



JUNIOR UMPIRE PARENT INFORMATION

The AFL Yarra Ranges has enjoyed success with the junior umpires over the past years and a key element to that success has been support by the parents of the young umpires. We recognise and fully appreciate all the efforts that the parents have given in helping young umpires reach their achievements. Not only does this include early morning Sunday taxi runs, washing muddy uniforms, huddling under an umbrella mid winter – it usually involves navigating around siblings with basketball, karate, netball and horse-riding!

We like to think that our role extends beyond just training the umpires in how to pay free kicks in a match – umpiring gives young people great experience in leadership and taking responsibility for their own actions. As such we like to have the umpires manage factors like availability and transport as much as we can but also recognise the varying levels of organisational skills and that some umpires might need the occasional prompting from their parents.

The YRUA now have a Junior Umpiring section on their website; go to www.yarrarangesumpires.com.au we encourage parents to check out the site as it has heaps of resources & information available on registrations, news, contacts and training.

The umpiring body has a committed team that oversees and delivers training and coaching which is built around the following structure:

1. **Training** is held each Monday night (public holidays excluded) at Morrison Reserve Mt. Evelyn commencing at 5.30PM and finishing by 7.00PM. The format of the night begins with a short fitness session; this is followed by some on ground skill drills and finished with a short indoor coaching session which will usually recap and summarise the drills performed earlier. Match appointments for the following Sunday are given out at completion.
2. We do have an “unavailability book” at training and umpires are requested to write their name down for any rounds that they will be unavailable due to family functions / school camps, etc. **Appointments are developed a week in advance, so early advice of any unavailability is of major assistance to us. Umpires can also register unavailability on Team APP or by contacting Scott Van Noordennen – AFLOE Umpiring Operations Manager directly.**

3. To provide some consistency in the provision of umpire coaching, a number of years ago the **AFL developed the National Umpire Accreditation Scheme (NUAS). Workbooks are provided and umpires cover the topics throughout skill drills and coaching sessions during the year.** Assessment takes place during matches and culminates in the presentation of a Level 1 certificate at the end of the year. Further progression through the course results in Level 2 certification.

4. **We have a team of observers** who visit selected grounds each Sunday who provide feedback both during the game and at the following training night on how the umpire has performed. These sessions aim to both highlight aspects that the umpire has performed well and also areas for development that they can work on in subsequent matches. Out of the 14 rounds of home and away matches, an umpire might be observed 3-4 times so it's not uncommon for no coaching staff to be at a venue on any given Sunday.



5. **Effort has been made in recent years to more closely align the junior and senior umpiring bodies.** The ongoing success of the senior competition relies heavily on future progression of junior umpires through the ranks. Your child may just want to umpire juniors for a few seasons; they might want to progress to senior community football or they may have aspirations to reach VFL / AFL football. Each of those scenarios is perfectly acceptable and the current pathway structure fully allows those objectives to be met.

Umpiring football is rewarding but is hard work and it's important for parents to be aware of the following topics:

Excellent work has been initiated from the AFL down in past years at promoting community support for umpires to assist the work in recruiting and retention of junior umpires.

The umpiring body has the full support from the AFL Yarra Ranges Commission for zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour towards players and officials. We have enjoyed an excellent working relationship with the clubs and endeavour to maintain this as a priority. Having said that, umpiring can sometimes be a lonely sport and an excellent way in which a parent can help is to bring a drink or lollies out at a quarter time break when an umpire might require some moral support. A general awareness of how their mood is during the season and feeding back any concerns to the umpire coaching staff is important.

A parent might find the rules of the game and positioning very foreign but ask your child before the game what they plan to work on in the game as a way of helping focus on the previous weeks feedback. **The resources section of our website has heaps of information and video resources as well for parents and umpires to watch!**

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Appointments throughout the year will always be arranged to match the umpire's ability. Later in the season that may even include them umpiring a game slightly higher than they had been accustomed to. Other times they might even drop a grade or two. Unless the drop is discussed with an umpire, there is not much to be read in this. Sometimes an umpire might need to run a lower grade just so they can be observed. Rotation is a key to umpire development, and this means across different grades and certainly different teams.

Some junior umpires also play football and appointments are done in a way to ensure appropriate time between games and also that locations are convenient. Generally, we try and avoid appointing an umpire to a match where their home club is one of the participating teams. There has never been a suspicion of bias but sometimes it's better to avoid a situation where perception can differ from reality.

An umpiring handbook is published and given to each umpire. Please have a look through it when you get a chance so that you are also aligned with concepts such as administration and codes of conduct. To be successful we need to be as transparent as possible and this handbook is designed to provide the clarity required. **This Handbook can also be found on the website in the Juniors pages along with heaps of other valuable resources about the Laws of the Game and video resources.**

Finals time can be particularly testing for some umpires. The reality is that often there are more umpires than positions required, and this can be a time where numerous discussions with umpires take place to help them understand why they finished where they did. The discussions will be tactful, yet fact based and as a parent it will be important for you to support your child in helping manage these expectations. Our experience has shown that most respond positively by re-defining a goal for the next season and you might find your child has a bit more character than you thought!

In summary, we see this as a partnership with the parents and thank you for your assistance in helping your child achieve success with their umpiring.

Any time that you have something that needs discussion please contact one of the coaching staff as listed below:

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