher
2003	D.Wilson	2013	M.Curtis
2004	R.Findlay	2014	S.Piperno
2005	J.Armstrong	2015	D.Butcher
2005	A.Wojcik	2015	L.Rayner



2016 milestones

175 VFL matches

Nick Laurence	Saturday, 30 July 2016	Collingwood v. Geelong (Victoria Park)
---------------	------------------------	----------------------------------------

150 VFL matches

Jamie Grindal	Sunday, 24 April 2016	Collingwood v. Essendon (Victoria Park)
Andrew Mitchell	Saturday, 7 May 2016	Collingwood v. Sandringham (Olympic Park)
Dean Jones	Sunday, 3 July 2016	Richmond v. Casey (Punt Road)
Daniel Pieper	Saturday, 27 August 2016	Richmond v. Coburg (Punt Road)
Ben Macdonald	Saturday, 27 August 2016	Richmond v. Coburg (Punt Road)

100 VFL matches

Dylan Benwell	Sunday, 28 August 2016	Footscray v. Collingwood (Whitten Oval)
---------------	------------------------	-----------------------------------------

50 VFL matches

Chris Doyle	Sunday, 10 April 2016	Williamstown v. Richmond (Williamstown)
Hayden Gavine	Friday, 15 April 2016	Geelong v. Northern Blues (Kardinia Park)
Daniel Butcher	Saturday, 16 April 2016	Port Melbourne v. Coburg (Port Melbourne)
Callum Leonard	Friday, 22 April 2016	North Ballarat v. Geelong (North Ballarat)
Jarryd Barry	Saturday, 4 June 2016	Werribee v. Collingwood (Werribee)
Jerome Rowcroft	Saturday, 25 June 2016	Northern Blues v. Sandringham (Preston)
Travis Taylor	Sunday, 3 July 2016	Richmond v. Casey (Punt Road)
Andrew Heffernan	Saturday, 16 July 2016	Geelong v. Werribee (Kardinia Park)
Patrick Burns	Saturday, 27 August 2016	Footscray v. Collingwood (Whitten Oval)

First VFL match

Cam Milich	Saturday, 9 April 2016	Essendon v. Werribee (Windy Hill)
Brad Standfield	Saturday, 9 April 2016	Casey v. Frankston (Casey Fields)
Daniel Phyland	Sunday, 10 April 2016	Williamstown v. Richmond (Williamstown)
Josh Forner	Sunday, 10 April 2016	Footscray v. Northern Blues (Whitten Oval)
Patrick Jackson	Saturday, 30 April 2016	Northern Blues v. Collingwood (Preston)
Liam Pain	Saturday, 30 April 2016	Richmond v. Sandringham (Punt Road)
Anthony Laughton	Saturday, 7 May 2016	Port Melbourne v Richmond (Port Melbourne)
Leighton Rowe	Saturday, 14 May 2016	Williamstown v. Northern Blues (Williamstown)
Kyle Fisher	Saturday, 23 July 2016	Werribee v. North Ballarat (Werribee)
Lewis Spiker	Saturday, 30 July 2016	Footscray v. Box Hill (Whitten Oval)
Cameron Dore	Saturday, 30 July 2016	Collingwood v. Geelong (Victoria Park)
Patrick Damato	Saturday, 13 August 2016	Coburg v. Frankston (Coburg)
Lachlan Harty	Sunday, 14 August 2016	Essendon v. Williamstown (Windy Hill)
Chris Williams	Saturday, 27 August 2016	Box Hill v. Casey (Box Hill)
Blake Anderson	Saturday, 27 August 2016	Essendon v. Northern Blues (Windy Hill)

50 AFL Vic. Dev. League matches

Jamie Grindal	Sunday, 17 July 2016	Frankston v. Box Hill (Frankston)
---------------	----------------------	-----------------------------------

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		D.Humphries	P.Herrick
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	F.Dicosmo
2002	S.Grun	M.Nicholls	S.Ryan	G.Gibson	C.Morrison	A.Little	C.Appleton	D.Wilson
2003	S.Grun	S.Meredith	M.Stevic	R.Haala	S.Irish	J.Bennison	L.Walker	D.Wilson
2004	C.Donlon	C.Kamolins	D.Sully	A.Coote	M.Foster	M.Lefevre	M.Hammond	L.Fisk
2005	J.Armstrong	M.Jennings	D.Sully	I.Burrows	G.Large	M.Lefevre	M.Hammond	B.Letson
2006	J.Mollison	H.Ryan	S.Stewart	G.Large	M.Lefevre	C.Roberts	A.Clifton	B.Letson
2007	M.Jennings	J.Mollison	S.Stewart	C.Hay	G.Large	N.Woods	B.Letson	A.Wojcik
2008	R.Findlay	M.Jennings	T.Pannell	C.Gordon	S.Jones	N.Woods	P.Balding	S.Williams
2009	M.Jennings	A.Mitchell	B.Ritchie	G.Bergroth	D.Kowalski	M.Marantelli	C.Lai	B.James
2010	M.Brown	M.Leppard	B.Ritchie	D.Kowlaski	M.Marantelli	P.Tongue	A.Kyrkou	C.Lai
2011	D.Harris	B.Hosking	A.Mitchell	C.Esler	M.Jenkinson	M.Tomkins	A.Kyrkou	S.Piperno
2012	T.Burgess	S.Gleeson	D.Harris	D.Cusack	T.Lougoon	B.Macdonald	M.Craig	M.Palm
2013	S.Gleeson	R.O'Gorman	B.Ritchie	D.Cusack	T.Lougoon	J.Mather	D.Benwell	M.Craig
2014	N.Brown	J.Edwards	B.Wallace	J.Andrews	B.Elvey	J.Robertson	J.Scully	M.Dervan
2015	T.Burgess	D.Butcher	H.Gavine	N.Laurence	B.Macdonald	P.Dineen	L.Rayner	M.Dervan
2016	H.Ryan	D.Butcher	H.Gavine	N.Laurence	B.Macdonald	P.Dineen	D.Main	D.Benwell

2016 VFL Grand Final

Casey Scorpions v. Footscray Bulldogs



L-R: Dylan Benwell, Ben Macdonald, Damien Main, Hayden Gavine, Daniel Butcher, Heath Ryan, Nick Laurence, Pat Dineen, Matt Maclure.

VFL Reserves / AFL Victoria Dev. 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
2015	T.Carlos	T.Chrystie	A.Havelberg	B.Elvey	J.Rowcroft	L.Wilkie	C.Leonard	M.Maclure
2016	A.Heffernan	P.Burns	R.Young	J.Furman	S.Stagg	L.Wilke	P.Balding	B.Standfield

2016 AFL Victoria Development League Grand Final

Box Hill Hawks v. Casey Scorpions



L-R: Brad Standfield, Luke Wilke, Andrew Heffernan, Rob Young, Pat Burns, Josh Furman, Sam Stagg, Peter Balding.

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	J. Venkataya	R. Condon	
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	N.Liparota	M.Marantelli	E.Malpas
2006	T.McCarthy	R.Mills	B.Ritchie	C.Gordon	J.Robinson	P.Tongue	F.Brady
2007	T.Burgess	J.Grindal	J.Krull	G.Bergroth	S.Jones	P.Tongue	S.Williams
2008	T.Burgess	A.Mitchell	T.Saunders	D.Kowalski	M.Marantelli	S.Neal	R.Thwaites
2009	T.Burgess	D.Harris	A.Talbot	D.Card	T.Morrison	S.Neal	M.O'Donnell
2010	M.Curtis	B.Hosking	R.Young	G.Bergroth	T.Morrison	A.Masterton-Smith	M.O'Donnell
2011	N.Brown	M.Curtis	M.Oakley	J.Andrews	G.Bergroth	A.Masterton-Smith	M.O'Donnell
2012	T.Carlos	J.Edwards	H.O'Connor	B.Elvey	J.Scully	N.Steel	A.Kyrkou
2013	M.Curtis	A.Talbot	R.Young	J.Andrews	N.Laurence	J.Robertson	P.Balding
2014	P.Burns	D.Butcher	T.Chrystie	N.Laurence	B.Macdonald	L.Rayner	S.Plumridge
2015	P.Burns	J.Barry	M.Young	L.Buwalda	L.Coop	J.Robertson	A.Bell
2016	L.Rowe	C.Dore	J.Howorth	S.Blight	P.Jackson	K.Ferguson	A.Bell

2016 TAC Cup Grand Final

Murray Bushrangers v. Sandringham Dragons



L-R: Matt Edwards, Simon Blight, Pat Jackson, Cameron Dore, John Howorth, Leighton Rowe, Adam Bell, Kieran Ferguson. Chris Doyle.

2016 statistics

Field	VFL	AFLVDL	TAC	VWF
Jack Abrehart	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (8)	6 (6)
Tom Abrehart	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (8)	7 (7)
Michael Anderson	0 (0)	10 (10)	8 (21)	4 (4)
Peter Bailes	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (10)	6 (6)
Jarryd Barry	14 (56)	4 (28)	0 (23)	0 (0)
Stefan Bjelosevic	0 (0)	0 (0)	16 (24)	3 (3)
Tristan Burgess	20 (149)	0 (28)	0 (33)	0 (0)
Patrick Burns	18 (51)	2 (8)	0 (20)	0 (0)
Daniel Butcher	20 (68)	0 (21)	0 (27)	0 (0)
Tim Carlos	18 (95)	1 (26)	0 (29)	0 (0)
Ben Cheever	0 (0)	7 (7)	12 (21)	1 (1)
Thomas Chrystie	15 (45)	3 (19)	1 (26)	0 (0)
Matthew Clinton	0 (0)	0 (0)	11 (11)	8 (8)
Michael Curtis	15 (130)	5 (17)	2 (23)	0 (0)
James Davey	21 (74)	0 (12)	1 (13)	0 (0)
Cai Davies	0 (0)	0 (5)	11 (32)	8 (8)
Ben Dickson	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (8)	9 (9)
Cameron Dore	5 (5)	6 (6)	10 (10)	0 (0)
James Downing	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (10)	4 (4)
Tom Downs	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (7)	10 (10)
Jared Dyson	0 (0)	4 (43)	8 (39)	3 (3)
Hayden Gavine	22 (70)	0 (15)	0 (15)	0 (0)
Andre Gianfagna	14 (19)	3 (15)	0 (6)	0 (0)
Jamie Grindal	10 (157)	7 (54)	0 (43)	0 (0)
Tyler Hankinson	10 (33)	6 (56)	0 (27)	0 (0)
Andrew Heffernan	18 (56)	2 (9)	0 (6)	0 (0)
John Howorth	20 (27)	1 (10)	1 (12)	0 (1)
Nicholas Jankovskis	0 (0)	5 (5)	7 (7)	8 (8)
Jarryd Kingsbury	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3)	1 (1)
Michael Knight	0 (0)	12 (15)	5 (27)	2 (1)
Aaron Langdon	6 (7)	12 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Daniel Lawlor	14 (33)	4 (37)	1 (34)	0 (0)
Lucinda Lopes	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (32)	5 (4)
Zac Martin	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (5)	7 (7)
Peter McCaw	16 (26)	3 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Luke McIlroy	7 (17)	10 (30)	2 (19)	0 (0)
Annie Mirabile	0 (0)	8 (8)	11 (11)	2 (2)
Jack Murfett	0 (0)	7 (15)	8 (29)	0 (0)
Ben Nicholson	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (30)	4 (4)
Robert Parker	0 (0)	6 (12)	10 (31)	1 (1)
Daniel Patrick	0 (0)	1 (1)	11 (11)	3 (3)
Ben Pearson	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	3 (3)
Michael Pell	0 (0)	4 (4)	8 (8)	4 (4)
Daniel Philp	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (18)	6 (6)
Matthew Pongracic	0 (0)	10 (11)	6 (17)	2 (2)
Luke Porter	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (8)	7 (7)
Matthew Pryor	0 (0)	8 (15)	6 (27)	4 (4)
Nathan Quattrucci	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (12)	10 (10)
Paul Rebeschini	0 (0)	10 (10)	10 (10)	2 (2)
Luke Richardson	15 (27)	2 (14)	0 (14)	0 (1)
Ryan Robertson	0 (0)	2 (4)	10 (15)	5 (5)
Jacob Rockwell	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (7)	9 (9)
Martin Rodger	0 (0)	12 (12)	5 (17)	1 (1)
Leighton Rowe	10 (10)	5 (9)	4 (17)	0 (0)
Heath Ryan	20 (121)	1 (24)	0 (28)	0 (0)
Jack Spencer	0 (0)	9 (9)	5 (13)	2 (2)
Shane Stewart	20 (128)	0 (5)	0 (5)	0 (0)
Andrew Talbot	15 (133)	2 (18)	1 (19)	0 (0)
Nathan Toner	0 (0)	2 (2)	9 (9)	7 (7)
Libby Toovey	0 (0)	1 (1)	11 (17)	5 (5)

Field	VFL	AFLVDL	TAC	VWF
Alex Turner	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (16)	5 (5)
Gareth Verberne	1 (12)	17 (84)	0 (55)	0 (1)
Matthew Young	7 (22)	5 (7)	3 (6)	0 (0)
Robert Young	14 (79)	7 (24)	0 (20)	0 (0)

Boundary	VFL	AFLVDL	TAC
Blake Anderson	1 (1)	9 (9)	2 (2)
Brynton Ashton	14 (24)	1 (19)	0 (22)
Rory Ashton	14 (48)	1 (12)	1 (13)
Adam Bell	15 (82)	1 (28)	2 (28)
Josh Blain	0 (0)	2 (2)	10 (10)
Simon Blight	17 (28)	1 (3)	1 (7)
Trent Bowes	0 (0)	8 (8)	5 (5)
Cameron Brick	0 (0)	7 (7)	6 (6)
James Brown	0 (0)	3 (3)	7 (7)
Leigh Buwalda	11 (37)	1 (35)	2 (22)
Lawrence Coop	17 (43)	1 (20)	1 (17)
John Cooper	17 (82)	0 (11)	1 (18)
Patrick Damato	2 (2)	4 (10)	6 (11)
Jake D'Angelo	0 (0)	6 (6)	5 (5)
Curtis De Witt	11 (13)	3 (14)	0 (14)
Brenton Dickson	0 (0)	5 (5)	5 (5)
Patrick Dineen	18 (68)	0 (10)	0 (8)
Daniel Ebbott	0 (0)	5 (5)	3 (3)
Brendan Elvey	14 (135)	1 (32)	1 (22)
Kieran Ferguson	16 (46)	1 (10)	1 (12)
Kyle Fisher	2 (2)	7 (15)	4 (10)
Joshua Furman	13 (15)	2 (10)	1 (4)
Patrick Galea	0 (0)	4 (6)	10 (21)
Brendan Gherashe	10 (47)	3 (16)	1 (13)
Harry Green	0 (0)	6 (6)	6 (6)
Jaymee Guy	0 (0)	4 (8)	8 (15)
Lachlan Harty	2 (2)	5 (27)	5 (17)
Ashley Hawkes	13 (15)	3 (16)	1 (12)
Thomas Horsten	13 (24)	2 (11)	2 (11)
Stuart Huddle	0 (0)	7 (13)	4 (9)
Patrick Jackson	13 (13)	2 (2)	3 (3)
Mitchel Jones	0 (0)	4 (10)	5 (10)
Anthony Laughton	9 (9)	4 (11)	2 (10)
Nick Laurence	17 (182)	1 (40)	0 (21)
Andrew Leggo	15 (87)	0 (23)	1 (31)
Ben Macdonald	18 (154)	0 (16)	0 (12)
Damien Main	18 (47)	0 (8)	1 (9)
Ryan O'Shea	14 (46)	1 (11)	1 (9)
Liam Pain	11 (11)	1 (6)	4 (11)
David Park	10 (12)	1 (12)	0 (13)
Paul Parker	0 (0)	4 (4)	9 (9)
Nicholas Phillips	0 (2)	9 (28)	5 (28)
Daniel Phyland	15 (15)	0 (11)	2 (19)
Daniel Pieper	10 (150)	1 (60)	2 (38)
Jerome Rowcroft	14 (56)	1 (21)	2 (26)
Melissa Sambrooks	0 (0)	7 (7)	5 (5)
Lewis Spiker	2 (2)	6 (10)	5 (13)
Sam Stagg	14 (31)	2 (5)	0 (12)
Travis Taylor	12 (55)	2 (18)	0 (17)
Daniel Urbans	0 (0)	2 (17)	7 (16)
Shaun Weise	0 (0)	6 (6)	6 (6)
Luke Wilke	15 (48)	1 (6)	3 (15)
Jesse Wilkie	0 (0)	6 (12)	4 (8)
Chris Williams	1 (1)	9 (9)	3 (3)

2016 statistics

Goal	VFL	AFLVDL	TAC
Peter Balding	18 (235)	2 (52)	0 (36)
Peter Baldry	0 (0)	5 (29)	5 (20)
Dylan Benwell	21 (104)	0 (10)	0 (16)
Michael Blair	13 (25)	4 (72)	0 (90)
Nick Bridges	0 (0)	8 (8)	7 (8)
Liam Cuthbert	0 (0)	6 (6)	8 (9)
Chris Doyle	22 (71)	0 (97)	2 (77)
Patrick Dwyer	0 (0)	7 (7)	7 (7)
Matthew Edwards	20 (42)	1 (34)	1 (28)
Julian Ensink	0 (0)	8 (17)	6 (14)
Josh Forner	10 (10)	5 (18)	2 (13)
Jackson Griffiths	0 (0)	7 (7)	5 (5)
Kate Griffiths	17 (28)	2 (13)	0 (19)
Joshua Hickman	0 (0)	7 (19)	7 (13)
Dean Jones	16 (157)	1 (73)	1 (64)
Anthony Kyrkou	19 (145)	0 (28)	2 (23)
Callum Leonard	18 (65)	1 (27)	2 (25)
Kirsty Lord	0 (0)	5 (12)	7 (16)
Matthew Maclure	22 (95)	0 (34)	0 (25)
Brett McArthur	0 (0)	6 (6)	8 (8)
Jordan McMillan	0 (0)	7 (7)	5 (5)
David Miles	0 (0)	6 (16)	8 (17)
Cam Milich	15 (15)	3 (14)	3 (12)
Brendan Moloney	0 (0)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Luke Monea	0 (0)	7 (7)	5 (6)
Simon Plumridge	7 (86)	0 (13)	0 (20)
Josh Prince	0 (0)	8 (20)	7 (17)
James Richardson	0 (0)	8 (21)	6 (17)
Brad Standfield	18 (18)	2 (13)	2 (12)
Kelly Tellam	0 (0)	5 (5)	8 (8)
Paul Trotter ¹	18 (32)	1 (32)	1 (39)
John Varker	0 (0)	7 (7)	8 (8)
Sam Walsh	19 (80)	0 (13)	2 (16)
Jarred Walson	0 (0)	5 (5)	7 (7)
Cyrus Wong	11 (91)	5 (59)	3 (35)
Joon-Yip Wong	0 (0)	6 (9)	4 (7)

Figures in parenthesis indicate career totals

¹ Paul Trotter umpired 15 VFL Reserves and 20 TAC Cup matches as a field umpire in 2006-07.



Courage Award

Recognising recovery from significant hardship or injury

Courage Award recipients

1994	D.Hammond	2004	P.Balding	2013	L.Keen
1995	A.Malcolm	2005	B.McCorkell	2013	J.Mather
1996	D.Beard	2011	B.McCorkell	2015	B.Macdonald
1998	S.Nathan	2011	M.Sanders	2015	G.Verberne
2001	P.Anderson	2012	D.Cusack		

10 VFL finals 1992-2016

Finals	Finals	Finals
Peter Balding 21	Brad Letson 14	Michael Hammond 12
Michael Jennings 19	Michael Marrantelli 14	Andrew Malcolm 12
Ben Macdonald 18	Richard Mills 14	Graeme Bergröth 11
Steven Piperno 18	Steven Neal 14	Andrew Clifton 11
Shane Stewart 18	Damien Sully 14	David Harris 11
Shaun Gleeson 17	Matthew Brown 13	Courtney Lai 11
Neil Woods 17	Mitch Lefevre 13	Michael Richardson 11
Nick Laurence 16	Shane Mason 13	Andrew Talbot 11
Tristan Burgess 15	Andrew Mitchell 13	Michael Curtis 10
Anthony Kyrkou 15	Heath Ryan 13	Lloyd Fisk 10
Brett Ritchie 15	Jordan Andrews 12	Stefan Grun 10
Mark Foster 14	Dylan Benwell 12	Ben James 10
Drew Kowalski 14	Damien Cusack 12	Troy McCarthy 10
Gerard Large 14	Rob Findlay 12	Michael Palm 10

100 VFL matches 1992-2016

Matches	Matches	Matches
Peter Balding 235	Tristan Burgess 149	Andrew Malcolm 116
Dan Beard 224	Anthony Kyrkou 145	Adam Wojcik 115
Michael Richardson 194	Damien Cusack 138	Steven Neal 115
Shane Mason 188	Frank Dicosmo 137	Chris Donlon 115
Richard Mills 182	Brendan Elvey 135	Matthew Leppard 114
Nick Laurence 182	Andrew Talbot 133	Neil Woods 113
Andrew Clifton 181	Stephen Gloag 130	Robert Findlay 112
Lloyd Fisk 177	Michael Curtis 130	Geoff Twitt 110
Ben James 172	Damien Sully 129	Michael Palm 108
Matthew Brown 163	Peter Nastasi 129	Russell Davidson 106
Michael Jennings 162	Steele Irish 128	Jason Armstrong 105
Steven Piperno 161	Shane Stewart 128	Scott Murray 104
Jamie Grindal 157	Cameron Nash 125	Drew Kowalski 104
Dean Jones 157	Stefan Grun 123	Dylan Benwell 104
Michael Hammond 155	Brett Ritchie 122	Chris Morrison 103
Ben Macdonald 154	Heath Ryan 121	Andrew McCoy 102
Andrew Mitchell 153	Jason Quigley 118	Rob Frampton 101
Brendan Dye 150	Shaun Gleeson 117	Mark Foster 101
Daniel Pieper 150	Glenn Gibson 116	Matthew Oakley 101

2016 VWFL Grand Final



2015	M.Rodger	J.Spencer	
2016	P.Rebeschini	N.Jankovskis	N.Toner

Financial statements

Statement of income and expenditure

Year ended 30 September 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Interest Received	2,011	33
Subscriptions	34,080	29,330
Miscellaneous	5,720	5,301
Social Functions	22,830	18,228
Total Income	64,641	52,892
EXPENDITURE		
Audit Fees	250	250
Annual Report	957	1,063
Bank Charges	-	11
Honorariums	14,795	14,778
Photography	300	150
Postage	347	549
Printing and Stationary	433	727
Social Functions	27,047	23,447
Sundry Expenses	11,891	6,108
Trophies, Certificates	2,134	1,744
Total Expenditure	58,154	48,827
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	6,487	4,065
Transferred to Accum. Acc.	6,487	4,065

Merchandising sales account

Year ended 30 September 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Sales - Clothing	148	460
Total Sales	148	460
Stock 30.09.16	-	-
Purchases	2,218	2,017
Stock 30.09.16	-	-
Profit (Loss)	(2,218)	(1,557)
Transferred to Accum. Acc.	(2,070)	(1,557)

Balance sheet

Year ended 30 September 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at bank	24,258	20,562
-Cheque acc.	-	-
-Term dep.	62,259	60,270
-Maxi acc.	-	-
-Bpay	-	-
	86,517	80,832
Stock on hand	-	-
Office Equipment at WDV	-	-
	86,517	80,832

Represented by:

RESERVES

Accumulation Account	86,517	80,832
TOTAL RESERVES	86,517	80,832

Major raffle

Year ended 30 September 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
INCOME		
-Total Sales	2,900	4,195
-Total Income	2,900	4,195
EXPENDITURE		
-Prizes	1,165	1,143
-Total Expenditure	1,165	1,143
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	1,735	3,052
Transf. to Accum. Acc.	1,735	3,052

Accumulation account

Year ended 30 September 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Funds were derived from		
Accumulation Account	6,487	4,065
Major Raffle	1,735	3,052
Merchandising Account	(2,070)	(1,557)
	6,152	5,560
Add Balance brought forward	80,873	75,313
Balance carried forward @ 30.09.16	87,025	80,873

Financial statements

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2016

1. This special purpose financial report has been prepared for distribution to the members to satisfy the accountability requirements under the entity's constitution. The accounting policies used in the preparation of this report are consistent with previous years and are described below.

(a) The financial report has been prepared on a cash basis of accounting including the historical cost convention and the ongoing concern assumption.

(b) The requirements of Australian Accounting Standards promulgated by the accounting profession do not have mandatory applicability to the Victorian Football Umpires' Association Inc. in relation to the year ended 30th September, 2016 because the entity is not a "reporting entity" as defined therein.

The requirements of Statements of Accounting Concepts promulgated by the accounting profession also apply only to "reporting entities". These requirements have been complied with only to the extent that they coincide with the basis of accounting described in this Note.

2. It was agreed that for ease of financial recording and timing issues that the financial year now ends on the 30th September.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members

Victorian Football Umpires' Association, Inc.

I have audited the attached special purpose financial report of the Victorian Football Umpires' Association Inc. for the year ended 30th September 2016. I have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members.

The special purpose financial report has been prepared for distribution to the Members.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the cash basis of accounting as set out in Note 1 of the financial report. Statements of Accounting Concepts and Australian Accounting Standards have not been adopted in its preparation and presentation, other than as indicated in Note 1.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. Procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Victorian Football Umpires' Association Inc. present fairly the Accounts for the year ended 30th September 2015, in accordance with the basis of accounting disclosed above.

Signed:



L.I. Pope FCPA
Honorary Auditor

Date: 10 November, 2016

At: Melbourne

Jamie Grindal - 150 matches

"I get paid to keep fit", he laughs,
"I drive garbage trucks."



Field umpire Jamie Grindal will celebrate his 150th Peter Jackson VFL match when he officiates in Sunday's Anzac Day eve clash between Collingwood and Essendon at Victoria Park.

Grindal, 34, has been continuously involved in the caper since he followed his two brothers into umpiring local football at nine years of age.

Since starting out as a boundary umpire and then becoming a field umpire in the Diamond Valley Football League (now Northern FL), Grindal has risen through the ranks to become the oldest member of the AFL Victoria Field Umpires Senior Squad.

His career highlights include umpiring in the 2007 TAC Cup Grand Final at the MCG, as well as officiating in three Development League grand finals and two senior VFL preliminary finals.

As an elder statesman of the VFL field umpires squad, Grindal was this year awarded a significant symbolic honour – a move from his previous umpire guernsey of number 9 up to number 1.

But at the 2016 squad presentation, he initially thought his prospects for this year had gone pear-shaped.

"At the selection announcement they read out the senior list names in alphabetical order but my name wasn't part of it," Grindal said. "My stomach just dropped. I thought: 'My name hasn't been read out – what's going on?'"

"But at the end they announced I was number 1. I'll never forget that moment.

"VFL umpires that have worn that number have been around a while, such as (former field umpire and VFL life member) Richard Mills who wore it last year. I'm one of them now."

Grindal was surprised to be selected as an emergency for the 2015 Development League Grand Final given his age, but insisted that being 34 years old was not 'over the hill' in umpiring terms.

He said he'd been lucky to have never suffered a severe injury during his long career – "I haven't missed a year of umpiring at all" – and was able to maintain his fitness at work during the week.

"I get paid to keep fit," Grindal laughs. "I drive garbage trucks.

"Before they brought in all the safety regulations, we used to be up and down on the back of the truck all the time. Now at times I'll still get out and have a run, and that keeps me fit."

Grindal said the biggest change he'd noticed within VFL-level umpiring since he started was the way in which umpires could review their performance.

Coaches can now send them vision and feedback online early in the week after their matches and are more accessible and approachable than ever should umpires need to discuss their performance.

A keen junior cricketer, Grindal is happy he chose to pursue umpiring over playing sport, viewing it as "more of a career" – and you can't argue he hasn't made the most of it.

"I'm at the age now where the VFL coaches are going with younger guys, but I'm happy with where I've ended up in my life and all the opportunities I've had."

AFL Victoria record, Round 3, 22-24 April 2016

Peter Balding - VFL record 225 matches

"I wasn't a natural at all. I had to work a lot harder and it took me a lot longer to become natural at it."



Goal umpire Peter Balding made history on the weekend, officiating in his 225th Peter Jackson VFL match and breaking the record of field umpire Dan Beard for VFL games umpired.

Balding, 39, said Beard – who umpired from 1994-2009 – was revered within the Victorian Football Umpires Association and that it felt "sort of strange" taking the record from him.

For perhaps the first time in a VFL umpiring career stretching back to 2001, Balding had a cheer squad stationed behind him at Whitten Oval for Saturday's game between Footscray and Geelong, while he was honoured by his peers and mentors at umpire training the week prior.

The presentation made to him that night put into perspective exactly what it's taken him – and his family – to break the record.

"As part of the presentation the guys did some algorithms in Google Maps and worked out I've travelled over 60,000 kilometres in my umpiring career," Balding said.

"You realise you've had all that travelling time while I've got a wife (Crystal) and kids (Audrey, Genevieve and Maurice) at home. We've had three kids pretty much the whole time I've been umpiring... and umpiring often took priority.

"I never pulled out of games or requested changes. I committed 100 per cent, and you can't do that unless you've got someone at the other end who's making sacrifices like my wife has." baldingp

With his dream of graduating to the AFL now past him, Balding said he was enjoying a "golden period" of his umpiring career, able to invest more time in his family but enjoying his craft more than ever.

After doing field and boundary umpiring as a junior, Balding left the caper for several years before returning – but not wanting to run as much. Goal umpiring was the answer.

However, Balding explained that being a goal umpire was more difficult than many people would think, and it took him several years to establish himself at senior VFL level after being promoted from umpiring in the Western Region FL.

"You see a lot of people that are gifted and come in and do senior footy in their first or second year," Balding said. "That wasn't me; I wasn't a natural at all. I had to work a lot harder and it took me a lot longer to become natural at it.

"When a player overruns a ball it's no big deal, but when we overrun it, it can mean getting a score wrong. There's a lot of pressure on us and it takes a long time to be able to read the play and the flight of the ball properly.

"It was a tough apprenticeship. My first year in the VFL I didn't even do finals. The second year I did a bit better and I didn't make the seniors until the end of my third year. But by the end of that year it had clicked."

Balding was involved in 10 straight Grand Finals at various levels from that point, including the 2008 VFL decider. He credited coaches from his early years in Kevin Mitchell and Andrew Sinclair for helping him find his feet at the level, as well as Leigh Keen – who, with a laugh, he called "the kingpin of mentoring goal umpires".

With 225 VFL games under his belt and showing no sign of losing his love of the caper, Balding has now surely become a role model for aspiring umpires himself.

AFL Victoria record, Round 11, 18-19 June 2016



Laurence earns VFL life membership



“I’ve had a fair few highs and lows... doing the senior grand final... was such a feeling of reward for effort.”

Laurence said he’d also relied on a “sound, even-keeled nature and mindset” to deal with criticism and a professional approach to his physical preparation to help him reach a rare milestone.

“To be any kind of sporting official, I think you’ve got to have that thick skin,” Laurence said. “You’ve always got fans and players who are looking to share a difference in opinion from the decision you’ve made if it’s a tough call.”

“You can’t probably downplay the physical preparation side of it as well. While we might not necessarily call ourselves elite athletes or professionals, umpires are really not too far off it.”

AFL Victoria record, Round 17, 30-31 July 2016

Nick Laurence became the first boundary umpire to earn life membership of the Peter Jackson VFL when he officiated in his 175th senior match in Round 17.

The 31-year-old was given a choice of which game to bring up his milestone in and decided to run the boundary at the iconic Victoria Park – also an umpire training base – for the clash between Collingwood and Geelong.

Laurence started his umpiring journey as a high-school student in the Diamond Valley FL (now Northern FL) in 1999 and moved through the ranks until he graduated to the VFL umpires squad in 2004.

After some testing early years, Laurence’s hard work culminated in earning selection for last year’s senior VFL grand final between Williamstown and Box Hill at Etihad Stadium.

“I’ve had a fair few highs and lows,” Laurence said. “I’ve been lucky enough to do three Development League grand finals and a couple of TAC Cup grand finals, and last year culminating in getting the big one and doing the senior grand final. It was such a feeling of reward for effort.”

“But clearly the standout trait to get to 175 games is resilience, because you do get those kicks in the guts along the way – times when you think you’re travelling pretty well and the cards don’t fall the way you’d hoped.”



VFUA office bearers 1993-2016

Senior officers

	President	Vice-president	Executive Officer	Social secretary	Historian-statistician
1993	John Russo	Keith Callaghan	Peter Bunworth	Peter Kelly	
1994	Keith Callaghan	Mark Prince	Peter Bunworth	Peter Kelly	
1995	Mark Prince	Greg Kennedy	Peter Bunworth	Peter Kelly	
1996	Greg Kennedy	Anthony Black	Peter Kelly	Steven Stirling	
1997	Anthony Black	Greg Russo	Peter Kelly	Steven Stirling	
1998	Greg Russo	Russell Davidson	Peter Kelly	Alf Galea	
1999	Russell Davidson	Anthony Black	Peter Kelly	Dean Paulin	
2000	Steven Stirling	Chris Snell	Peter Kelly	Frank Dicosmo	
2001	Chris Snell	Stephen Evans	Peter Kelly		
2002	Chris Snell	Troy Tindill	Peter Kelly	Comm. Officer	
2003	Anthony Black	Rob Findlay	Peter Kelly	David Dixon	
2004	Stephen Evans	Rob Findlay	Peter Kelly	David Dixon	David Flegg
2005	Stephen Evans	Rob Findlay	Peter Kelly	Leigh Keen	David Flegg
2006	Rob Findlay	Jason Armstrong Adam Wojcik	Peter Kelly	Matthew Lee	David Flegg
2007	Rob Findlay	Adam Wojcik	Peter Kelly	Drew Kowalski	David Flegg
2008	Adam Wojcik Matt Leppard	Matt Leppard Stephen Gloag	Peter Kelly	Michael O'Donnell	David Flegg David Flegg
2009	Matt Leppard	Michael Boss	Peter Kelly	Stephen Gloag	David Flegg
2010	Richard Mills	Tristan Burgess	Peter Kelly	Andrew Mitchell	David Flegg
2011	Richard Mills	Tristan Burgess	Peter Kelly	Michael Palm	David Flegg
2012	Andrew McCoy	Graham Bergroth Steven Piperno	Peter Kelly	Daniel Lawlor	David Flegg
2013	Andrew McCoy	Steven Piperno	Peter Kelly	Daniel Butcher	David Flegg
2014	Steven Piperno	Daniel Butcher	Peter Kelly	Adam Havelberg	David Flegg
2015	Daniel Butcher	Adam Havelberg	Peter Kelly	Luke White	David Flegg
2016	Michael Curtis	Callum Leonard	Peter Kelly	Tim Carlos	David Flegg

Notes:

The current role of executive officer has evolved from that of secretary (1993-1995) and administrator (1996-2002).

The role of social secretary was discontinued at the end of 2000.

The positions of communications officer and historian-statistician were added to the Executive Committee in 2004.



VFUA office bearers 1993-2016

Track representatives

Track Rep.	Years	Track Rep.	Years	Track Rep.	Years	Track Rep.	Years
Jason Armstrong	2004-05	Greg Denison	2005-06	Dean Jones	2006-07	Paul Pickett	1995
Peter Balding	2012	Damian Devincentis	2010	Chris Kamolins	2002-03	Daniel Pieper	2002-03
Dan Beard	2001	Rhys Doughty-Cowell	2009	Hayden Kennedy	1993-94	Mark Prince	1993
Dylan Benwell	2012	Chris Doyle	2012-13	Drew Kowalski	2008	Lachlan Rayner	2015
Graeme Bergroth	2008-10	Andrew Duncan	1994	Anthony Kyrkou	2010-11	Michael Robins	1999
Anthony Black	1995	Jared Dyson	2016	David Lambourn	2006-07	Greg Russo	1996
Michael Blair	2010	Joel Elliott	2004	Anthony Laughton	2016	James Scully	2014
Michael Boss	2008	Brendan Elvey	2013	Nick Laurence	2010-11	Colin Segota	1993-94
Corey Brown	2014	Stephen Evans	2000	Callum Leonard	2014-15	Stephen Smith	2000-01
Nick Brown	2011	Jarrod Faoro	2007	Matt Leppard	2006-07	Chris Snell	1996
Tristan Burgess	2008-09	Rob Findlay	2002	Tim Lougoon	2014	Harry Stamos	1997
Daniel Butcher	2012	Mark Foster	2004-05	Josh Maine	2012-13	Steven Stirling	1998
David Card	2009	Alf Galea	1994	Wes Mann	1998-99	Travis Storti	2001
Tim Carlos	2011	Michael Gibson	2003	Andrew McCoy	2011	Andrew Talbot	2012
Jason Cook	1997-98	Stephen Gloag	2001-04	Luke McIlroy	2014-16	Troy Tindill	2001
Lawrence Coop	2014	Kate Griffiths	2016	David Miles	2016	Gareth Verbene	2008
Ashley Crawford	2011-12	Michael Hammond	2000	Joel Morrison	2011	Andrew Wheeler	1996
Michael Curtis	2013-15	Lachlan Harty	2016	John Murnane	1993-94	Luke White	2013-14
Damien Cusack	2005	Adam Havelberg	2013	Ben Naughtin	2005-07	Daniel Wilson	2002-03
Russell Davidson	1997	Peter Herrick	1993-94	Mark O'Reilly	1995	Adam Wojcik	2004-05
Curtis De Witt	2015	Wayne Hoskins	2010	Ryan O'Shea	2016		
Justin Delaney	1993	David Humphries	1995-96, 1999	Michael Palm	2009		
Andrew Dempster	1997-99	Anthony Hunter	2011-12	Brent Pawley	2011		

Social Committee members

Member	Years
David Ackland	1994-95
Dan Beard	1997
Anthony Black	1994-95
Peter Bradford	1997
Brett Carter	1996
Geoff Caulfield	1994
David Dixon	1996
Alf Galea	1994
Steven Hanley	1996-97
David Humphries	1995
Mark McKenzie	1995-96
Jason Tyrrell	1995
Ashley Wilkinson	1996-97



2016 VFL Umpires of the Year



Ben Macdonald (B), Hayden Gavine (F), Dylan Benwell (G)

2016 Interstate match - SANFL v. VFL



Simon Plumridge (G), Ben Macdonald (B), Daniel Butcher (F)