

Hi All

This weekend would have been the start to the season. It was pretty average in terms of weather, more like July, not the first week in April, but this Melbourne so we are used to it. Hope you are keeping well, safe and fit.

Hopefully you are able to keep training, again whilst I have provided a program for you, if you want to change it up or down, that is fine, we are all different and everybody needs to be aware that it is still 10 weeks before the earliest start day of June 6. In that, I would like you to continue with the current training program and next week in will set the remaining weeks based on a June 6 start. This date is far from certain and like everything related to the current pandemic, know one has the answers, but we all need to consider our personal fitness in readiness for a shorter season which would clearly reflect how well we have prepared when the ball gets bounced.

Keep the pics and videos coming to Kristen at the WRFL at K.Alebakis@wrfl.asn.au , thanks Grant F, Rosie M and Jason M.

I posed a challenge last week which came off the back of last week's task to revise the 2019 Laws of Australian Football.

"The field umpire calls for a ball up in front of goal, all umpires are in their required position when, a ruckman punches the ball on the full and it just touches the goal post on the behind post side of the goal post, so the opposite side to the goal umpire". What happens next??

The question implies that all umpires are in their correct position.

Goal umpire is in the center of the goal posts, close to the goal line, both boundary umpires are on their respective behind posts, and the closest second field umpire is on the opposite side of the ball up to the controlling umpire.

The most important aspect of this scenario is at what location did the ball up occur. I posed 'in front of goal' so there are two processes based on distance from the goal/behind line, resulting in different results.

If the ball up is **ON or INSIDE** the 9m kick-off line, then it is irrelevant which team punches the ball on the full, striking the goal post on the behind side of the post. The ball has crossed the line, the boundary umpire should assist the goal umpire that it hit the goal post, the goal umpire calls 'mine', whilst tapping his/her chest, indicating a behind, the field umpire then gives the all clear, the boundary umpires move backwards along the boundary line, at the same time the goal umpire taps the goal post 3 times, then signals a behind, whilst play recommences.

If the ball up is **BEYOND** the 9m kick-off line, then there are two more answers:

If the ball up is **BEYOND** the 9m kick-off line, and a **DEFENDING** ruckman punches the ball on the full, striking the goal post on the behind side of the post. The field umpire signals a free kick to the opposition. However, the field umpire **MUST** discuss with the boundary and

goal umpire that the ball has struck the goal post. Once this is established then the free kick is awarded to the player closest to where the football struck the goal post, with the free kick taken from the middle of the Goal Line, because it struck the goal post.

If the ball up is **BEYOND** the 9m kick-off line, and a **FORWARD** ruckman punches the ball on the full, striking the goal post on the behind side of the post. The same result occurs, as if the ball up is **ON or INSIDE** the 9m kick-off line. A behind is registered. This is also the case if the ball crosses the behind line on the full, except the goal just indicates a behind, not hit the post.

All three umpires have a role to play in this scenario. The key point being that **ANY** ball up near goal, **ALL** umpires need to be aware of where the ball up occurs, in relation to the **9m kick-off line**. That determines the next act of play.

There are two other possible scenarios from this stoppage.

1 – The ball is punched out of bounds or hits the behind post on the full. It does not matter what distance the ball up occurs at, it is a free kick to the opposition, to the closest player where the football crosses the boundary line. It is critical that the boundary umpire signals 'Out of bounds on the full', then confers with the field umpire, as is to who struck the ball so as to determine direction of play and the resultant free kick. If it is unclear who has struck the ball, the field umpire can ask for further assistance from the goal umpire and again if it is not clear who struck the ball on the full the field umpire will ask the boundary umpire to blow his/her whistle to signal 'touched out of bounds', and the field umpire then asks for the ball to be thrown in when the ruckmen are set for the throw-in.

2 – A **DEFENDING** ruckman punches the ball on the full, **BEYOND** the 9m kick-off line, between the goal and behind posts. The field umpire signals a free kick to the opposition. Again, the field umpire **MUST** discuss with the boundary and goal umpire as to where the ball crossed the behind line. Once this is established then the free kick is awarded at that point where the football crossed the Behind Line. This will result in a very tight angle and the second field umpire should attempt to assist controlling the protected area.

NOTE: If **BEYOND** the 9m kick-off line and a **DEFFENDING** ruckmen punches the ball and it bounces before crossing the goal or behind line, the field umpire blows his whistle and **MUST** discuss with the goal and boundary umpire that the ball bounced before crossing the goal or behind line, once confirmed, all clear is given for a behind to be registered. This is **NOT** a free kick.

The relevant section from the rule book is below:

17.10 DELIBERATE RUSHED BEHINDS

17.10.1 Spirit and Intention Players shall be encouraged to keep the football in play.

17.10.2 Free Kicks - Deliberate Rushed Behinds A Free Kick shall be awarded against a Player from the Defending Team who intentionally Kicks, Handballs or forces the football over the

Attacking Team's Goal Line or Behind Line or onto one of the Attacking Team's Goal Posts, and the Player:

(a) is greater than nine metres from the Goal Line or Behind Line;

(b) is not under immediate physical pressure;

(c) has had time and space to dispose of the football; or

(d) from a Ruck contest, hits the football over the Goal Line or Behind Line on the full.

17.10.3 Taking Free Kick A Free Kick awarded under Law 17.10.2 shall be taken from the middle of the Goal Line if the football crossed the Goal Line or hit the goal post, or at the point where the football crossed the Behind Line.

17.4.3 Free Kicks - Ruck Contests

A field Umpire shall award a Free Kick in a Ruck contest against a Player where the Player:

(h) hits the football Out of Bounds On the Full from a throw-up by a field Umpire or a throw-in by a boundary Umpire.

This week's challenge for our new umpires, is to watch one of the Footy Vaults currently being shown on TV and see if you can observe the umpires in that game doing some of the basics, as discussed in the skills documents. Boundary umpiring, turning up the line after they throw the ball in, or a goal umpire straddle the line in a close decision or a field umpire controlling a set kick.

For those established umpires, I am sure the answer to last week's challenge had a few of you thinking twice!!! Now is a great time to revise the rule book and know the laws of the game.

Easter will be different in 2020 as we won't be able to spend time with different family members so check out Zoom, it is good fun! Easy to set up and great for everybody to keep connected. You can even try and play a board game with friends online.

Take care and look after yourself and those close to you.

See you on the track sooooooooooon

Mark