

Victorian Football Umpires' Association Annual report 2023



2023 VFL Grand Final umpires



L-R: John Varker, Lachlan Menara, Blake Anderson, Nick Jankoviskis, Nick Scott, Jack Howard, Will Morris, Anthony Laughton, Luke Monea.

2023 VFLW Grand Final umpires



L-R: Conor Petrie, Solomon Miesen, Jonathon Peck, Harry Warmington, Jonathan Clark, Mciahel Whelan, Madeleine Lum, Zak Kenny.

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Photo credits Ross Malcolm, AFL, Chris Powney Photography, VFUA

Cover photo: In VFL Round 21 four female boundary umpires from the VFUA created history when they were appointed to officiate the Round 21 VFL match between Port Melbourne and Richmond at the Punt Road Oval. It was the first time an all-female team has run a senior men's state league match nationally. L-R: Madeleine Lum, Greta Miller, Melissa Sambrooks, Kaitlin Barr.

Back Cover: Andrew Talbot celebrating his record breaking 236th VFL match.

Executive Committee 2023



President Joon-Yip Wong

Vice-president Melissa Sambrooks

Vice-president Andrew Talbot

Administrator Brad Noonan

Members' Representative Peter Howe

Track Representatives:

Senior Field - Michael Willcox

Development Field – Jacob Stuckey

Senior Boundary – Blake Anderson

Development Boundary – Harrison Bell

Senior Goal – Emma Young

Development Goal – Bridget Saftenberger

Historian-statistician David Flegg AM

Events Coordinator Jack Stammers

President's report

It is fair to say that 2023 would have been the year of returning to normality; but what is normality in the world of umpiring? Other than routine, structure, and discipline, I can confidently say that there is no such thing as normality when it comes to the trials and tribulations that we face in our profession year on year. This year was no exception.

First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge and thank my committee for their devotion and amazing passion for the association and umpiring. They work so hard behind the scenes to improve the overall umpiring experience in this state and continue to ensure our umpires have a voice and are heard, namely Michael Wilcox, Jacob Stuckey, Blake Anderson, Harrison Bell, Emma Young and Bridget Staffenberger. I also wish to thank our social butterfly Jack Stammers who has diligently planned and organised our 2023 events with impeccable finesse, assisted by his trusty coffee machine, devil's flute and biblical "Birks & Socks" ensemble. Special shout-outs to my lieutenant commanders Andrew Talbot and Melissa Sambrooks for their continued support and loyalty.

The committee has also been strengthened by my knights in shining armour Peter Howe (Members Representative), David Flegg AM (Historian/Statistician & QAP Program Manager) and Brad Noonan (Administrator), all of whom have consistently supported me with their devotion, guidance, and wisdom to help us deliver on our strategic goals and tactical plans.

If Jesus was a ball-boy decked out in AO gear, his name would be Matt Mahoney – who's devout faith in the association was proven by donating his time and efforts in counting beans to keep the association's finances balanced and prudent.

I thank you all and I couldn't have accomplished this year without your dedication.

One of my key objectives shared at our Executive Planning Day earlier in the year was to reinvigorate the social culture of the association by reducing our reliance on virtual meetings and breaking the post-COVID hangover by encouraging more face-to-face events and engagements. In 2023, we have seen the association return to a full calendar of social events, with pre-season lawn bowls, mid-season squad socials, our life members dinner, the Mini Olympics,

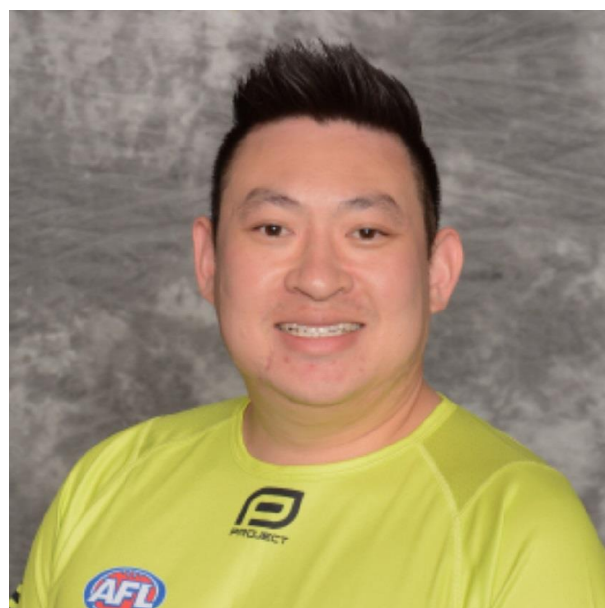
the grand final after party, annual ball, and we even slipped in a few in-person association meetings.

For the third consecutive year, the development boundary squad took out the Paul Anderson Memorial Shield. I was also extremely proud and grateful for the generous donations our umpiring family and friends had made to the Cancer Council at the Mini Olympics. We exceeded our target and raised \$2,325. I sincerely thank everyone who volunteered their time and efforts to make the event a success.

I am always so happy to see life members at our events, they are the very reason we can gather to reconnect off the track and share plenty of stories, laughs and showing our younger members a thing or two about survival in umpiring.

As we enter 2024, my ambition is to find a suitable pub to call home, close to Victoria Park so that we can build on more post-training gatherings and celebrations throughout the season.

On the topic of celebrations, we witnessed the biggest set of milestones ever in a single season! Andrew Talbot breaking Peter Balding's "All-time record" for games umpired in the history of modern-day VFL, Adam Bell and John Cooper notched up their 175th matches and claimed their VFL life memberships at the VFL's awards ceremony. At the same event, Sam Mounajed collected his VFL life membership. Both he and fellow life member, Judi Elliott, announced their retirements and both will be sorely missed.



John Varker, Luke Monea, Liam Pain and Adam Gardner passed their tons, followed by 18 50 match milestones and 14 senior debutants. I must also congratulate Lucy Lopes on being the first to crack a VFLW milestone (50 matches) as a field umpire since the competition began.

Our association awards have a rich history and it's important that we continue to ensure they hold great significance. These awards are great way to recognise and reward our members, for their dedication to their discipline, to the association and, most importantly, who they are as people.

I also wish to personally congratulate all our members who were appointed to the VFL, VFLW and Coates Talent League finals, selected for the AFLW S8 competition and those elevated to the AFL list in 2023.

The competitions our members serve have been in a transient state over the last few years, driven by the growth of the senior and U18 grades, expansion of the women's and girls' competitions and inclusion of the Queensland and New South Wales NEAFL teams under the manifestation of a consolidated east-coast competition. We will also closely track the introduction of Tasmanian teams into our competitions in the coming years and work with the AFL on its implications for our members.

Consequently, the umpiring structure of the state league and its talent pathways has continuously evolved, stretched, and adapted to meet the current requirements but still has a long way to go to create a sustainable pool of talent through recruitment, retention and progression. The association continues to monitor this with vigilance, particularly with the introduction of the FTEM development program and compliment it with the delivery of our very own wellbeing program, driven by Dylan Fulton.

Season 2023 saw the Victorian list size grow by 28 positions (c.f. 2022) across the board to support this and the association has played a part in ensuring the list management process was transparent and fair. With the assistance of Peter Howe, the association also advocated and promoted the state of umpiring within our jurisdiction following the release of the Women in Umpiring report in May 2022; and I have been proud to have had a strong voice and a large representation of women serving on our committee this year.

I must also acknowledge the departure of Luke O'Brien who has been a strong supporter of the association and collaborated with the us immensely to overcome the challenges in processes of the AFL administration. I look forward to working with Lucy Shaw who succeeded Luke late in 2023 and continuing to build a strong relationship together with Lisa Lawry and Adam Davis.

As part of our continuing dialogue with the AFL, we have also secured a sound and comprehensive three-year Fees & Conditions Agreement that will protect, compensate, and acknowledge the contribution of our membership base to the competitions we service, especially when the long-term vision of Victorian football is continuously blurred by the AFL and AFLW competitions.

Building on strong consultation with our members, the 2024-2026 agreement has had the effect of calibrating the prior impacts of the pay scales to meet legal minimum national employment entitlements mostly benefiting the development squads and balancing out the inequity senior umpires endured since our employment classification changed from casual to part time in 2021, importantly the package reflects the actual requirements and expectations that vary between disciplines and squads, with greater focus on the boundary cohort and our base rates for training that remunerates according to skill and experience.

After the first year of the agreement, all members will receive the consistent increases in pay rates and allowances. I have been proud of achieving our strategic mandate of ensuring that not one of our members will be worse off financially than their previous year and effectively securing guaranteed income over the entire season, irrespective of what competition that member officiates in. Given the expected growth of the Victorian list, we are confident that the AFL's investments and training arrangements planned for 2024 and beyond will alleviate the congestion and crowding at Victoria Park.

Our association is only as strong as its members, and it is our collective voice that makes our employer accountable for our welfare and to make our umpiring experience enjoyable and rewarding. I thank you for your support of the association in 2023 and look forward to an even greater umpiring future with you.

Joon-Yip Wong
President

Members' Representative's report

I was invited to apply for the newly created role as Member's Representative for the VFUA in November 2020. The role was defined by a clear job description: to distance the current Executive Member's from any dispute with their employers. The role was designed to enable me to be the front-line contact for the VFL and AFL in relation to negotiating employment contracts and the MOU, advocating on behalf of the VFUA should any disputes arise with the contracts and represent any member who required support if a dispute should arise.

In this period of time I supported the VFUA Executive and members to deliver four Fees and Conditions Agreements for the years, 2021, 2022, 2023 and now 2024-2026.

Each of these negotiations took hundreds of hours to deliver. Consultation with all VFUA members, formulation of an agreed position with the Executive Committee, numerous meetings with the AFL and finally back to each of the members for their endorsement. I must thank all VFUA members for their involvement and passionate commitment to improve their working conditions, not only salary but as important to improve the conditions under which our members train and umpire.

Further, since the AFL took over the management of the VFL Umpiring Department we have had nothing but support from them to assist us to get you the best conditions available.

When the Fees and Conditions Agreement was not being negotiated, my role was to assist in the induction of all new umpires to the VFL. The current AFL Contract for our VFL Umpires contains over 117 pages of AFL Policy that an umpire must know, acknowledge and then fulfil for the duration of the contract. My role was to make all umpires aware of their contractual obligations and advocate for the umpire if they ran afoul of those obligations.

In the past twelve months I have worked with the AFL and our members when AFL policies were broken to assist in the resolution of those matters.

I have assisted those members who have had payroll issues, for non-payment of allowances, non-payment for matches, Work Cover claims, unfair dismissal when contracts were not being renewed, travel claims, sexual assault and stalking to mention but a

few. I also work with VFL contracted umpires who live in NSW, Canberra and Queensland to ensure their needs are also being managed.

A VFL contracted umpire will be supported by the VFUA and the Member's Representative if they belong to their state-based association.

We have had significant dialogue with the AFL/VFL regarding poor change room facilities and facilities at Victoria Park especially with overcrowding on training nights. We are currently working to improve coaching facilities for all groups. One of our biggest hurdles is to facilitate more observers for our Development Panel. Our work is ongoing.

We are only as strong as our members and without your feedback and reporting of conditions we cannot work with the AFL to resolve those concerns.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working for you.

Peter Howe
VFUA Members' Representative



Administrator's report

Following the re-alignment of the VFLW and Coates Girls Development League to be in-line with the 'main' VFL competition timings, this year saw perhaps the largest introduction of first year umpires ever into the VFUA. A total of 53 first year umpires joined the state league level resulting in some significant challenges being faced by the VFUA. Perhaps the biggest challenge has been the management of training facilities at Victoria Park and ensuring all umpires were provided with the appropriate levels of access for their training and development. Introducing the new umpires to the VFUA and how the association worked on their behalf also required management.

VFUA Executive

With the influx of new members, the VFUA Executive and particularly Member Representative, Peter Howe, worked hard with coaches to ensure that training facilities at Victoria Park were fairly distributed to all squads.

Another area of focus for the Executive was the development of a welfare program established through the work of former VFUA member Dylan Fulton and Peter Howe. While the AFL Human Resources and Umpiring Departments have both agreed to establishing this program, it is yet to be officially launched. However, the VFUA will continue to maintain its focus on this important program for our members.

I would like to sincerely thank all the track representatives who take the time to be the combined voice of the members and help the Strategic Leadership Team focus on the major issues.

Membership

This year saw 97% (167) of running umpires take up full membership of the VFUA. This has been consistent over the past four years, even with significant increases in the number of running umpires since COVID-19 (an increase of almost 50% since 2020).

Partners

Our partnership particularly with Nike and 2XU continued to be strong, with members taking advantage of discounted access to both suppliers. We must ensure that all members are aware of the benefits offered by other partners including Musashi, Sherrin, Budgy Smuggler and Good Life Health Clubs and also generate new partnerships that are worthwhile for our members.

Fees and Conditions

Since the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the VFUA focus has been on improving payment levels for the development level membership base. For 2023 the focus was on;

- 1) Start at the pre-COVID-19 level and adding CPI from the three years
- 2) A dedicated focus on improving match fees for development squads

Both objectives were achieved, while it is noted that with the focus on the development level of members the senior boundary umpires remain below the levels of increase that other squads have received in recent years. For the 2024 negotiations, increasing the senior boundary umpire payments will be a key focus.

Another focus for the next round of discussions with the AFL will also center on achieving a multi-year agreement. This is for two reasons;

- Reduce the demands on the VFUA having to negotiate fees and conditions annually.
- Provide members with long term certainty relating to the fees and conditions they will receive while on a state league squad.

The following tables (page 7) illustrate membership and the gains made over recent fees and conditions negotiations.

Strategic Plan

The current Strategic Plan has completed the second year of progress and the VFUA have certainly established a stronger relationship with the AFL Umpiring Department particularly in terms of base and match payments.

Our next focus will be in locking in the new welfare program with the AFL to ensure that umpires are supported off the field as well as on field.

Umpire Performance

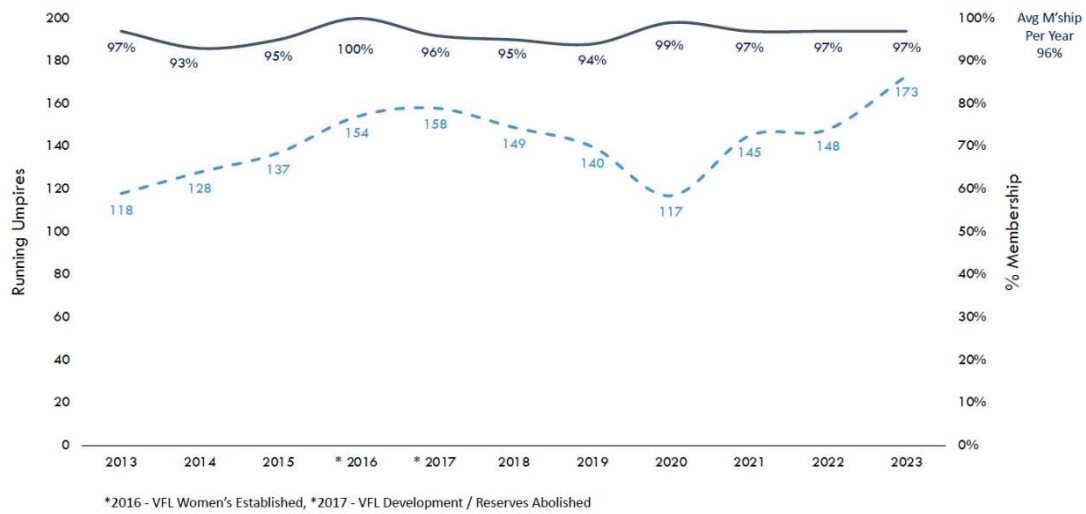
Congratulations to all the squads for their performances during the season. After the uncertainty of competition fixtures and access to training facilities of the past few years, it was great to have all umpires back on the track permanently. While there were challenges regarding the on-ground space at Victoria Park, all umpires showed their commitment to training which must be commended.

To all those who achieved grand final appointments across all the leagues, congratulations on your achievements.

Awards

Congratulations to the 2023 Most Improved Umpires – Jack Howard (Field), Lachlan Menara (Boundary) and Brad Kellett (Goal) along with the 2023 Best First Year Umpires – Scott Simpson (Field), Solomon Miesen (Boundary) and Zak Kenny (Goal). Congratulations also to Zak Kenny on being awarded the Frank Leverett Shield for the 2023 best overall first year umpire.

VFUA Membership by Year

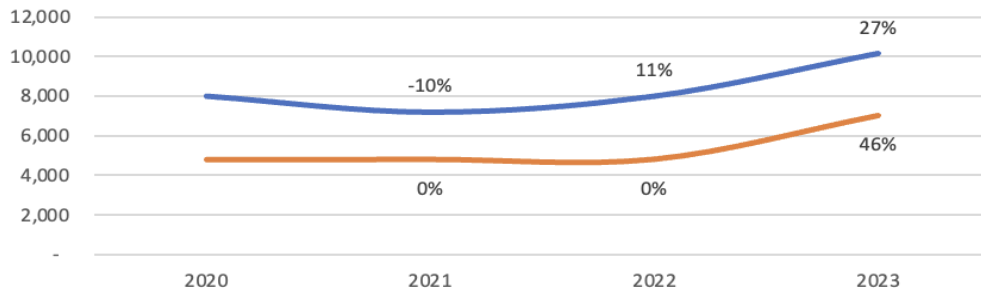


VFUA Typical Payments 2020 - 2023

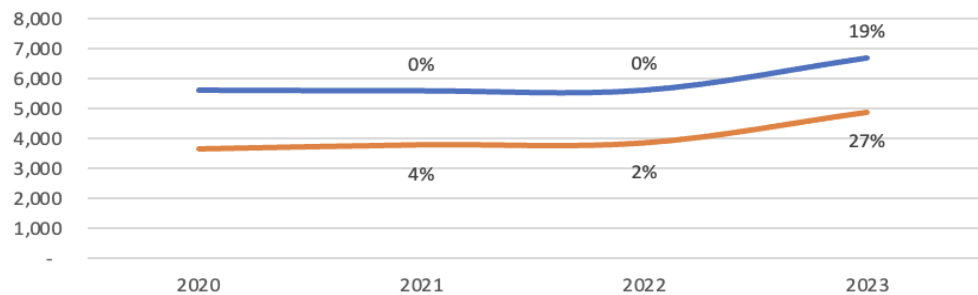


\$ Amount

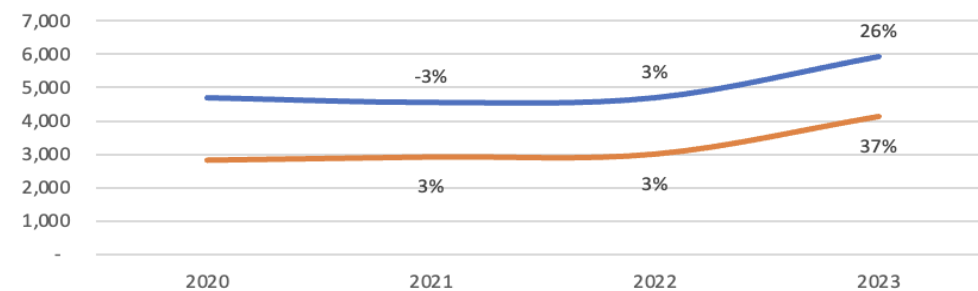
Field



Boundary



Goal



Note - Senior Typical Pay (20 x VFL), Dev Typical Pay (10 x U/18 Boys, 5 x VFLW, 5 x U/18 Girls), also shown is percentage

			
Vision To provide members with the best officiating experience possible.			
Mission To continually improve the member experience through workplace representation, social engagement and professional development.			
Purpose	a) To represent and advocate for umpires employed by the AFL, and strengthen the relationship between the bodies	b) To foster fellowship among umpires and support their welfare	c) To work with the AFL to promote the development of umpires for the highest levels of Australian football
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negotiate fees and conditions with AFL. - Maintain strong relationship and regular communication with the AFL. - Workplace issues are addressed with the AFL. - Quality Assurance Program (QAP) successfully operated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a formal Welfare program in conjunction with AFL People Department. - Strive for 100% VFUA membership of all listed umpires. - Provide opportunities for members to mix with other members in a social environment. - Provide benefits to members for their annual subscriptions which are seen as value for money. - Effective and timely communication with members. - Manage VFUA finances in a responsible manner, maximising benefit to members. - Develop and maintain link with life members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure a professional environment is provided to members in terms of physical and mental preparation - Members receive appropriate performance assessment as individuals. - Be viewed by the AFL as a valued stakeholder and participant in the development of umpiring in Victoria

Milestones

A significant milestone was achieved during the season by Andrew Talbot, breaking the record for the most matches officiated by a VFL umpire. This was achieved in June when Talbo recorded his 236th match. It cannot be underestimated the importance of this achievement to not only the umpiring group but for the VFL competition.

Congratulations to all the other members who also achieved personal milestones during 2023, detailed later in this report. It was wonderful to see so many members achieve personal milestones and shows how strong the group currently is.

Closing

In closing, I'd like to thank everyone of you for your support of the VFUA during the year. It was a big challenge with such an influx of new members, but hopefully this will make the association stronger for many years to come.

Brad Noonan
VFUA Administrator



Members 2023

Field		Field		Boundary	
2018	Joshua Ball	2018	Cameron Williams	2023	Lachlan Smith
2019	Jack Cannon	2023	Jeremy Zhou	2015	Lewis Spiker
2012	Thomas Chrystie			2023	Ben Tingiri
2017	Joel Clamp	Boundary		2016	Daniel Urbans
2023	Jonathan Clark	2016	Blake Anderson	2021	Andrew van Keulen
2022	Lisa Compton-Robins	2023	Shaylee Anderson	2015	Jesse Wilkie
2021	Lachlan Coyne	2022	Wade Anderson	2016	Chris Williams
2019	Sebastian Dalgleish	2023	Nicholas Bahr	2021	Lachlan Wright
2021	Genevieve Devenish	2023	Ashlee Ball		
2019	Shamus Dundon	2019	Kaitlin Barr	Goal	
2023	Liam Dye	2009	Adam Bell	2022	Laura Brogan
2023	Casey Fellows	2022	Harrison Bell	2019	Joe Dorrat-Thorpe
2022	Lachlan Flinn	2023	Lachlan Bezzina	2006	Chris Doyle
2019	Jackson Gillespie	2016	Josh Blain	2022	Joshua Dudman-Doyle
2023	Sophie Gleeson	2021	Shaun Bourke	2023	Nathan Dugdale
2021	Connor Hawes	2016	Trent Bowes	2012	Matthew Edwards
2023	Douglas Haworth	2019	James Brayshaw	2003	Adam Gardner (e)
2019	Ian Herman	2023	Ryan Brown	2019	Thomas Gath
2017	Jack Howard	2022	Jack Buller	2022	Benjamin Geleit
2021	Luke Hunter	2023	Angus Cameron	2023	Jenna Green
2023	Sam Hurford	2011	John Cooper	2021	Brady Gutbier
2023	Campbell Hymans	2023	Michael Court	2019	Lochlin Hamer (f)
2016	Nicholas Jankovskis	2016	Jake D'Angelo	2023	Bradley Heffernan-Benfield
2019	Elias Kafritsas	2022	Mitchell Dorling	2023	Georgia Henderson
2021	Arron Knezevic	2022	Reuben Dyer	2015	Joshua Hickman
2023	Ben Lefebvre	2015	Kyle Fisher	2021	James Kandler
2014	Lucinda Lopes (a)	2023	Monique Galea	2019	Bradley Kellett
2017	Thomas Lyon	2021	Caleb Garraway	2022	Damon Kelly
2017	Matthew Mahoney	2022	Cooper Geall	2023	Jack Kennedy
2021	Ryan Mann	2023	Luke Gonis	2023	Zac Kenny
2023	Cooper Marriott	2022	Olivia Grcic	2022	Charlie Lodge
2023	James Meek	2018	Lachlan Higgs	2017	Tayla Manning
2023	Christopher Menara	2023	Thomas Kruen	2023	Jackson Mansell
2019	Hugo Morgan	2014	Anthony Laughton (c)	2018	Jake Marnie
2021	Emiel Morvell	2022	Mitch Lea	2022	Noah Meyers
2017	Alex Murray	2017	Madeleine Lum (d)	2023	Issa Mikhael
2021	Connor Newett	2019	Corey Malcolm	2016	Brendan Moloney
2023	Oliver Pearce	2019	Lachlan Menara	2016	Luke Monea
2022	Hayden Pearson	2021	Benjamin Merrick	2023	Jake Penny
2019	Jordyn Pearson	2023	Solomon Miesen	2021	Phillip Pettinella
2015	Matthew Pongracic	2018	Greta Miller	2022	Samuel Polden
2016	Luke Porter	2023	Daniel Molino	2018	James Rizio
2023	Brock Reid	2023	Daniel Mortlock	2021	James Rodwell
2023	Samantha Ritchie	2019	Zachary Mousaco	2018	Samuel Rogers (g)
2021	William Ross (b)	2023	Ben Myatt	2021	Bridget Saftenberger
2018	Nick Scott	2019	Luke Myatt	2022	Cohen Shannon
2023	Scott Simpson	2021	Mitch O'Neill	2018	Jack Stammers
2023	Jai Smith	2015	Liam Pain	2019	Adam Steger
2019	Jacob Stuckey	2022	Jonathon Peck	2023	Courtney Stelling
2008	Andrew Talbot	2021	Lachlan Perdon	2018	Callum Thornton
2021	Austin Tattersall	2023	Oliver Pratt	2023	Alex Tomada
2023	Shannon van Boven	2023	Ryan Pulley	2021	Harley Trickey
2022	Kylie van Raay	2019	Benjamin Rofe	2017	Nelson Tucker (h)
2023	Harry Warmington	2016	Melissa Sambrooks	2016	John Varker
2023	Ned Welsh	2023	Dominic Schiliro	2015	Joon-Yip Wong
2023	Michael Whelan	2023	Vo Schofield	2023	Dylan Wood
2018	Michael Willcox			2021	Emma Young

Notes

(a) Field 2014-16, 2018-23. Boundary 2017. (b) Off list 2022. (c) Off list 2015, 2017-2020. (d) Off list 2019-2022. (e) Off list 2009-2016, 2018. (f) Off list 2021. (g) Off list 2020. (h) Off list 2018.

John Russo Trophy – Matt Mahoney

Matthew Mahoney was thrust into the presidency of the Victorian Football Umpires' Association in August 2019 with the resignation of then President, Andrew Talbot.

Despite only a year as Track Rep. (2018) and a part-year role as vice-president, Matt took the reins with an energy and enthusiasm that lasted through what would become three very different football seasons. These were traits that he maintained throughout his term as he became a more determined and confident leader.

During 2019 the VFUA completed a long-term investigation into umpiring payments and employment status over previous five years, Matt's ability to wrangle spreadsheets in support of the project was vital to the outcome; the AFL responding to the payment issues raised by VFUA and agreeing to voluntarily make a supplementary payment to identified umpires who had been paid below minimum wage. This was paid in November 2019.

Despite planning to employ a negotiator for the 2020 Fees and Conditions Agreement this did not occur, and it was Matthew who primarily dealt with the AFL. As a result the AFL forwarded, for the first time, an agreement including increased match fees, payment for training and recognized that umpires were part-time rather than casual employees. This final point was critical in the year that followed.

The agreement was signed in March 2020, immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. A remarkable achievement for someone with little previous negotiating experience.

Season 2020 provided various challenges. With COVID-19 decimating the season Matt negotiated reduced fees for any games that were played but the fact that umpires were now considered part-time made them available for Job Keeper. Through the year Matt kept the Executive Committee engaged by constantly communicating with Track Reps and the AFLUD as the pandemic year developed. This was a hallmark of his presidency over all three seasons. Matt was also a key supporter of reduced VFUA membership fees for 2020 and, with the AFL, the funding of Greg Buck as support for umpires who needed it.

In 2021 Matt was key in the appointment of VFUA Representative, Peter Howe, and VFUA Administrator, Brad Noonan. While much of the negotiation fell to Peter, Matt was still active in the fees and conditions meetings.



He was never afraid to voice his thoughts to the AFLUD throughout the process. It was that year Matt made his VFL senior debut.

In 2022 there was a return to something resembling pre-pandemic seasons. Matt encouraged the use of VFUA funds for social events and, again, used his spreadsheet skills in helping prepare for negotiations for the 2022 fees and conditions.

On the field his 2022 development was outstanding. With only the one previous VFL match to his name he began the season in the VFL seniors and remained there for the next 18 weeks finishing the season with a total of 19 VFL matches in what was effectively his debut season.

Combining this on-field success in 2022 with his enthusiastic, energetic, dedicated and, importantly, effective leadership of this association in years where there was little football played and the off-field challenges for the association were immense, we are delighted to recognise those achievements with the awarding of the 2022 John Russo Trophy to Matthew Mahoney.

Best First Year Umpires

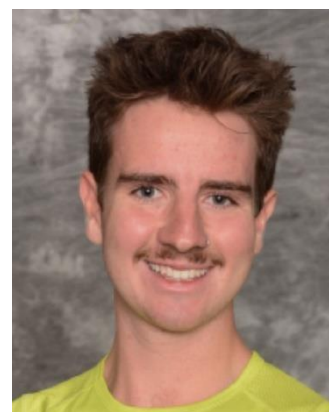
Field		Boundary		Goal	
2012	Hayden Gavine	2012	Lachlan Rayner	2012	Sam Walsh
2013	Pat Burns	2013	Kieran Ferguson	2013	Matthew Dervan
2014	John Howorth	2014	Sam Stagg	2014	Kate Griffiths
2015	Leighton Rowe	2015	David Park	2015	Cameron Milich
2016	Cameron Dore	2016	Chris Williams	2015	Brad Standfield
2017	Sam Ferguson	2017	Joel Davis	2016	Pat Dwyer
2018	Josh Ball	2018	Matthew Crowley	2017	Sian Atkins
2019	Shamus Dundon	2019	Corey Malcolm	2018	James Rizio
2020	No award	2020	No award	2019	Thomas Gath
2021	Lachlan Coyne	2021	Riley Guerin	2020	No award
2022	Kyle van Raay	2022	Harrison Bell	2021	Emma Young
2023	Scott Simpson	2023	Solomon Miesen	2022	Josh Dudman-Doyle
				2023	Zak Kenny



Scott Simpson



Solomon Miesen



Zak Kenny

Frank Leverett Shield

Overall best first year umpire

1992	Alan Letson	2003	Neil Woods	2014	Sam Stagg
1993	Adam Skidmore	2004	Matthew Lafite	2015	Leighton Rowe
1994	Steven Hanley	2005	Jacob Mollison	2016	Cameron Dore
1995	Adam Bastin	2006	Chris Gordon	2017	Joel Davis
1996	Gordon Muir	2007	Graham Bergroth	2019	James Rizio
1997	Glenn Guzzo	2008	Matt Maclure	2019	Corey Malcolm
1998	Matthew Tippet	2009	Brendan Hosking	2020	No award
1999	Matt Stevic	2010	Luke White	2021	Riley Guerin
2000	John Neaven	2011	Daniel Butcher	2022	Harrison Bell
2001	Luke Walker	2012	Hayden Gavine	2023	Zak Kenny
2002	Rob Haala	2013	Matthew Dervan		

Most Improved Umpires

	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.OGorman	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
2017	A.Gianfagna	L.Harty	P.Trotter
2018	P. Rebeschini	A. Hawkes	J. Varker
2019	L. Porter	M.Crowley	J. Rizio
2020	No award	No award	No award
2021	M.Young	K.Fisher	M.Edwards
2022	J. Ball	A. Laughton	C. Thornton
2023	J. Howard	L. Menara	B. Kellett



Top: Jack Howard
Middle: Lachlan Menara
Bottom: Brad Kellett

Life Members' Dinner

The VFUA life members have made a significant contribution to the association from its inception and each year gather to both reminisce and keep in touch with umpiring goings on.

The event was held on Sunday 27 August at the Hotel Collingwood in Smith Street and began with pre-dinner drinks in the main bar followed by a dinner in the upstairs private function room.

President, Yippy Wong, welcomed guests and brought guest up to date with the affairs of the association. Attendees introduced themselves including highlights and personal memories from what were long and, in some cases, continuing careers.

Conversation carried on throughout the meal and then around the room as the mingling continued well into the night. Chatting was interrupted only by the ubiquitous raffle.

Thanks to Jack Stammers for organising a successful event and to the 16 life members and current Executive who were in attendance.



Left to right: Andrew Talbot, Yippy Wong, Michael Blair, Brendan Dye, Leigh Keen, Judi Elliott, David Flegg, Steven Stirling, Rod Davies, Melissa Sambrooks, Andrew Leggo, Michael Richardson, Jack Stammers, Cyrus Wong, Adam Wojick, Dean Jones

VFUA Life Members

Darren Agnew (1995)	David Dixon (2004)	Peter Kelly (1996)#	Doug Purss (Found.*)
Peter Allsop (1992)	Mikel Donsen (1993)	Greg Kennedy (1998)	Frank Raiti (1994)
Paul Anderson (2018*)	Gavin Dore (1993)	Hayden Kennedy (1993)	Gary Ramm (1999)
Jason Armstrong (2006)	Brendan Dye (2004)	Colin Larter (1999)	Denis Rich AFSM (Found.)
Peter Balding (2010)	Judi Elliott (1997)	Nick Laurence (2015)	Michael Richardson (2006)
Dan Beard (2004)	Brendan Elvey (2017)	Andrew Leggo (2019)	Linton Roe (2000)
Gary Best (1994*)	Stephen Evans (2006)	Matthew Leppard (2009)	Greg Russo (1999)
Anthony Black (1998)	Ray Fargie (1993)	Richard Leslie (2002)	John Russo (Found.)
Michael Blair (2013)	Rob Findlay (2007)	Stephen Luckman (1992)	Paul Saville (Found.)
Michael Boss (2011)	Lloyd Fisk (2003)	Andrew Malcolm (2002)	Rowan Sawers OAM (Found.)
Alan Brewer (1996)	David Flegg AM (1997)#	Wes Mann (1999)	Graeme Scherger (1992)
Graeme Brewer (1993)	Rob Frampton (1999)	Shane Mason (2003)	Colin Segota (1996)
Nick Brown (2019)	Joy Gelly (2005)	Dean Maxwell (1995)	Roger Selwood (1992)
Tristan Burgess (2013)	Stephen Gloag (2005)	Peter McDonald (1998)	Michael Sexton (1998)
Daniel Butcher (2016)	Darren Goldspink (1993)	Anton McKernan (1993)	Bryan Sheehan (1993)
Keith Callaghan (1997)	Peter Gonis (2005)	Scott McLaren (1999)	Michael Sneddon (Found.)
Peter Cameron (Found.)	Doug Gourlay (1994)	Richard Mills (2013)	Chris Snell (2003)
Mark Canning (2000)	Doug Gower (1993)	Chris Mitchell (Found.)	Harry Stamatopoulos (2003)
Peter Carey (1992)	Ian Green (1993)	David Mitchell (Found.)	Justin Stephenson (2001)
Brendan Carland (Found.)	Kate Griffiths (2020)	Kevin Mitchell OAM (2006)	Steven Stirling (1998)
Barry Carmichael (Found.)	John Hall (1997)	Sam Mounajed (2018)	Brad Strachan (2000)
Geoff Caulfield (1995)	Michael Hammond (2003)	Geoff Morrow (Found.*)	Terry Suitryk (1993)
Craig Clark (1996)	Lindsay Hardman (2000)	Geoff Mowat (1992)	Phil Sutton (Found.)
Andrew Clifton (2005)	Shane Harris (1992)	Peter Nastasi (2004)	Andrew Talbot (2017)
Andrew Coates (1994)	Darren Holt (2003)	Ben Naughtin (2008)	Simon Tursi (2008)
Alan Cook (1993)	Colin Hood (1997)	John O'Leary (1993)	James Van Beek (1994)
Michael Curtis (2018)	David Howlett (Found.)	Malcolm Owen (1993)	Jason Venkataya (2005)
Damien Cusack (2013)	David Humphries (2001)	Laurie Page (1994)	Michael Viney (1993)
Graeme Danne (Found.*)	Anthony Hunter (2014*)	Brian Philp (1994*)	Matthew Vitrutti (2000)
Russell Davidson (2000)	Steele Irish (2007)	Daniel Pieper (2016)	Phil Watson (1993)
Rod Davies (1995)	Ben James (2006)	Steve Piperno (2015)	Andrew Wheeler (1998)
Andrew Dempster (2001)	Michael Jennings (2010)	Simon Plumridge (2019)	Graeme Williams (Found.)
Greg Denison (2012)	Dean Jones (2019)	Mark Powell (1998)	Adam Wojcik (2007)
Frank Dicosmo (2006)	Leigh Keen (Found.)	Mark Prince (1993)	Cyrus Wong (2018)

Notes: Year indicates year of life membership. (Found.) Foundation life member. * deceased. # Special Award

Social Report

Senior field squad function

With only one Sunday game in Round 18, the senior fieldies took the chance to catch up without worrying about appointments and headed to the newly renovated Melbourne Golf Park.

Whilst a few umps probably fancy themselves as semi-decent golfers, this was going to be put to the test as the ball tracking technology tracked every single one of the 600 balls being hacked. Whilst Clampy somehow flushed his first swing, it didn't take long for Jank to set an early distance of 233m to beat before eventually setting a longest drive of 235m. Muzz and Jank, sporting their own golf gloves, went drive for drive, Ferg was the first to smack the ball into the wooden barrier, and Clampy started a new trend of biggest slice, getting the ball to leave the club at almost right angles to eventually land on top of the groundsman's shed roof!

Despite everyone being right-handed, we were supplied a couple of left-handed clubs which led into some "interesting" practice. Clamp challenged himself by trying to use the left-hand clubs. If a baby giraffe also tried to coordinate a golf swing while starting to walk, that's what it looked like! Jank, on the other hand, decided to stay right-handed and flipped the club face upside down. His first swing with the iron was flushed for a good 160m. He then repeated this new strategy with an upside-down driver for 200m!

After 90 minutes everyone was complaining about their back, so the intimate crew finished the night with a nearby feed. Thanks to those who came out to have a bit of fun, a few laughs and throw your back out - Jank, Muzz, Wilcox, Clamp, Ferg, Mahoney, Talbo and Coyne. Thank you to the VFUA for helping support a social event for each squad again. It's always valuable being able to connect with our teammates away from Vic Park and game day.

Goal umpires squad function

The VFL goal umpires returned to Ballers Clubhouse for the mid-year social event for the second year running. This was also the inaugural event for the freshly launched Goal Umpire League (affectionately known as "The GUL"). The mid-season draft took place at the pub the Thursday before which saw all

umpires, both senior and development squad, drafted into teams to compete in different activities throughout the year.

With Ballers Clubhouse the location of the inaugural event, there were three competitions being held throughout the night for everyone to score points for their team.

The events held were table tennis (doubles and singles) and darts. The night started with lots of pizza and ping-pong chicken for pre-game carbs.

Each team put forward a singles and doubles team to compete in table tennis and one person for darts.

The teams began their quest to earn points for their teams and saw the singles tournament come down to Josh Dudman-Doyle and Josh Hickman as finalists with Hickman posting the win for Team Yellow. The doubles tournament saw the solid pairing of Laura Brogan and John Varker battle it out with Jake Penny and Zak Kenny (who's names together can only be described as confusing at best). Brogan and Varker were the victors for Team Orange.

To finish off the night, the darts board was set up with each player starting at 300 and had to get down to exactly zero (Disclaimer: No umpires were harmed during the darts competition, except maybe some egos). Track reps Bridget Saftenberger and Emma Young were solid out of the blocks early and were battling it out for first place for a few rounds before the rest of the group caught up.

Due to an apparent technical glitch in the software, Charlie Lodge was deemed the official winner on the scoreboard. The whole crowd were screaming for a score review and the result was left up to the ARC for an official review. The deliberations lasted several minutes. The outcome saw the final throw deemed a foul due to technical errors with Charlie disqualified and Bridget deemed the winner for Team Red.

Overall, the night was enjoyed by all and was a great launching pad for The GUL. On behalf of the whole squad, a big thanks to Emma and Bridget for organising the function



Boundary squad function

A change of sport was on the agenda for the boundary umpires mid-season function. This year's function brought out our cricketing abilities and let's just say we got a mixed bag.

We had Mel Sambrooks who looked like she just came back from the Australian cricket camp, hitting balls left right and centre. Jack "the bulldog" Buller went into the net wearing all under armour gear thinking he's a sponsored athlete. Lachlan Menara couldn't find a bat wide enough to hit the ball, I've seen a rusty gate swing better than him! Lachy Smith thought he was Steve Smith, walking around like he owned the place... only to get his middle stump smashed out of the ground on his first ball. Mitch Lea was "absolutely smashing them", shame it was on the easiest difficulty.

Once we all had a crack at the imaginary bowler, the food came out and we were treated to a feast. Luke "the chef" Myatt enjoying some of the best Jamaican jerk chicken, while a small bowl of chips was enough to keep Lachie Higgs satisfied (even if half were taken by fellow attendees). JB enjoyed his vegan 'super food salad' while just about the rest of us went with the stock standard parma.

Painy and Blake made it look like they were opening their own wallets for everyone and putting some money on the bar for us all. But we all know the VFUA funded the night... nice try lads.

Overall, it was a fantastic night that was enjoyed by everyone. Special shoutout to Blake, Harry and Mel for organising the event.



Bowls Day

The season opening social event was an informal get together held at Brunswick Bowls Club on Sunday 5 May.

Umpires gathered for drinks and some barefoot bowling, with awards for the 2022 season also being presented.

Our thanks to Brunswick Bowls Club (especially for the prices of drinks!) and Jack Stammers, prominent on the club honour boards as well as organizing the function.

VFL Grand Final function

Our 2023 VFL Grand Final After Party was held at Avalon the Bar on Brunswick Street.

It was great to see over 120 current listed VFL umpires, coaches, trainers and life members celebrating the year that was. We were extremely fortunate to have some tremendously talented umpires make the night such a success. Some necessary call outs:

- Our resident umpire DJ, Charlie Lodge (Development Goal) span tunes for six hours straight...demonstrating the goal umpire craft in its purest form; concentration, resilience, strong leg game performance and of course, reacting to the act of play around him (outrageous song requests, and bodies constantly surrounding him in his working area). Clodge, thank you for your energy and presence on the night, it was Lafite.

- Roaming 'Clampy', rumour has it that this vision is yet to surface, keeping in mind that; one, J. Clamp was asking the questions, and two, the on-tap cocktails needed to be restocked at 10:30pm. Great intent lads, thank you to Joel Clamp (senior field) and James Kandler (development goal) for the spontaneous conversations throughout the night.

It was fantastic to celebrate and gather to celebrate our grand final umpires, and all of the successes throughout 2023.

VFUA Ball

Showtime was the venue and the catch cry for the night as VFUA members dressed up and hit the dancefloor at the annual ball. A record 205 attendees enjoyed the association's biggest event for the year with the partners of many members also joining us for the night.

After such a successful event last year, MC Samantha Riches guided us through the proceedings, with the musical trio of Georgia on vocals, DJ Sean, and the incredible Harry on sax back again to provide the tunes.

The highlight of the night was recognizing the VFL Men's Grand Final Panel for achieving the ultimate appointments in our group, while also congratulating the panels from VFLW, Coates Talent League Boys and Girls. The winners of the Most Improved and Best First Year Umpires for 2023 were also announced and those who achieved personal game milestones during the year also received acknowledgement.

Thanks to everyone for making the night such a wonderful celebration to end 2023.





Squad Reports

Senior field

The season started for the senior squad with a preseason camp down on the Great Ocean Road. This was a great chance to bring the entire squad and coaches together from all across the eastern seaboard for some team bonding, physical challenges and fun. A highlight for the trip was Shaun Ryan speaking to us around his experiences as an AFL umpire and some of the tips that helped him reach and maintain his standard as an elite umpire. It was also great for the people trialling to get on the squad to share a bit about themselves and their umpiring backgrounds. As a relatively young and inexperienced squad this was a great way to start the season and develop the trust and teamwork required to perform at a high level.

We were also fortunate to have a number of guests attend our training sessions throughout the season. AFL Umpires Nathan Williamson, Justin Power, Hayden Gavine and Cameron Jones all attended training throughout the season and shared some stories and advice to hopefully help the development of our squad.

During the season there were a number of squad dinners and also the mid-season squad event. These were generally well attended with Joel Clamp and Andrew Talbot doing a power of work to get these organised. The season culminated in the Grand Final between Gold Coast and Werribee being played at Ikon Park on a perfect Sunday in September.

During the season there were a number of milestones achieved by VFL umpires with none being bigger than Andrew Talbot breaking the VFL all-time record for most games umpired. Talbo is an icon of the VFL and VFUA and continues to set standards for the squad with his performance and team-first approach. He was voted the Teammate of the Year by his peers on the senior squad.

Joel Clamp, Thomas Chrystie and Nick Jankovskis were selected to umpire the Season 7 AFLW Grand Final at Brighton Homes Arena in Brisbane in the offseason. It was fantastic to see such a great representation of Victorian umpires selected to umpire the grand final and a deserved reward for each umpire's hard work.

The 2023 VFL Grand Final was also umpired by three Victorian field umpires with Nick Scott, Nick Jankovskis and Jack Howard all umpiring their first senior Grand Finals. Joel Clamp was also selected as the emergency field umpire and showed why he was voted as Teammate of the Year last season by

carrying water for all the umpires throughout the match. A huge effort by all these umpires and a great reward for their dedication and excellence throughout the season. Jack was also awarded the Most Improved Field Umpire Award at the VFUA Ball.

There were also several umpires who achieved match milestones:

1st VFL senior matches – Lachlan Coyne, Kyle Van Raay, Sam Hurford, Casey Fellows, Connor Hawes and Ian Herman.

Also of note were the six umpires who were elevated to the VFL Senior List for the first time in 2023 - Shamus Dundon, Cameron Williams, Jordyn Pearson, Kyle Van Raay, Lachlan Coyne and Seb Dalglish.

50th matches – Joel Clamp, Luke Porter, Sam Ferguson, Joshua Ball, Nick Scott, Jack Howard, Nick Jankovskis.

We also said goodbye to some valued squad and staff members before and during the season.

- Jack Edwards finished his VFL career early in the preseason after a magnificent career including 159 VFL and 11 AFL matches. Jack was another experienced leader in the group and pushed everyone to get the best out of themselves. There are exciting times ahead for Jack with a young family.
- Matthew Pongracic is another experienced field umpire who showed incredible dedication and desire to improve throughout his career. Pongo ended his VFL career with 69 matches and was always a unique person that could get a laugh out of the squad.
- Luke O'Brien was a massive advocate for umpires in his role at the AFL and provided great support and humour within the four walls of Victoria Park. He was always the first to check that everything was alright with everyone on the squad and to crack a joke when there was some energy needed.
- Judy Elliott and Sam Mounajed both called time as trainers at the end of the 2023 season. Their contribution to umpiring and our umpiring group cannot be put into words and their presence at Victoria Park will be missed. Both consistently went above and beyond for every umpire and their care and support was incredible. The applause at every one of Sam's retirement speeches summed up just how much the pair meant to the umpiring group.

There were also seven VFL umpires promoted to the AFL squad in the offseason – Victorians Martin Rodger, Matthew Young, Harry Birch, Peter Bailes as well as Queenslanders Andrew Adair and James Strybos and ACT based Nic McGinness were rewarded for their consistent quality performances at state league level. It is great to see all of them umpiring at the next level and we hope to see many more AFL games for the group in the future.

Every week we get to go out and do what we love and chase our dreams, but this would not be possible without the support of a number of people. Firstly, the support of families, partners and loved ones means that we are able to go out on weekends and perform. The work that the administration team and all of the coaches and observers do to make sure that we are able to continue to strive for a high level of performance each week does not go unnoticed. Adam Veli and the high-performance put in a mountain of work to tailor training programs to individual needs and also make sure that we are in the best possible position to umpire well. Finally, the trainers, physios and doctors help keep some of us on the park every week and continue to improve the environment for umpires.

Overall, it was a great year for the senior squad which was finished off with the finals series. We are fortunate to continue to have some of the best on and off-field resources across the country available to us. This has helped improved our umpiring experience and it's great to see so many of our squad being rewarded for the hard work they put in week in, week out to achieve their goals.

Senior boundary

We arrived back at Victoria Park ready to rock and roll for 2023 with the return of Leigh Buwalda as senior coach and Lachlan Harty as development coach. With a new and improved style and system of coaching continuing on from last year, everyone was keen to put their best foot forward early in the preseason.

The preseason took us offsite to the likes of Ikon Park and Albert Park to alleviate us of the monotony of running laps and dodging fieldies in our quarter of the ground at Victoria Park. The time trial that wasn't a time trial also saw a return in an extended 4km format.

Well soon enough it was time to kick the season off and we saw debuts in the seniors for the likes of Mitch Dorling, Wade Anderson, Reuben Dyer and Shaun Bourke. Dom Schiliro also made his VFL debut after crossing Bass Strait.



Jumping from debutants to seasoned professionals, we had Patrick Jackson, Jake D'Angelo, Lewis Spiker, Kyle Fisher, Trent Bowes, Lachlan Higgs, Chris Williams and Greta Miller all clock up 50 senior matches.

We also had former VFUA Vice-president, Liam Pain, get to 100 games through trying conditions but we were there for him.

Furthermore, we had life membership of the VFL awarded to John Cooper and Adam Bell for umpiring 175 VFL matches. They became the second and third boundary umpires to have achieved this milestone, so it was an incredible effort for both umpires.



The Mini Olympics was another great success with lots of money raised for the Cancer Council and the development boundaries taking out the Paul Anderson Memorial Shield for the fourth year in a row.

Finals were then finally upon us with Harrison Bell, Mitch Dorling, Lachlan Higgs, and Jesse Wilkie all running in the Coates League Boys Grand Final at Ikon Park. Then it was time for the main dance.

Will Morris, Blake Anderson, Anthony Laughton and Lachlan Menara umpired the VFL Grand Final for 2023. The crowning moment was gaining air time on Channel 7 with our 'Ooh Ahh, Menara' sign and chant.

And so our umpiring year was finished. The annual ball rolled around and was a great success and as was our end of season festivities.

Senior goal

No offence to anybody else writing a track report in this year's annual report, but I feel we can sometimes do a bit better than the tried-and-true track report. You know the drill, Joe Blow was appointed to this match, and Billy Bloggs did this on the track or Jack Stammers got arrested doing this. Might mention a few things of interest but only certain people in a squad get mentioned and leave others out of the limelight. So we're going at the 2023 Senior Goal Umpires track report a little differently and we're going to imagine as if this year's cohort was the 2023 field for the Melbourne Cup. I wonder what that would look like.....

And it's a big welcome to all here today at the Project Clothing Centre at Victoria Park for the 2023 VFL Senior Squad Melbourne Cup. A top field of 20 runners has been assembled for this year's race, which was opened by the VFL Senior Coach Bradley Letson and the Assistant Coach Frank Dicosmo. Letson spoke well about all the runners in this year's field providing some solid insights to this year's crop and what to expect. Dicosmo said that he'd like to repeat everything that Brad has just said. Whilst this race and all associated training sessions has usually been run on Wednesday, this year's schedule of training and races has been run on Thursdays. This is a concession the senior group made to allow some on the junior squad to not have to miss their 5pm tutes as well as allowing for the horses down in Geelong to not have to change training nights. With that out of the way lets head down to the mounting yard as our experts go through this year's field:

Vintage Doyle (Chris Doyle)- The oldest horse in the field and surprises many when they learn he is still running along with the younger horses, especially as the medical staff seemed to be considering bringing out the screen last year. A proven performer over a long time, was looking to try and shore up a place in this year's finals field but seemed to be sidetracked 174 metres out from the finish. Maybe that midyear trip to the UK to champ King Charles III at Royal Ascot was a contributing factor. A year-to-year proposition at the moment, he is weirdly adorned with equal levels of talcum powder and glitter due to the efforts of a mare in the field victimising him at every opportunity.

Dudman-Doyle Loosen Up (Josh Dudman Doyle)- The newest horse in the field after joining from the development list of horses this year. An incredibly enthusiastic young galloper, it can easily be seen he loves everything about his involvement with the senior group, and each race is an exciting experience for him. An even more enthusiastic performer off the track, his relationship with certain members of the development group has created a 'rat pack' so to speak which has cut a swathe of goodwill all over the Melbourne circuit.

Just A Edwards (Matt Edwards)- Another one of the experienced runners in the field who has proven himself as a standout performer on the senior circuit over a prolonged period. Many form observers thought him likely to feature in the final dash to the line but conspicuous by his absence when the whips were seriously cracking. The only horse wearing a wrist guard, he also found himself in the sick bay for a week when ball met face at Victoria Park late in the season.

Makybe Gardner (Adam Gardner)- One of the more senior horses in the field, having brought up his 100th race during the season not surprisingly on the track at Kinetic Stadium. Remains to be seen how he will fare around the Project Clothing Centre track as at least 98 of his races have been contested at Frankston.

So You Gath (Tom Gath)- Apparently is still a runner amongst this group of senior horses, however this might be news to some. The epitome of a quiet runner he has barely made a peep during his time on the list. Unlike some other gallopers decided to take an overseas sojourn to Japan after he realised his season was over.



Our Henderson's Star (Georgie Henderson)- A newcomer to the Victorian circuit after racing in South Australian circles previously, has settled in nicely amongst the Victorian group. This filly has big wraps on her after being awarded the AFLW Rising Star award in 2022 and was also appointed to this current season's opener. A talented soccer player, she is likely to be the only horse in the field doing soccer dribbling tricks before entering the barriers.

Rogan Josh (Josh Hickman)- Yet another runner who looked like they might have been set for a finals campaign until that pesky Europe travel bug caught him as well. His miniature dachshund has an Instagram account (Wallacethewiener) which is bound to have more followers than the rest of the squad combined.

Kellett Supreme (Brad Kellett)- Another horse to earn selection to their first finals field, this runner impressed more than most getting all the way to the senior preliminary race as well as earning a start in the juniors grand final. Even more commendable considering he endured a nasty fall at the Genis Steel Oval which led to a replacement wearing some garish footwear having to jump in.

Kingston Manning (Tayla Manning)- A big year for this mare who backed up her selection in last year's AFLW decider with selection to run in the National Under 18's carnival featuring the best young horses around the nation as well as bringing up her 50th senior race. This all combined with the constant torture and niggling of the oldest horse in the field carrying on the tradition of the previous captain Cal Leonard. Interesting to see if she runs with the pack

or if she is drawn to the ambulance circling behind the runners.

Delta Marnie (Jake Marnie)- A breakout season for the bustling left hander earning selection to this year's finals field for the first time. Some improved attendance on Thursdays a catalyst for this. This improved attendance also resulted in less colleagues having to ironically introduce themselves when he managed to find his way to Abbott St.

Moloney Puzzle (Brendan Moloney)- Wearing the distinctive blinkers, has gone up a level this year with his first appointment to the finals panel and drawing the attention of the Victorian trainers winning their coaches award. Last seen getting stuck in the middle of a fight between stallions from Hawthorn and Geelong at the MCG. Might need to speak to Sergeant Gardner for some better crowd control techniques.

Might and Monea (Luke Monea)- This stallion who runs out of the Storyville stables has more theories than this writer has had hot dinners. With that being said has managed to back up last year's salute of the judge by going back-to-back in this year's finale whilst also bringing up the 100-race milestone in the finals at the Avalon Airport Oval track. Takes a keen interest in mentoring the next crop of horses to come up as he claims at least two thirds of them as 'my horse'. Surprises some of his competitors (especially the older ones) by his intense warmups on the track before the race, which makes it even more surprising that the oldest horse in the field joined in on the warmup sessions before the 100th race. Monea was surprised that the old horse managed to keep up after sounding like Darth Vader for the first furlong.

Rizio Park (James Rizio)- Surprisingly in the blue 'clash' saddle cloth, it'll be interesting to see if he manages to keep this on as he has been known to shed the top layer in many a setting recently. A cocky strutter around the mounting yard and known to proclaim his barrier and position in the third person. Still can't doubt the pedigree of this stallion who backed up last year's appearance in the big race with a position as first emergency in this year's finale as well as a gallop in the junior race preceding this.

Great Southern Stammers (Jack Stammers)- Fought back from adversity after seriously damaging a fetlock during the previous summers AFLW campaign. Brought up his 50th during this campaign, which drew significant attention and celebration reminiscent of a more substantial milestone. Was looking good for a place in the field for the finals, but a journey to Europe for... checks notes... a wedding seemed to waylay those plans. Should've gone to Tassie....

Steger's Order (Adam Steger)- Resplendent in the green saddle cloth awarded to him for being the top ranked horse in last year's AFLW campaign, with his very distinctive mane which even drew attention from some interesting circles on social media. Managed to carry over that strong form to this year's senior season earning himself a spot in this season's senior finals field, his form has also attracted the attention of the head stewards being rewarded with the VFL Rising Star award

Twilight Thornton (Callum Thornton)- Whilst not happy with his finish at the end of the season, to be named as an emergency for this year's finals field after running in last year's finals is still a highly commendable effort for a colt in his second senior season. Other competitors will be wary of running too close to this horse as he is rapidly shedding hair from his mane causing a potential tripping hazard for other runners.

Tucker's Daughter (Nelson Tucker)- Whilst Thornton is losing hair a rapid rate, Tucker is a unique case in that he has got incredibly grey hair for a horse so young. The soon to be betrothed gelding is probably the only known Australian to pull off the Goal Umpire/Water Skier/ MMA fighter trifecta. Will be very vocal in the barriers and mounting yard leading up to the race.

Varker Lap (John Varker)- One of the more closely followed runners in the field, especially in his hometown of Bendigo where even the most innocuous event has been known to warrant a four page lift out in the local rag. Has proven himself to be an elite performing in the Winter Under 18's carnival as well as being named Horse of the Year. Capped off the year by being appointed to the main race this season. Has drawn strong attention from AFL stewards. Sure to have his sire and Bendigo legend Les keeping a close eye on every race.

Very Wong (Joon-Yip Wong)- Another runner who cut his teeth previously in South Australia. Assumed the position of president of the association this year, fighting for improved working conditions of all involved in the Victorian circuit. Hit a trifecta this year of most backbenders, most elongated squats and most inappropriate comments on the training track. Will want to make sure he can keep his footing after a nasty spill in his last race of the year at DSV Stadium. Nasty for him as it left a decent gash on the lower fetlock, but also annoying for the rest the squad having to endure assistant trainer Dicosmo's return to the track and all that involved.

Young of Penzance (Emma Young)- Has continued to develop in her second season in the top Victorian flight. Chosen to officiate in this current season AFL

W's opening race which is a feather in the cap for this runner from the Peninsula. Lucky to escape sanction from stewards for her brutal use of the flag on Finbar O'Dwyer on a particularly cold Williamstown day earlier in the season. A favourite of the race caller down at Frankston who always singles out when she is involved in a race at the bayside venue. Also jumped in to assist at the same venue during the local league's finals campaign for her dad, Rod, when he was unwell during one of the finals races.

And there you have it. This year's field of runners have had an interesting but also very enjoyable season to say the least. And as they're about to jump we look onto the 2024 season and all that entails with great enthusiasm. Hopefully Disco's end of season video has finished by then.

Development field

This year started with a normal feel back to it, starting back at training before any games, welcoming back Heath Ryan as our coach, the first time in four years we have had the same coach as the previous year. We also welcomed several new faces, half our list this year were new to us, we welcomed Leighton Rowe, Owen Hinson and Jonathan Auditore as assistant coaches to Heath. We also said farewell and good luck to a number of umpires from our list last year, In particular Shamus Dundon Cameron Williams, Jordyn Pearson, Sebastian Dalglish, Lachlan Coyne and Kyle Van Raay with their promotion to the senior list.

When we finally managed to hit the training track, led by our new commander-in chief Matthew Whitehead, we got our first look at how all the new talent were going to fit in. With Chris Menara keeping Luke Hunter honest up at the front of the group there were some questionable fashion choices going on behind with Austin Tattersall, Connor Hawes, Emiel Morvell, Hayden Pearson, and Ryan Mann sporting some interesting sunglasses during the early sessions.

Games started rolling in within a couple of weeks and thanks to the senior squad having a weekend away surfing and singing kumbaya around the campfire it gave a number of us their long-awaited taste of senior footy in a few practice matches.

With the hard yards done and a big pre-season under our belts round one was quickly upon us. Huge congratulations to Sam Hurford who made his senior debut in Round 1, soon followed by Casey

Fellows and Connor Hawes with their debuts in Round 4. Our final debut for the season came in the last round with Ian Herman making his debut. Another notable milestone was to Lucinda Lopes who celebrated her 50th VFLW game in Round 4 of the VFLW season. While we are on milestones a massive congratulations from all of the dev squad to Andrew Talbot on his record-breaking season this year, we all had an enjoyable day and night celebrating at your game and out for dinner, some of us had such a fun time they decided to go back again the day after, looking at you Ben Lefebvre.

As the season was progressing, we had several umpires represent us at the various national championships around the country. Starting with the U16 girls' congratulations to Lucinda Lopes, Samantha Ritchie, Liam Dye, Scott Simpson, Genevieve Devenish and Harry Warmington. Followed by the U16 boys with their trip up to the Gold Coast; congratulations to Lachlan Flinn, Hayden Pearson, Luke Hunter and Austin Tattersall. The U18 Boys were next with big congratulations to Connor Hawes, Jack Cannon and Emiel Morvell. The final championships were the U18 girls with a big congratulations to Hugo Morgan, Genevieve Devenish, Lisa Compton-Robins and Samantha Ritchie.

As one of the lucky squads we get to have three grand finals to officiate during the year. Firstly, our VFLW panel full of first year experience; congratulations Harry Warmington, Jonathan Clark, Michael Whelan and Liam Dye. Congratulations to our Coates Girls grand final umpires Samantha Ritchie, Shannon Van Boven, Brock Reid and Ryan Mann. The big one for our list, the Coates Boys grand final team congratulations Sam Hurford, Connor Hawes, Emiel Morvell and our best first year Scott Simpson.

After what has been our most settled season for a number of years, we can all look back on it and come back next year with a renewed mindset and get ready to take the opportunities that we shall all be presented.

Development boundary

The 2023 season didn't just see some new additions to the umpiring squad, but new coaching members as well.

Alex Keys and Raushaan Seychell came on board as assistant coaches to Lachlan Harty and were instrumental in the development boundary squad reaching record observations as well as overseeing the VFLW Finals Series while Harty was enjoying a few short holidays cheering the Aussies past the Poms. We would like to thank Alex and Raushaan for

their continuous commitment this season and are looking forward to their support in 2024.

Achievements were not just exclusive to new coaches but new umpires as well. The umpire who stood out from the very talented recruits was Solomon Miesen who was named the Best First Year Umpire of this year's boundary squad.

Solomon also accomplished a grand final in his first year, umpiring the VFLW Grand Final alongside Madeleine Lum and Jonathan Peck.

Angus Cameron and Ryan Pulley were umpires who also hit the ground running in their first year at the VFL. They were awarded the Coates Talent League Girls Grand Final alongside Olivia Gricic, who was named the Rising Star of the Development Boundary Squad, a deserved accomplishment.

Mitch Dorling and Harrison Bell also had a massive achievement in the 2023 season, umpiring the Coates Talent League Boys Grand Final, alongside senior umpires Lachlan Higgs and Jesse Wilkie.

Season 2023 also saw Ben Rofe, Kaitlin Barr, Caleb Garraway, Andrew Van Keulen and Melissa Sambrooks officially promoted to the Senior Boundary Squad, A worthy recognition for these umpires who have worked incredibly hard and have been an integral part of the Development Boundary Squad. We wish them all the best and hope to see even more promotions in 2024.

Arguably the greatest achievement of the season was the camaraderie and support shown throughout the season. Whether it was getting a pub feed after Tuesday training at Victoria Park, or abusing each



other at games, the Development Boundary Squad was always a close-knit team that enjoyed each other's company.

This teamwork helped the Squad win their fourth consecutive Paul Anderson Shield, even after a poor showing in the boundary throw-in from Thomas Kreun and an even worse bounce from Jack Buller.

A big congratulations to the entire squad for the whole season, for supporting each other, for continuous application, and for making a fantastic environment that reminds us all why we are umpires.

We would like to give a final farewell to Shaun Bourke who has retired after 64 matches at the VFL including 1 VFL senior match. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours.

For those returning, relax and enjoy yourself, and let's make 2024 even better.

Development goal

State league football returned to its action-packed best in 2023 and with that, we welcomed 11 new umpires to the team. While the squad almost doubled over the offseason, it seemed like we had known each other for a lifetime.

The theme of being a family and connectedness was evident throughout the year as we never missed an opportunity to get around our teammates and support each other. We would engage in friendly banter on the training track, socialise over parras and cob loafs for our weekly dinners, as well as cheer on our fellow umpires when we weren't umpiring.

At the start of the year, we had the pleasure of celebrating Josh Dudman Doyle's senior-squad promotion, a reward for his hard work last season, in what is a fantastic achievement.

For the first time since the pandemic, all three seasons started simultaneously, as we began the Coates Girls, Coates Boys, and VFLW seasons in March. The moment games were played for premiership points, umpires began to join the injury list. Most notably, James Kandler, Issa Mikhael and Alex Tomada spent significant time on the sidelines but always turned up to training and games to support the running umpires.

Over the course of Indigenous Round, we were honoured and privileged to wear tops designed by our very own Josh James, a proud Noongar Wandandi man.

In June, we had to say goodbye to one of our fearless leaders in Matt Lafite who made a move overseas to the United Kingdom. We miss his wit and

professionalism that would be on full display in our coaching sessions, especially when he dug through the archives and shared his thoughts on some hilarious media displayed on the screen.

As we started to roll into finals season, four of our umpires were rewarded with the experience of representing us at the National Championships. Courtney Stelling and Laura Brogan officiated in the AFLW Under 18 Championships, while Phil Pettinella and Connor Petrie travelled to the Gold Coast for the AFL Under 16 Championships. An amazing achievement for all involved.

The first grand final for the year was the VFLW Grand Final played between Collingwood and Port Melbourne at ETU Stadium. On what was a glorious day, Port Melbourne won the game in a thriller. Zak Kenny and Connor Petrie proudly represented us on the day doing a magnificent job, while congratulations also extend out to Phil Pettinella who was the emergency goal umpire.

Next, it was the Coates Girls Grand Final at IKON Park where the Oakleigh Chargers and the Eastern Ranges did battle. Well done to Jenna Green, Phil Pettinella and Cohen Shannon (emergency) on your efforts this season and reaching the final week of the season! Finally, congratulations to James Rodwell on being selected to bench the Coates Boys Grand Final between the Ranges and the Sandy Dragons.

At the end of our season, Bridget Saftenberger, Laura Brogan, and Josh James were chosen to umpire in the 2023 AFLW season in what is a testament to their umpiring over the course of the year. Further congratulations go out to Laura and Josh who are officiating AFLW for the first time.

During the final stages of the season, we were saddened by the retirement of Lochlin Hamer who in his five years has made a connection with everyone on the list. He was sent off in style – on a cold Friday night in Bendigo. But despite the parameters, Hamer had a cheer squad to bid him farewell.

A huge thank you to everyone involved in making this season an enjoyable one. Special shoutout to Bridget Saftenberger who was our track rep and unofficial mum of the group, what you have done for our squad is greatly appreciated.

Enjoy the off-season and see you in 2024!



Milestones

175 VFL matches

Adam Bell	Sunday, 16 July 2023	North Melbourne v. Box Hill (Arden Street Oval)
John Cooper	Saturday, 15 April 2023	Port Melbourne v. Northern Bullants (North Port Oval)

100 VFL matches

John Varker	Sunday, 24 September 2023	Gold Coast v. Werribee (Princes Park)
Luke Monea	Saturday, 2 September 2023	Werribee v. Box Hill (Chirnside Park)
Liam Pain	Saturday, 5 August 2023	Footscray v. North Melbourne (North Port Oval)
Adam Gardner	Saturday, 10 June 2023	Frankston v. Footscray (Frankston Oval)

50 VFL matches

Tayla Manning	Saturday, 5 August 2023	Footscray v. North Melbourne (North Port Oval)
Greta Miller	Saturday, 5 August 2023	Williamstown v. Richmond (Williamstown Oval)
Jack Stammers	Saturday, 8 July 2023	Coburg v. Carlton (Coburg City Oval)
Chris Williams	Sunday, 25 June 2023	Port Melbourne v. Essendon (North Port Oval)
Trent Bowes	Saturday, 24 June 2023	Collingwood v. Sydney (Olympic Park)
Lachlan Higgs	Saturday, 24 June 2023	Collingwood v. Sydney (Olympic Park)
Joshua Ball	Sunday, 11 June 2023	Richmond v. Werribee (Punt Road Oval)
Sam Ferguson	Saturday, 20 May 2023	Werribee v. Gold Coast (Chirnside Park)
Nick Scott	Saturday, 20 May 2023	Port Melbourne v. Sydney (North Port Oval)
Kyle Fisher	Saturday, 20 May 2023	Essendon v. Richmond (MCG)
Lewis Spiker	Saturday, 20 May 2023	Essendon v. Richmond (MCG)
Nicholas Jankovskis	Sunday, 14 May 2023	Sandringham v. Port Melbourne (Beach Road Oval)
Jake D'Angelo	Sunday, 7 May 2023	Geelong v. Southport (Kardinia Park)
Luke Porter	Sunday, 23 April 2023	Werribee v. Williamstown (Chirnside Park)
Joel Clamp	Saturday, 25 March 2023	Collingwood v. Coburg (Victoria Park)

50 VFLW (Field)

Lucinda Lopes	Sunday, 16 April 2023	Hawthorn v. Collingwood (Box Hill City Oval)
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First VFL match

Ian Herman	Sunday, 20 August 2023	Sandringham v. Williamstown (Beach Road Oval)
Shaun Bourke	Saturday, 8 July 2023	Coburg v. Carlton (Coburg City Oval)
Reuben Dyer	Saturday, 3 June 2023	Carlton v. Frankston (Princes Park)
Wade Anderson	Saturday, 20 May 2023	Port Melbourne v. Sydney (North Port Oval)
Mitchell Dorling	Saturday, 20 May 2023	Casey v. North Melbourne (Casey Fields)
Connor Hawes	Sunday, 16 April 2023	Sandringham v. Frankston (Beach Road Oval)
Casey Fellows	Saturday, 15 April 2023	Williamstown v. Coburg (Williamstown Oval)
Joshua Dudman-Doyle	Friday, 7 April 2023	North Melbourne v. Carlton (Arden Street Oval)
Georgia Henderson	Saturday, 1 April 2023	North Melbourne v. Southport (Arden Street Oval)
Sam Hurford	Sunday, 26 March 2023	Richmond v. Northern Bullants (Punt Road Oval)
Kylie Van Raay	Sunday, 26 March 2023	Essendon v. GWS Giants (The Hanger)
Dominic Schiliro	Saturday, 25 March 2023	Collingwood v. Coburg (Victoria Park)
Lachlan Coyne	Saturday, 25 March 2023	Collingwood v. Coburg (Victoria Park)

Andrew Talbot - Record breaker

There has rightly been a lot of focus this season on VFL legend Ben Jolley closing in on becoming just the third man to play 300 VFA/VFL matches and then breaking the matches record of Billy Swan a few weeks later.

Then there is Andrew Talbot. Fittingly wearing the No.1 shirt, he led the umpiring team onto Box Hill City Oval on Saturday to celebrate his 236th VFL senior match when the Hawks take on Jolley's Williamstown.

Talbot, who broke the VFL match record of his mentor Dan Beard in Round 1, told the State of Play podcast that umpiring was always going to be his destiny.

"Dad tells a weird story that when I was a little kid I was in the car and I pointed out a bumper sticker that said, 'Be an umpire' and I said, 'I want to do that,'" Talbot said.

"It would have been when I was five or six years old, so I think deep down it was always meant to be and I just needed to find how to get started."

He officiated his first match as a field umpire in 2003 and quickly rose through the ranks, making the VFL development squad in 2008 before being promoted to the senior list the following year.

He made his debut on the same ground he will celebrate the record at in a Round 2 clash between Box Hill and Northern Bullants.

He went on to umpire the 2009 and 2013 TAC Cup (now Coates Talent League) Grand Finals and was the emergency umpire for 2012 VFL decider before being promoted to the AFL rookie list in 2013.

He spent three seasons on the list and was capped as an AFL umpire when he went on as an injury replacement for Jason Armstrong in the second quarter of the Round 3 clash between North Melbourne and Port Adelaide at Marvel Stadium in 2014.

While there were sadly no more opportunities at AFL level, the state league honours kept coming.

Talbot officiated the last VFL Development League Grand Final in 2017, before a memorable 2018 season that saw him named the VFL Field Umpire of

the Year and take charge of the Box Hill Hawks' 2018 grand final win over Casey Demons.

Awarded a VFL life member when he reached the 175-match threshold in 2019, his love for the game, its players and characters has never diminished.

"The challenge of being involved in the game is quite a privilege," he said. "I just love being involved in football. I grew up going to the footy with the family every single weekend. My mum took me interstate just to go watch football, so I grew up living and breathing the game."

Talbot said the relationships made along the way had contributed to his longevity in football.

"I've made so many friends throughout the years through umpiring, being coached by people, being mentored by others."

"The grand finals are illustrious to come by so they're the ones I'm pretty proud of, but at the end of the day I'm just most proud of the people I've been able to connect with and the lifelong friendships I've been able to take away from the game."



Adam Bell – 175 VFL matches

Boundary umpire stalwart Adam Bell celebrated his 175th VFL match during Round 17 at Arden St, awarding him VFL life membership, long awaited after COVID interruptions of the past three years, to be just the third boundary umpire to reach this milestone.

First making the list in 2009, Belly quickly became a cult figure with his sling throw, rising through the ranks to consistently push deep into finals, reaching consecutive TAC Cup Boys Grand Finals in 2015 and 2016.

Belly has shown remarkable consistency over his time at the VFL, having umpired over 70% of his total state league matches at VFL level, highlighting his determination and attention to detail with his umpiring to be able to continue to develop and adapt to ensure he was a constant feature in the senior appointments.

To borrow a stat from Simon Blight in Belly's 150th match article, current Boundary Development Coach, Lachlan Harty made the list the same year as Bell, has retired, returned for a couple of years, retired again and has been coaching for three years over the same time span that Belly has been on the list, further highlighting Belly's durability and consistency.

Off the field, Belly has demonstrated his willingness and passion to pass on his experience to the up-and-coming umpires, having coached the local boundary umpires in Geelong for two years, as well as taking on a mentor role with the development and younger senior umpires. This is highlighted by the fact that five current umpires that Belly has coached are currently on the VFL list (senior and development), showing the impact he has had on the umpiring space.



L: Adam Bell. R: John Cooper

John Cooper - 175 VFL matches

"John, congratulations on your 175th match however you could've run harder out of defence".

Despite what coach Buwulda might think, on Saturday the 15th of April, JC umpired his 175th VFL senior match, Port Melbourne v Northern Bullants. Unfortunately, due to a miscalculation, this wasn't celebrated to the voracity in which it deserves however the magnitude of this should not be understated, hence the \$175 JC contributed to the fines kitty for this match. To put how many matches that is in context, Super Dooper has more senior matches than all his senior coaches have combined.

JC has been a part of the furniture at the VFL boundary squad since 2011 and has been a regular high performer among the group. He has run the TAC cup grand final in 2017, 3 VFL grand finals (2018, 2019 and 2022), including being named Boundary Umpire of the Year in 2022.

Throughout 2017 and 2018 he was skipper of the boundary panel, following in the footsteps of the great Leggo. While skipper, Super Dooper created the foundation for the fantastic culture of camaraderie, professionalism and enjoyment that will last for years to come. He is the favourite among the group, being just about everyone's first choice whenever a boundary is asked whom they want to run.

On the field, JC undoubtedly has the best trigger on the list, with amazing consistent running throughout all quarters. Off the field, I've never seen Johnny not have a smile on the face. A wealth of knowledge for umpiring that is utilised by teammates and coaches alike and whether on or off the field, has a "lead by example" mentality with a mindset to never let anything affect him too much, no matter how unfair it may be for him. Even the coaches look up to JC, with one of the development coaches, Lachlan Harty, copying JC's haircut in an attempt to get more credibility.

Resilience is definitely one of John's strengths, getting agonisingly close to the VFL grand final in 2016 and 2017 before making a mistake in the penultimate match to just miss out, however JC just came back the next year with a positive mindset looking to improve on his previous performances.

Luke Monea - 100 VFL matches

Luke Monea umpired his 100th Smithy's VFL match in the Werribee v Box Hill Hawks second qualifying final at the Avalon Airport Oval. A special achievement made even more so due to the enormity of the occasion and being the first goal umpire to bring up a significant milestone in a final since Simon Plumridge's 150th in the 2019 VFL Preliminary Final.

Starting at the BLK Clothing Centre (now Project Clothing Centre) in 2016 out of the Essendon District Football League and in the footsteps of his best mate Cameron Milich, Luke was a rather quiet achiever in his first year on the list, but it was evident a determination and ability shone through, with him representing the group at the National Under 16 Championships. He then shot straight into senior footy in Round 1 of 2017 umpiring the Footscray v Box Hill Hawks clash at the VU Whitten Oval.

After self admittedly taking some time to get used to senior footy, from 2019 Luke has really thrived, doing his 50th match in the final round Northern Blues v Sandringham encounter and making his senior finals debut. After the two years of COVID-19 craziness Luke has been the benchmark both on and off the track. He was the Victorian rep in the National Under 18s Championships in 2022 and the same year, the VFL Goal Umpire of the Year and was appointed to the 2022 Smithy's VFL Grand Final. This season has been no different with another stellar year being capped off with his appointment to the Gold Coast Suns v Werribee decider at IKON Park.

Luke is a consummate professional on and off the track and as highlighted earlier has really set an example in the way he diligently prepares himself at training and on match days and also away from the group. His peers have acknowledged his standing with appointment to the Senior Goal Leadership Group for a number of seasons. He has also mentored numerous umpires from the development squad and umpires from local leagues under the community program and has taken pleasure when 'his crew' earn accolades. With that being said he claims about 25 (out of 30) Dev Squad umpires currently so any Goal Umpire who owns 4 flags seems to qualify.

Adam Gardner - 100 VFL matches

On 10 June (Round 12 of the 2023 VFL season), our very own Adam "Gards" Gardner umpired his 100th match at Frankston. Some say that this is also his 100th match umpired at Frankston...go figure that out!

Gards is not your typical goal umpire. He is a character that consistently oozes sarcastic and amusing "coolness" on and off the track. Whether it be his 'thongs attire' pre and post training, his overly enthusiastic (and sometimes deadly) defender skills during drills, or his incredibly loud boundary umpire assists, Gards offers a unique entertainment to the group, which is highly appreciated by his peers.

Furthermore, Gard's can also be somewhat 'policeish' on policy despite his laid-back attitude.

Maybe his professional endeavours have an impact on this behaviour?

Outside of this, there was also a rumour circulating that he once participated in a running battle with a VFL team manager on break times...only Gard's could get away with that.

All jokes aside, to accomplish 100 matches in state league is simply astonishing. The fact that Adam balances this with his career whilst also raising a beautiful family, is a testament to his dedication as a VFL senior umpire. Gards, congrats mate!



L: Adam Gardner. R: Luke Monea

Liam Pain - 100 VFL matches

Mildura - a place that has produced many sporting icons: Jason Akermanis, Todd and Rick Kelly, Cam Waters and beloved, five-foot tall boundary umpire Liam Pain.

Departing from the Sunraysia League in 2015 for the big smoke, the Pain Train has steamed through 139 state level matches, including three senior VFL finals.

In Round 20, 2023, he arrived at the final station: a well-deserved 100th VFL match at Port Melbourne, becoming the twentieth boundary umpire to achieve this milestone. After the match, he proceeded to try his first ever beer (fact check required) and enjoyed it immensely.

For a guy of short stature, the great man has built a presence larger than any boundary umpire that has graced the Project Centre before him. A trip to Frankston will prove this fact, where the crowd will scream at the boundaries to "bring back the midget!!!" louder than they play their bongo drums.

For his final match, a large group of boundary umpires, his family, friends, Mel's mum and my mum came to support the little fella. As I happily handed off the 17th throw in a row to him, in front of this cohort, the roar and cheers that came from North Port as he slung the ball in, has only been matched during the finals series. That's how special this lad is to us!

If there was a "Best Boundary Clubman Award", Painy would win it every year, in similar fashion to how his coach smashed all of us in that ONE time trial. From his role as VP of the VFUA, to encouraging the group to get around others' milestones, or taking Happy with him to support his mates at random Casey matches, you can always rely on Painy to have your back and be by your side.

Well...except that one time he decided to party a little too hard the night before the footy trip in 2016, subsequently missing the flight up to the GC and travelling on his lonesome.

Liam, on behalf of all the boundaries (and the umpiring group as a whole), thank you for everything you have brought to umpiring. The support you have provided to each and every umpire (in particular the girls coming through the system), the laughs and shenanigans, and most importantly the positivity to

keep everyone going during the colder, tougher parts of the season.

We will miss seeing you every week at training. Hopefully, if you do pop down for a visit, you'll line it up with Tommy Horsten, so we can watch you wrestle each other in the rooms (without the risk of missing weeks).

Congratulations on the fantastic achievement, legend!!! We hope you enjoyed your 100th match and we hope to see you helping the next generation of umpires coming through our community in the future!



John Varker – 100 VFL matches

The year was 2016 John walked in to the then known Buffalo Centre at the sweet age of 16.

In tow was dad Les and close friend Jeremy Ford, who were both still completing their final years of school.

John spent two years on the Development Squad, before getting the Senior Squad call up.

Here is where the alter ego Varkdaddy emerged.

Varkdaddy's career has expanded across multiple divisions and leagues including the one elusive NEAFL match that tipped him over the edge to reach his 100th match milestone this year in the 2023 Smithy's VFL Grand Final. John has also been involved in AFLW where he has officiated in 37 matches including one grand final.

John's commitment to the game and professionalism carries across both competitions.

The commitment Varkdaddy has shown over the years driving from Bendigo to Victoria Park and matches shows the character he has developed today – a committed, respected umpire across all disciplines.

In his 100 VFL matches John has been fortunate enough to travel to other states and experience umpiring on footy's biggest stages. John has been on the MCG, Marvel and a big highlight, Metricon where he umpired this year's prelim before going on to umpire the grand final.

John contacted the *Bendigo Advertiser* multiple times over the weeks leading up to the milestone, enquiring about when his 100th match motorcade would take place. The Addie worked on publicity and ticketing.

John also introduced us to his partner Catelyn who has been a massive support on his journey who we have embraced and love seeing her support John.

Off field there is too much to write about the person he has grown into since walking through those doors at Victoria Park. Most of which cannot be shared here.

However, what CAN be said is that the whole squad are immensely proud of what John has achieved in his time.

We all congratulate John on his 100th game milestone and can't wait to see what he achieves in his umpiring journey.



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
2002	S.Grun	M.Nicholls	S.Ryan	G.Gibson	C.Morrison	A.Little	C.Appleton
2003	S.Grun	S.Meredith	M.Stevic	R.Haala	S.Irish	J.Bennison	L.Walker
2004	C.Donlon	C.Kamolins	D.Sully	A.Coote	M.Foster	M.Lefevre	M.Hammond
2005	J.Armstrong	M.Jennings	D.Sully	I.Burrows	G.Large	M.Lefevre	M.Hammond
2006	J.Mollison	H.Ryan	S.Stewart	G.Large	M.Lefevre	C.Roberts	A.Clifton
2007	M.Jennings	J.Mollison	S.Stewart	C.Hay	G.Large	N.Woods	B.Letson
2008	R.Findlay	M.Jennings	T.Pannell	C.Gordon	S.Jones	N.Woods	P.Balding
2009	M.Jennings	A.Mitchell	B.Ritchie	G.Bergroth	D.Kowalski	M.Marantelli	C.Lai
2010	M.Brown	M.Leppard	B.Ritchie	D.Kowlaski	M.Marantelli	P.Tongue	A.Kyrkou
2011	D.Harris	B.Hosking	A.Mitchell	C.Esler	M.Jenkinson	M.Tomkins	A.Kyrkou
2012	T.Burgess	S.Gleeson	D.Harris	D.Cusack	T.Lougoon	B.Macdonald	M.Craig
2013	S.Gleeson	R.O'Gorman	B.Ritchie	D.Cusack	T.Lougoon	J.Mather	D.Benwell
2014	N.Brown	J.Edwards	B.Wallace	J.Andrews	B.Elvey	M.Dervan	S.Piperno
				J.Robertson	J.Scully		
2015	T.Burgess	D.Butcher	H.Gavine	N.Laurence	B.Macdonald	M.Dervan	S.Plumridge
				P.Dineen	L.Rayner		
2016	H.Ryan	D.Butcher	H.Gavine	N.Laurence	B.Macdonald	D.Benwell	M.Maclure
				P.Dineen	D.Main		
2017	N.Brown	D.Butcher	A.Gianfagna	P.Jackson	K.Ferguson	S.Walsh	S.Plumridge
				P.Dineen	D.Main		
2018	J.Howorth	P.Rebeschini	A.Talbot	S.Blight	J.Cooper	C.Leonard	S.Plumridge
				J.Furman	S.Stagg		
2019	M.Pell	P.Rebeschini	M.Rodger	J.Cooper	K.Ferguson	C.Leonard	S.Plumridge
				N.Phillips	S.Stagg		
2020	No grand final						
2021	No grand final						
2022	A.Adair	M.Rodger	M.Young	J.Cooper	T.Duncan	L.Monea	J.Rizio
				P.Jackson	Z.Mousaco		
2023	J.Howard	N.Jankovskis	N.Scott	B.Anderson	A.Laughton	L.Monea	J.Varker
				L.Menara	W.Morris		

VFLW grand final umpires

	Field		Boundary				Goal	
2015	M.Rodger	J.Spencer						
2016	P.Rebeschini	N.Jankovskis						
2017	S.Ferguson	J.Howard	J.Clamp	P.Damato	B.Anderson	B.Dickson	S.Atkins	J.Griffiths
2018	J.Ball	L.Porter	N.Scott	R.Kane	A.Pretorius	B.Dickson	T.Manning	J.Stammers
2019	H.Birch	C.Gibson	B.Hunter	S.Beer	K.Fisher	C.Malcolm	J.Marnie	B.Moloney
2020	No grand final							
2021	No grand final							
2022	C.Hawes	H.Morgan	K.Van Raay	S.Bourke	M.Dorling	L.Myatt	S.Polden	C.Shannon
2023	J.Clark	H.Warmington	M.Whelan	M.Lum	S.Miesen	J.Peck	Z.Kenny	C.Petrie

Coates League (Girls) grand final umpires

	Field			Boundary		Goal	
2019	K.Laker	L.Lopes	C.Williams	K.Barr	C.Malcolm	C.Brown	T.Gath
2020	No grand final						
2021	L.Coyne	S.Dalglish	S.Dundon	D.Petrucci	M.Sambrooks	E.Young	J.Dorrat-Thorpe
2022	L.Coyne	J. Gillespie	N. Thorneycroft	K.Barr	H. Bell	C.Petrie	B.Saftenberger
2023	B.Reid	S. Ritchie	S. van Boven	A.Cameron	O.Grcic	R.Pulley	J.Green



Coates League (Boys) 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.M-Smith	M.O'Donnell
2011	N.Brown	M.Curtis	M.Oakley	J.Andrews	G.Bergroth	A.M-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	D.Benwell	A.Kyrkou
				J.Robertson	A.Bell		
2016	L.Rowe	C.Dore	J.Howorth	S.Blight	P.Jackson	M.Edwards	C.Doyle
				K.Ferguson	A.Bell		
2017	M.Pell	N.Jankovskis	N.Toner	S.Blight	L.Wilkie	P.Trotter	C.Doyle
				J.Cooper	S.Stagg		
2018	P.Bailes	J.Clamp	C.Watts	K.Ferguson	A.Hawkes	J.Varker	P.Dwyer
				T.Horsten	L.Wilkie		
2019	S.Ferguson	N.Jankovskis	N.Scott	J.Blain	M.Crowley	L.Monea	J.Rizio
				T.Bowes	R.Kane		
2020	No grand final						
2021	No grand final						
2022	L.Coyne	S.Dundon	C.Williams	W.Anderson	J.Brayshaw	M.Edwards	J.Varker
				L.Perdon	B.Rofe		
2023	C.Hawes	S.Hurford	E.Morvell	H.Bell	M.Dorling	B.Kellett	J.Rizio
				L.Higgs	J.Wilkie		

John Russo Trophy

1997	R.Davidson	2010	R.Mills
1998	D.Flegg	2012	D.Butcher
1999	A.Black	2013	M.Curtis
2001	C.Snell	2014	S.Piperno
2003	D.Wilson	2015	D.Butcher
2004	R.Findlay	2015	L.Rayner
2005	J.Armstrong	2017	M.Curtis
2005	A.Wojcik	2018	A.Talbot
2006	D.Flegg	2021	M.Sambrooks
2008	S.Gloag	2022	M.Mahoney

Courage award

1994	D.Hammond	2004	P.Balding	2012	D.Cusack	2015	G.Verberne
1995	A.Malcolm	2005	B.McCorkell	2013	L.Keen	2017	J.Grindal
1996	D.Beard	2011	B.McCorkell	2013	J.Mather	2017	D.Main
1998	S.Nathan	2011	M.Sanders	2015	B.Macdonald	2017	S.Plumridge
2001	P.Anderson					2023	L.Wright

AFLW 2023

Field umpire	2023	Total	Boundary umpire	2023	Total	Goal umpire	2023	Total
Josh Ball	11	19	Blake Anderson	7	57			
Thomas Chrystie	6	22	Kaitlin Barr	10	22	Laura Brogan	5	5
Joel Clamp	10	21	Trent Bowes	11	53	Matthew Edwards	7	30
Lisa Compton-Robins	4	9	James Brayshaw	9	9	Georgia Henderson	12	28
Lachlan Coyne	7	7	John Cooper	7	41	Josh Hickman	8	22
Genevieve Devenish	8	25	Jake D'Angelo	8	27	Tayla Manning	5	36
Courtney Gibson	9	39	Kyle Fisher	10	33	Luke Monea	8	37
Jack Howard	6	15	Anthony Laughton	7	29	James Rizio	8	34
Nicholas Jankovskis	5	33	Madeleine Lum	9	34	Bridget Saftenberger	5	11
Lucinda Lopes	6	24	Corey Malcolm	11	21	Jack Stammers	10	32
Tom Lyon	9	9	Lachlan Menara	8	29	Adam Steger	7	29
Jordyn Pearson	9	33	Greta Miller	14	53	John Varker	5	38
Luke Porter	11	31	Mitch O'Neill	3	3	Emma Young	8	20
Sam Ritchie	1	1	Melissa Sambrooks	13	33			
Nick Scott	8	18	Dominic Schiliro	13	29			
Andrew Talbot	8	8						

Statistics - 2023

Field Umpire	VFL	Coates Boys	VWFL	Coates Girls	Umpire	VFL	Coates Boys	VWFL	Coates Girls
Joshua Ball	20 (60)	0 (13)	0 (7)	0 (3)	Luke Porter	21 (66)	0 (25)	0 (15)	0 (0)
Jack Cannon	0 (0)	12 (32)	0 (20)	0 (11)	Brock Reid	0 (0)	4 (5)	5 (5)	11 (11)
Thomas Chrystie*	15 (135)	0 (30)	0 (2)	0 (0)	Samantha Ritchie	0 (0)	1 (1)	4 (5)	11 (11)
Joel Clamp	24 (73)	0 (26)	0 (7)	0 (1)	William Ross	0 (0)	11 (16)	3 (20)	2 (16)
Jonathan Clark	0 (0)	5 (6)	11 (12)	1 (1)	Nick Scott	24 (65)	0 (17)	0 (8)	0 (4)
Lisa Compton-Robins	0 (0)	3 (10)	7 (13)	6 (10)	Scott Simpson	0 (0)	15 (15)	1 (1)	1 (1)
Lachlan Coyne	19 (19)	0 (16)	0 (10)	0 (15)	Jai Smith	0 (0)	6 (8)	3 (3)	11 (11)
Sebastian Dalglish	17 (20)	0 (23)	0 (13)	0 (17)	Jacob Stuckey	0 (0)	11 (28)	5 (23)	5 (15)
Genevieve Devenish	0 (0)	5 (14)	6 (18)	3 (8)	Andrew Talbot	23 (247)	0 (19)	0 (1)	0 (0)
Shamus Dundon	10 (19)	1 (27)	1 (17)	0 (9)	Austin Tattersall	0 (0)	4 (19)	5 (18)	7 (15)
Liam Dye	0 (0)	5 (5)	8 (10)	2 (6)	Shannon van Boven	0 (0)	4 (4)	7 (7)	10 (10)
Casey Fellows	2 (2)	13 (13)	2 (2)	0 (0)	Kylie van Raay	10 (10)	1 (10)	1 (11)	0 (3)
Lachlan Flinn	0 (0)	10 (18)	5 (14)	3 (7)	Harry Warmington	0 (0)	6 (6)	9 (9)	2 (2)
Jackson Gillespie	0 (1)	7 (26)	1 (21)	3 (20)	Ned Welsh	0 (0)	5 (5)	4 (4)	5 (5)
Sophie Gleeson	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3)	9 (9)	Michael Whelan	0 (0)	6 (7)	8 (13)	3 (3)
Connor Hawes	3 (3)	13 (31)	1 (15)	0 (9)	Michael Willcox	20 (44)	0 (13)	0 (17)	0 (5)
Douglas Haworth	0 (0)	3 (3)	8 (9)	4 (5)	Cameron Williams	15 (19)	0 (33)	0 (23)	0 (16)
Ian Herman	1 (1)	13 (30)	4 (28)	0 (18)	Jeremy Zhou	0 (0)	4 (4)	6 (6)	7 (7)
Jack Howard	24 (54)	0 (38)	0 (13)	0 (1)	Boundary Umpire				
Luke Hunter	0 (0)	10 (21)	3 (17)	1 (11)	Blake Anderson	19 (83)	0 (14)	0 (9)	0 (1)
Sam Hurford	6 (6)	13 (13)	1 (1)	0 (0)	Shaylee Anderson	0 (0)	0 (2)	0 (0)	1 (1)
Campbell Hymans	0 (0)	6 (6)	8 (12)	3 (6)	Wade Anderson	3 (3)	9 (17)	2 (7)	2 (14)
Nicholas Jankovskis	23 (67)	0 (28)	0 (13)	0 (0)	Nicholas Bahr	0 (0)	8 (10)	8 (10)	4 (5)
Elias Kafritsas	0 (0)	7 (21)	3 (29)	8 (21)	Ashlee Ball	0 (0)	4 (7)	9 (9)	6 (6)
Arron Knezevic	0 (0)	8 (21)	6 (22)	0 (10)	Kaitlin Barr	14 (15)	2 (16)	1 (25)	0 (23)
Ben Lefebvre	0 (0)	3 (3)	3 (5)	7 (7)	Adam Bell	18 (178)	0 (35)	0 (6)	0 (0)
Lucinda Lopes ¹	0 (0)	2 (50)	7 (54)	7 (20)	Harrison Bell	3 (4)	12 (22)	1 (8)	2 (9)
Thomas Lyon	16 (48)	0 (30)	0 (11)	0 (4)	Lachlan Bezzina	0 (0)	3 (5)	11 (12)	5 (6)
Matthew Mahoney	19 (38)	0 (31)	0 (25)	0 (1)	Josh Blain	12 (34)	5 (45)	0 (16)	0 (6)
Ryan Mann	0 (0)	8 (22)	6 (17)	7 (16)	Shaun Bourke	1 (1)	12 (27)	4 (27)	0 (9)
Cooper Marriott	0 (0)	12 (14)	4 (9)	4 (4)	Trent Bowes	18 (56)	0 (27)	0 (11)	0 (0)
James Meek	0 (0)	5 (7)	7 (7)	6 (6)	James Brayshaw	17 (40)	3 (16)	1 (13)	1 (6)
Christopher Menara	0 (0)	5 (7)	8 (12)	3 (3)	Ryan Brown	0 (0)	5 (7)	4 (4)	6 (6)
Hugo Morgan	0 (0)	9 (27)	2 (24)	1 (15)	Jack Buller	0 (0)	8 (15)	5 (14)	3 (8)
Emiel Morvell	0 (0)	14 (32)	1 (17)	0 (9)	Angus Cameron	0 (0)	7 (7)	7 (9)	7 (7)
Alex Murray	20 (40)	0 (33)	0 (20)	0 (1)	John Cooper	16 (187)	1 (26)	0 (1)	1 (1)
Connor Newett	0 (0)	3 (17)	6 (16)	3 (11)	Michael Court	0 (0)	5 (7)	7 (7)	8 (8)
Oliver Pearce	0 (0)	3 (4)	5 (5)	11 (11)	Jake D'Angelo	16 (61)	3 (27)	1 (12)	0 (3)
Hayden Pearson	0 (0)	12 (25)	3 (8)	2 (5)	Mitchell Dorling	3 (3)	11 (21)	2 (13)	3 (6)
Jordyn Pearson	13 (15)	0 (11)	0 (13)	0 (4)	Reuben Dyer	4 (4)	9 (15)	5 (9)	1 (5)
Matthew Pongratic	17 (69)	0 (34)	0 (7)	0 (0)					

¹ Lucinda Lopes umpired 5 U18 Boys and 10 VFLW matches as a boundary umpire. Totals: U18 Boys 55, VFLW 64. * Includes NEAFL matches.

Boundary Umpire	VFL	Coates Boys	VWFL	Coates Girls	Goal Umpire	VFL	Coates Boys	VWFL	Coates Girls
Kyle Fisher	18 (61)	2 (37)	0 (12)	0 (2)	Nathan Dugdale	0 (0)	4 (4)	9 (9)	8 (8)
Monique Galea	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (6)	6 (6)	Matthew Edwards	20 (146)	0 (32)	0 (1)	0 (0)
Caleb Garraway	5 (10)	1 (16)	0 (11)	0 (6)	Adam Gardner*	12 (105)	1 (65)	0 (12)	0 (2)
Cooper Geall	0 (0)	10 (15)	6 (16)	2 (5)	Thomas Gath	13 (34)	1 (10)	0 (11)	0 (5)
Luke Gonis	0 (0)	3 (4)	8 (9)	5 (5)	Benjamin Geleit	0 (0)	7 (18)	7 (13)	2 (5)
Olivia Grcic	0 (0)	5 (8)	8 (17)	4 (8)	Jenna Green	0 (0)	3 (3)	11 (11)	14 (14)
Lachlan Higgs	20 (59)	3 (20)	0 (11)	0 (4)	Brady Gutbier	0 (0)	9 (26)	7 (17)	6 (22)
Thomas Kruen	0 (0)	4 (4)	7 (7)	9 (9)	Lochlin Hamer	0 (0)	8 (20)	6 (21)	5 (9)
Anthony Laughton*	19 (78)	2 (14)	0 (1)	0 (0)	Brad Heffernan-Benfield	0 (0)	9 (9)	8 (8)	10 (10)
Mitch Lea	0 (1)	16 (25)	2 (12)	2 (3)	Georgia Henderson	12 (12)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Madeleine Lum	1 (12)	7 (21)	9 (27)	1 (3)	Joshua Hickman	14 (65)	2 (24)	1 (9)	0 (1)
Corey Malcolm	9 (23)	1 (12)	1 (17)	3 (7)	James Kandler	0 (0)	3 (19)	1 (19)	4 (12)
Lachlan Menara	22 (46)	2 (12)	0 (8)	0 (8)	Bradley Kellett	17 (41)	3 (21)	0 (25)	0 (15)
Benjamin Merrick	0 (0)	10 (19)	2 (11)	5 (10)	Damon Kelly	0 (0)	4 (11)	5 (14)	6 (11)
Solomon Miesen	0 (0)	9 (9)	8 (8)	0 (0)	Jack Kennedy	0 (0)	2 (2)	2 (2)	9 (9)
Greta Miller	18 (53)	1 (15)	1 (8)	0 (5)	Zac Kenny	0 (0)	7 (8)	7 (7)	5 (5)
Daniel Molino	0 (0)	2 (2)	4 (6)	9 (9)	Charlie Lodge	0 (0)	6 (11)	4 (16)	4 (8)
Daniel Mortlock	0 (0)	13 (13)	7 (7)	0 (0)	Tayla Manning	13 (51)	1 (17)	0 (20)	0 (5)
Zachary Mousaco	10 (40)	1 (6)	0 (10)	0 (5)	Jackson Mansell	0 (0)	4 (4)	5 (5)	5 (5)
Ben Myatt	0 (0)	5 (6)	8 (8)	9 (10)	Jake Marnie	17 (39)	4 (16)	0 (20)	0 (8)
Luke Myatt	3 (6)	10 (30)	2 (23)	2 (17)	Noah Meyers	0 (0)	5 (14)	3 (8)	4 (10)
Mitch O'Neill	16 (37)	3 (10)	0 (5)	0 (8)	Issa Mikhael	0 (0)	5 (5)	0 (0)	6 (6)
Liam Pain	16 (100)	3 (24)	1 (6)	0 (2)	Brendan Moloney	14 (35)	5 (36)	0 (25)	0 (9)
Jonathon Peck	0 (0)	8 (14)	8 (18)	1 (4)	Luke Monea*	21 (103)	0 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Lachlan Perdon	16 (24)	5 (19)	0 (7)	1 (10)	Jake Penny	0 (0)	4 (4)	6 (6)	9 (9)
Oliver Pratt	0 (0)	3 (3)	1 (1)	4 (4)	Connor Petrie	0 (0)	9 (17)	8 (13)	3 (10)
Ryan Pulley	0 (0)	5 (7)	7 (12)	12 (15)	Phillip Pettinella	0 (0)	9 (19)	7 (21)	2 (11)
Benjamin Rofo	16 (20)	5 (29)	0 (13)	0 (15)	Samuel Polden	0 (0)	4 (14)	6 (16)	2 (5)
Melissa Sambrooks	14 (20)	5 (43)	0 (29)	0 (11)	James Rizio*	21 (77)	1 (8)	0 (5)	0 (4)
Dominic Schiliro	17 (17)	1 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	James Rodwell	0 (0)	8 (23)	10 (24)	1 (14)
Vo Schofield	0 (0)	6 (6)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Samuel Rogers	0 (0)	5 (32)	6 (39)	2 (20)
Lachlan Smith	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	2 (2)	Bridget Saftenberger	0 (0)	4 (13)	8 (23)	4 (15)
Lewis Spiker	19 (63)	1 (28)	0 (7)	0 (5)	Cohen Shannon	0 (0)	6 (10)	10 (24)	6 (7)
Ben Tingiri	0 (0)	7 (7)	8 (9)	4 (4)	Jack Stammers	14 (55)	1 (15)	0 (11)	0 (4)
Daniel Urbans	11 (34)	3 (46)	0 (12)	1 (12)	Adam Steger	16 (36)	1 (12)	0 (13)	0 (2)
Andrew van Keulen	12 (14)	4 (21)	0 (16)	0 (4)	Courtney Stelling	0 (0)	4 (4)	5 (6)	11 (11)
Jesse Wilkie	17 (71)	4 (22)	1 (2)	0 (0)	Callum Thornton	15 (30)	2 (25)	0 (38)	0 (17)
Chris Williams	16 (55)	2 (30)	1 (20)	0 (4)	Alex Tomada	0 (0)	1 (1)	7 (8)	7 (7)
Lachlan Wright	3 (20)	1 (12)	0 (6)	0 (7)	Harley Trickey	0 (0)	6 (11)	7 (17)	4 (13)
					Nelson Tucker	12 (24)	3 (22)	0 (34)	0 (7)
Goal Umpire					John Varker*	19 (100)	1 (19)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Laura Brogan	0 (0)	4 (14)	7 (15)	7 (10)	Joon-Yip Wong	13 (39)	1 (28)	0 (30)	0 (9)
Joe Dorrat-Thorpe	0 (0)	10 (32)	4 (28)	2 (16)	Dylan Wood	0 (0)	4 (4)	7 (8)	11 (11)
Chris Doyle*	16 (174)	1 (82)	0 (3)	0 (0)	Emma Young	13 (24)	3 (10)	0 (10)	0 (10)
Josh Dudman-Doyle	12 (12)	2 (15)	0 (8)	0 (3)	* Includes NEAFL matches				

100 VFL matches 1992-2023				12 VFL finals 1992-2023	
Umpire	Total	Umpire	Total	Umpire	Finals
Andrew Talbot	247	Shane Stewart †	128	John Cooper	22
Peter Balding	235	Steele Irish	128	Peter Balding	21
Dan Beard	224	Cameron Nash	125	Simon Plumridge	21
Dean Jones	207	Rob Young	124	Michael Jennings	19
Michael Richardson	194	Brett Ritchie	123	Andrew Talbot	19
Nick Laurence	194	Stefan Grun †	123	Ben Macdonald	18
Michael Curtis	188	Heath Ryan †	121	Steven Piperno	18
Shane Mason	188	Jason Quigley	118	Shane Stewart	18
John Cooper	187	Andrew Leggo	117	Shaun Gleeson	17
Richard Mills	182	Shaun Gleeson	117	Neil Woods	17
Tristan Burgess	182	Andrew Malcolm	116	Nick Laurence	16
Andrew Clifton	181	Glenn Gibson †	116	Tristan Burgess	15
Adam Bell	178	Adam Wojcik †	115	Michael Curtis	15
Lloyd Fisk	177	Chris Donlon †	115	Anthony Kyrkou	15
Chris Doyle*	174	Steven Neal	115	Brett Ritchie	15
Ben James	172	Matthew Leppard	114	Daniel Butcher	14
Andrew Mitchell †	167	Neil Woods	113	Kieran Ferguson	14
Matthew Young*	165	James Davey	112	Mark Foster	14
Nick McGinness*	165	Robert Findlay †	112	Drew Kowalski	14
Matthew Brown	163	Andrew Heffernan	111	Gerard Large	14
Michael Jennings	162	Geoff Twitt	110	Brad Letson	14
Steven Piperno †	161	Dan Butcher	108	Michael Marantelli	14
Jack Edwards*	159	Dylan Benwell †	108	Richard Mills	14
Jamie Grindal	158	Michael Palm †	108	Steven Neal	14
Michael Hammond †	155	Kieran Ferguson	106	Damien Sully	14
Ben Macdonald †	154	Patrick Burns	106	Matthew Brown	13
Frank Dicosmo	153	Russell Davidson	106	Patrick Dineen	13
Simon Plumridge	151	Adam Gardner	105	Mitch Lefevre	13
Brendan Dye	150	Jason Armstrong †	105	Shane Mason	13
Daniel Pieper	150	Drew Kowalski †	104	Andrew Mitchell	13
Matt Edwards	146	Scott Murray	104	Heath Ryan	13
Anthony Kyrkou	145	Chris Morrison †	103	Sam Stagg	13
Callum Leonard	142	Andrew McCoy	102	Jordan Andrews	12
Damien Cusack †	142	Luke Wilkie	102	Dylan Benwell	12
Cyrus Wong	136	Sam Walsh †	102	Simon Blight	12
Brendan Elvey	135	Mark Foster †	101	Damien Cusack	12
Tom Chrystie*	135	Matt Maclure	101	Rob Findlay	12
Stephen Gloag	130	Matthew Oakley	101	Michael Hammond	12
Damien Sully	129	Rob Frampton	101	Andrew Malcolm	12
Peter Nastasi †	129	John Varker	100	Nick McGinness*	12
		Liam Pain	100	Sam Walsh	12

† 100 AFL matches * Includes NEAFL matches

Senior office bearers 1992-2023

	President	Vice-president	Executive Officer	Social secretary	
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	Historian-statistician
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
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
2017	Michael Curtis	Nick Brown	Peter Kelly	Kate Griffiths	David Flegg
2018	Michael Curtis	Tristan Burgess	Peter Kelly	Andrew Talbot	David Flegg
			Administrator		David Flegg
2019	Andrew Talbot	Matthew Mahoney	Peter Kelly	Joon-Yip Wong	David Flegg
2020	Matthew Mahoney	Liam Pain Joon-Yip Wong	Peter Kelly		David Flegg
Members' Repr.					
2021	Matthew Mahoney	Liam Pain Joon-Yip Wong	Brad Noonan	Peter Howe	David Flegg
2022	Matthew Mahoney	Liam Pain Joon-Yip Wong	Brad Noonan	Peter Howe	David Flegg
2023	Joon-Yip Wong	Melissa Sambrooks Andrew Talbot	Brad Noonan	Peter Howe	David Flegg

Note: Communications officer role undertaken by vice-president (marketing and communications) 2020-2022. Not filled 2023

Track representatives 1992-2023

	Years		Years		Years
Blake Anderson	2021-23	Rob Findlay	2002	John Murnane	1993-94
Jason Armstrong	2004-05	Mark Foster	2004-05	Ben Naughtin	2005-07
Peter Bailes	2019-21	Dylan Fulton	2019-21	Mark O'Reilly	1995
Peter Balding	2012	Alf Galea	1994	Ryan O'Shea	2016
Dan Beard	2001	Michael Gibson	2003	Liam Pain	2019
Dylan Benwell	2012	Stephen Gloag	2001-04	Michael Palm	2009
Harrison Bell	2023	Kate Griffiths	2016	Brent Pawley	2011
Graeme Bergroth	2008-10	Michael Hammond	2000	Paul Pickett	1995
Anthony Black	1995	Lachlan Harty	2016-17	Daniel Pieper	2002-03
Michael Blair	2010	Adam Havelberg	2013	Simon Plumridge	2017
Michael Boss	2008	Ashley Hawkes	2018	Mark Prince	1993
Corey Brown	2014	Peter Herrick	1993-94	Lachlan Rayner	2015
Nick Brown	2011	Wayne Hoskins	2010	Michael Robins	1999
Tristan Burgess	2008-09	David Humphries	1995-96, 1999	Greg Russo	1996
Daniel Butcher	2012	Anthony Hunter	2011-12	James Scully	2014
David Card	2009	Dean Jones	2006-07	Bridget Saftenberger	2022-23
Tim Carlos	2011	Chris Kamolins	2002-03	Melissa Sambrooks	2017-22
Ben Cheever	2017	Hayden Kennedy	1993-94	Colin Segota	1993-94
Jason Cook	1997-98	Drew Kowalski	2008	Stephen Smith	2000-01
Lawrence Coop	2014	Anthony Kyrkou	2010-11	Chris Snell	1996
Ashley Crawford	2011-12	David Lambourn	2006-07	Jack Stammers	2019
Michael Curtis	2013-15	Anthony Laughton	2016	Harry Stamos	1997
Damien Cusack	2005	Nick Laurence	2010-11	Steven Stirling	1998
Russell Davidson	1997	Callum Leonard	2014-15	Travis Storti	2001
Curtis De Witt	2015	Matt Leppard	2006-07	Jacob Stuckey	2022-23
Justin Delaney	1993	Tim Lougoon	2014	Andrew Talbot	2012, 2017
Andrew Dempster	1997-99	Matt Mahoney	2018	Callum Thornton	2019
Greg Denison	2005-06	Damien Main	2017	Troy Tindill	2001
Damian Devincentis	2010	Josh Maine	2012-13	Gareth Verbene	2008
Rhys Doughty-Cowell	2009	Wes Mann	1998-99	Andrew Wheeler	1996
Chris Doyle	2012-13	Tayla Manning	2020	Luke White	2013-14
Andrew Duncan	1994	Andrew McCoy	2011	Michael Willcox	2022-23
Jared Dyson	2016	Luke McIlroy	2014-16	Daniel Wilson	2002-03
Jack Edwards	2018	Greta Millar	2020	Adam Wojcik	2004-05
Matt Edwards	2018-19	David Miles	2016-17	Joon Yip Wong	2018
Joel Elliott	2004	Ken Mitchell	2020	Emma Young	2022-23
Brendan Elvey	2013	Luke Monea	2021-22		
Stephen Evans	2000	Joel Morrison	2011		
Jarrold Faoro	2007	Jack Murfett	2017		

Financial report

Profit and Loss

Victorian Football Umpires' Association
For the year ended 30 September 2023

	2023	2022
Income		
Interest Received	176	488
Miscellaneous	8	-
Raffle Income	408	348
Subscriptions Received	33,660	30,590
Merchandise Income	292	135
Total Income	34,544	31,561
Total Income	34,544	31,561
Expenses		
Honorariums	9,194	12,290
Meeting Expenses	779	1,407
Social Functions	13,057	19,099
Trophies and Certificates	2,927	765
Merchandise Expense	1,873	1,052
Website Expenses	195	166
Consumer Affairs Annual Statement	61	60
Donations, Gifts and Prizes	126	229
Mini Olympics	1,317	377
Square Fees	90	-
Total Expenses	29,619	35,445
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	4,925	(3,884)

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report. This financial report is unaudited.

Note that \$6,551 of honorariums relating to the 30 September 2023 year were paid on 2 October 2023. As the financial statements are prepared on a cash basis, these honorariums are not included in the calculation of the surplus/(deficit) for the year ended 30 September 2023. If these honorariums were included, the result for the 2023 year would be adjusted to a deficit of \$1,626.

Balance Sheet

Victorian Football Umpires' Association As at 30 September 2023

Assets	30 SEP 2023	30 SEP 2022
Current Assets		
Westpac Cheque Account	31,872	27,122
Westpac Term Deposit	70,387	70,212
Total Current Assets	102,259	97,334
Total Assets	102,259	97,334
Net Assets	102,259	97,334
Reserves		
Accumulation Account	97,334	101,218
Current Year Earnings	4,925	(3,884)
Total Reserves	102,259	97,334

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report. This financial report is unaudited.

Notes to and forming part of the accounts for the year ended 30 September 2023

- The 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:
 - The financial report has been prepared on a cash basis of accounting including the historical cost convention and going concern assumption
 - 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 because the entity is not a 'reporting entity' as defined therein.
- Under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act (2012)* the Victorian Football Umpires' Association Inc. is a 'Tier 1' entity as revenue is less than \$250,000. Therefore, neither an audit nor a review is required to be conducted.

OFFICEHOLDERS' DECLARATION

In the absence of an audit or review, in accordance with a resolution of the officeholders of Victorian Football Umpires Association Inc., the officeholders declare that the financial statements and notes presented herein:

- Present a true and fair view of the financial position of the entity; and
- Are free from fraud.

Joon Yip Wong

Joon-Yip Wong
VFUA President



Brad Noonan
VFUA Administrator

2023 Coates League (Boys) Grand Final umpires



L-R: James Rizio, Mitchell Dorling, Jesse Wilkie, Emiel Morvell, Connor Hawes, Sam Hurford, Lachlan Higgs, Harrison Bell, Brad Kellett.

2023 Coates League (Girls) Grand Final umpires



L-R: Phillip Pettinella, Angus Cameron, Shannon van Boven, Brock Reid, Samantha Ritchie, Olivia Grcic, Ryan Pulley, Jenna Green.

