

A new home. A new uniform. A new newspaper. A new era. (Farewell to Scovell News!)

Congratulations to Stephen Berry and Dane Cowper, whom know little about reporting, writing, editing, publishing or the game of football, but were able to scramble Edition 1 together. They were found in a hotel not far from your place and ordered to throw a second edition for the umpires to giggle over. Obviously, if you are reading this then it is obvious that they were obviously able to obviously achieve the obvious. Obviously!

For those reading this newspaper for the first or second time please be aware that it is entirely fictional. It is the work of a deranged madman that loves making up stories. He then substitutes names from the WRFL umpires into each story. He really is naughty.

As you know, this wonderful newspaper only reports on incidents and stories that are about football. Needless to say that the score in the Finnish marble championship was Globel 15, Hennig 12 & Senserert 17. Best players were Z.Pykl, P.Fromme & W.Le Mers.

A new addition to the WRFL umpiring department has been young Bob Taylor. He is an old VFA goal umpire and can remember the days when goalies only had two flags. Wow! Just how old is a dinosaur? Interestingly, young Tim Moloney said he could also remember the two flag days but that wasn't that long ago in Tim's case. He's from Tasmania and we all know that that state is a little **behind** the rest of Australia. Or should we say **below** the rest of Australia!

**Westgarth, Westgarth, Westgarth!** It must be some sort of record with all three field umpires in the Division 1 Senior game being from the same family. And related as well! But it did happen here in the WRFL last month when Wyndhamvale took on Caroline Springs on 8/4/2017. And exactly how did they pass the play over to each other? Yours, Dad. Yours, son. Yours, Westie. Or simply: Yours, Mister Westgarth.

Just how short are we in the field umpiring department? Long time boundary rider in Robert Hill lost his way and mis-placed the boundary line. He wandered mid-field and searched without any luck. After a while, in desperation, he blew his whistle when a pack of players blocked his way and tumbled to the ground. Immediately one player asked, "What for?" Robert, a keen TV football viewer, blurted out the only three words in his vocabulary, "Holding the ball!" The players accepted the decision and all ran off. Robert chased them and only could make them stop by blowing the whistle. Again a player asked, "What for?" Suddenly the penny dropped and a centre star was born.

Bob Taylor was observing one game and made notes on all the participating umpires, field, boundary and goal. He was quite concerned about the lack of effort by the two goal umpires. Both seemed to be ultra slow and quite disinterested in the game. Bob decided to send an email to the goal umpires' coach to pass on his observations. (He probably wondered what that coach was actually teaching his goalies in view of their lack lustre performance.) The coach quickly responded by email. It began, "Thanks for your comments, Bob. I really appreciate feedback from the observers. I have fifty-six goal umpires on my list. The two you saw are listed as number fifty-five and fifty-six..."

All field and boundary umpires know that they need to always have their shirts tucked in. The new shirts do have a slight tendency to work themselves out of the pants after a while. One idea is to tuck them into your jocks. Another idea is to use safety pins to carefully attach them to your underwear. If you do use this method then be careful!

When Evan Eliopoulos was asked if his shirt ever came out, with a straight face he replied, "The shirts remain tucked in for the fast runners. I don't have any problem!"

One observer was speaking to another umpire about the behaviour of some boundary umpires when on the corners of the centre square. "Some of them are standing with their hips on their shoulders..." What? But that's exactly what he said.

"Do as I say not as I do." The coach had told his charges in no uncertain terms that when wearing short sleeves that the goal umpires must wear white sweat bands. One goalie turned up to a game and watched the coach mentoring a young trainee and neither were wearing sweat-bands. His excuse? We came out in jackets but when we reached the middle we decided that jackets were not needed. So we took them off and, yes, no sweat-bands. Yeah, sure!

Ray Gordon is one of the older goal umpires and he carries a penny for the toss of the coin. Most of the field umpires and captains at the toss (and their parents and even some of their grandparents) weren't even born when that penny was made. Just one question: What is a penny?

Goal umpires are now printing their own scorecards because there seemed to be a distinct lack of them. Unfortunately some goalies tend to grab more than enough when they can. This means that there are not many for others. John Sutton must be planning to umpire for the next ten years or do fifteen games each weekend based on the number of scorecards that were sitting in his bag. John, the rumour going around is that the Gang of Desperate Goal Umpires raided your stock of scorecards and reduced the pile by half. Now he's only got enough scorecards to last five years or do seven and a half games each weekend.

Report from the tribunal: Gareth Hodges (Veterans) was reported for high contact. When he quietly explained to the umpire at the time that the only contact made was to raised hands just like high-fiving his opponent, the umpire, Brad Lee-Huffen, decided to award a 50 metre penalty and without any further word or action from player Hodges he was shown a red card and ordered from the ground. The Veterans team produced video evidence that clearly showed that no high contact was made. The tribunal chairperson, in dismissing the case, told umpire Lee-Huffen that he should stick to the rules in the rule book and not create his own little fantasy world. The umpires association ordered the umpire to write a letter of apology to that wonderfully fair player. The umpire was also stripped of two coming appointments. Gareth Hodges said that he was pleased with the result. He also added with a devilish smile, "The pen is mightier than the sword."

Great statements from the 2017 football season: "We had a club boundary umpire and he was better than the official one." (Peter Auld); "You know that I love going down to Werribee Districts. It's a fortress for them." (Craig Hill); "I've umpired for over 20 years and I've only had two uniforms." (Richard Watt); "By Round 13 everyone will be running around in the new AFL style uniform." (Graeme Hodgart); "I've been in coaching umpires for 49 years." (Don Cooke); "That post is bent but not as much as me." (Richard Watt).

It's interesting the people you meet in football circles. There was an Umpires Conference held at Victoria Park. N one of the practical sessions the football went through the scoring area, over the fence and bounced into the nearby street. One of the umpires went to get the football. He came back and said, "I went to get the football and bumped into George Bailey walking his dog."

Once again the Anzac Day match at Braybrook, who played host to North Sunshine, drew a large crowd. Also the short but poignant service was beautifully done. It's a pity that a few parents didn't notice their children noisily having a kick on the oval at a time when more respect needed to be shown. One of those young girls was strangely familiar. Later in the day Terry McGarity was seen at half-time having a kick with his great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-child. Terry has been around for a very long time.

One observer bumped into Rene Van Kuyk at a game recently and sauntered up for a bit of a chat. Rene was in the crowd watching. He was also planning appointments for the following weekend right there and then. Now that's dedication.

The ball came into the forward line quickly but with a scrubby kick that caught field slightly out of position. A player collected the ball and snapped for goal but the kick was smothered and ricocheted straight into Andrew's head. It was just a glancing blow and he called, Play on! Luckily Andrew didn't have his mouth open when the ball hit him otherwise he may have swallowed it.

**Westgarth, Westgarth, Westgarth!** There has been a mass exodus from umpiring in the WRFL with 102 umpires from 2016 not returning. This has put a definite strain on resources. Even though there have been nearly 90 new umpires begin this year, providing field and boundary umpires to the women's and girls' games is the straw that broke the umpire's back. That's why in recent times there have been some Div 3 reserves' games without field and boundary umpires. At Wyndham Vale there was Mark Westgarth trying to show everyone that's he is fit. Firstly, he ran the boundary as a mentor to several new boundary umpires. Secondly, he was one of the two field umpires in the reserves. Thirdly, he was one of the three field umpires in the Division 1 senior game between Wyndhamvale and Albion. One observer who watched the senior game noted that when Mark had to sprint to get into position, he sprinted. Well done, Mark!

Who holds the record for the most whistle blows in thirty seconds? The answer is Evan Eliopoulos. When approaching a group of pushing and wrestling Under 19 lads in a game he decided to alert them of his presence. Hence the record.

Former AFL (and WRFL) boundary umpire Shane Jones is still running around as number 71 for Deer Park reserves, beard and all. The observer was thinking that he hadn't seen him get a kick but then he had one then a mark and a handpass. A few minutes later he grabbed the ball in the forward pocket and snapped a miraculous goal from right on the boundary line. As the ball sailed over the goal umpire's cap, the field umpire dashed down to the goal square and said, "No score. The boundary umpire has called it out." It was an interesting call because the boundary umpire was behind play and could not definitely be sure that the ball was ever out. The goal umpire, the observer and a nearby (unbiased) spectator all thought that the whole of the ball had not crossed the line.

Great statements from the 2017 football season: "Who do we contact to tell the editor that the coach of the goal umpires is not wearing sweat bands in his game after telling everyone that it is compulsory for goal umpires to wear them when in short sleeves?" (Trevor Budge); "Getitoutgetitoutgetitoutgetitoutgetitout!" (Terry O'Donnell); "Taking notes?" (Eight year old spectator to umpires' observer); "Maybe you can run behind me and tell me what to do." (Paul Dimartino to goal umpire's mentor); "Hey, Jake. Why play football when you could be over the fence with us drinking beer?" (Manor Lakes fan to a mate in the reserves team); "I think Schedula has dropped its guts." (Text message from John Prentice after Schedula went temporarily haywire); "Who's the kid that talks all the time?" (Jumbo Sutton on trying to name his young partner); "Now, Mitchell. Make sure you behave yourself today." (Graeme Hodgart to Mitchell Green before the Under 17 game at Albion); "The players were told to bring mouthguards to training." (Radio).

Trevor Budge doesn't mark the centre of the goals with his boot. No, he digs a trench!

It's a small world: story number one. Goal umpires' observer packs up his chair after the game (Wyndhamvale v Albion) and begins to walk to his car before heading home to Yarraville. He hears a familiar voice and is surprised to see his niece who lives in Hoppers Crossing and who never goes to the local football. She says, "I'm here because my friend (who now lives in America but was here for a quick visit) was meeting and catching up with some people at the footy. I also know a couple of guys who play for Wyndhamvale and another couple who play with Albion."

An Albion player grabbed the ball thirty metres out and threw it onto his boot quickly. It was a mongrel kick that flew low and hard just like a perfect torpedo. It careered straight at the goals and goalie Trevor Budge didn't have to move as it just cleared his head. In fact, if Budgie had been two metres tall the ball would either have decapitated him or knocked him senseless.

It's a small world: story number two. Long time teacher (now retired) was still doing some emergency work at a school in Yarraville. Last year that school employed a new business manager. Let's call her Sharon. The teacher was the goal umpires' coach who met two new goal umpires earlier this year down at MacKillop College, Werribee. We'll call them Craig and his daughter, Baylee. The three of them trained down at MacKillop together for about six weeks. Recently when the teacher walked into the office at the school, Sharon floored him by saying, "You're into goal umpiring, right? Well, I'm married to Craig."

How annoying! An opposition player with a sense of humour. Several times when a certain Deer Park reserves player grabbed the ball he laughed and teased his opponent as he baulked around him or ran away from him with the ball in his hands. Such a player usually meets their match one day, one way or another.

John Sutton. John Sutton. John Sutton. For legal reasons we're not allowed to name him.

Names in this following story have not been changed. Granny Hodges walked into the bank and bumped into Jacko Settlen. "I umpired with Verna Zattovick on Sunday. Don't ever put me with her again!" said Jacko. "Well, I've had my whinge now so I won't have to complain to you tomorrow at training," continued JS scratching one of his huge ears.

Some umpires missed the email that said the appointments were coming out 24 hours later than normal due to a few minor changes to the junior fixture. One umpire rang the coach and said he didn't get a game. The coach, seizing the opportunity, quietly told the umpire that he had been dropped. There was a long pause before either spoke ...

Scoreboard at Albion read 1 – 2 – 13 because the little kid added the goal to the behinds.

All umpires aged eighteen & over must get themselves a Working With Children Check.

John Prentice was enjoying his game waving his flags in the reserves at North Footscray. He thought he had done well especially knowing that the observer, Leo Keating, had been watching. Later in the seniors a goal was kicked so he promptly signalled, grabbed two flags and returned to the centre of the goals and prepared to wave them. What he didn't notice that a dog on a leash had momentarily escaped from the clutches of a two year old girl. Evidently the dog was making its way onto the field as John raised the pair of calicoes. The only thing that escaped John's attention was that he was now standing on the dog leash. Flags go up and dog dashes onto the field. JP goes backwards. Somehow John regains composure and balance and waves the flags and discovers that he has a companion. Little girl at his right knee watching as the dog tears around the field with leash still attached and whimpers, "My doggy's ran way!" John was pleased that Leo had left because that way nobody will ever hear of his embarrassing moment.

Merv Bartley (christened Mervyn) was introducing himself to another who was either hard of hearing or well known down at the pub because all that the guy heard was... "Bourbon?" Merv giggled, thinking of the nice refreshing ale or two that he would be enjoying after his game, "No. Not bourbon. Mervyn!" he said reaching for his lollies. "These will have to do for now," he thought offering them around to the others.

One of the coaches was going to be unavailable to take training for a week and so he made a call for volunteers. He thought he might get one or two people to help out but he was staggered to get nine people willing to conduct the various sessions. The good news didn't last long because before long two had to pull out due to various reasons.

In one Craig and out with another. Craig Hill has been waiting for an operation on his troublesome knee and the good news was that the date was hurriedly brought forward to Saturday 20 May. As he was contemplating no games for the weekend, in walked Craig Wilson, "Hello. I'm looking to become a goal umpire." The latest news was that the operation had taken place as scheduled. Craig sent a text message: "Howdy, all done. Hurts like hell when I stand up. Drugs r really good though!"

Scoreboard at Geelong actually said Geelong 1 – 0 – 6 Western Bulldogs 42 – 0 – 252.

Robert Hill has been mentoring some of the new boundary umpires. Rule one, Robert, is make sure that you have all your gear. Doing a game at Albion he was missing his shorts. So the impartial boundary umpire mentoring the youngsters was seen to be wearing a pair of Albion shorts! (Thanks, Albion.)

Welcome back Moloney and Moloney. After an absence of a few years, boundary umpire Justin Moloney has thrown away running lines and has returned reincarnated as a field umpire. After an absence of quite a few months, Tim Moloney (Justin's uncle) has thrown away the walking stick and has returned reincarnated as a fit goal umpire.

## Umpires Corner (A special feature article written by guest writer Graeme Hodgart)

It's been a big 12 months in football. Although there have been many stories and incidents, both positive and negative, the progress and strides forward of women in our great game has been a focus. The development of the AFLW was embraced by all sections of the football community. No doubt this growth will continue for many years.

Last September in the WRFL one of the goal umpires in the Division 1 grand final was Christine Gent. This was the first time that a female goalie had officiated in such a final in our league. In the recent Victorian Metro interleague games, Christine was appointed as a goal umpire in the senior game involving the Hampton League.

Just last weekend, history was made when Eleni Glouftsis became the first female field umpire to officiate in a senior AFL match. Originally from South Australia, Eleni was in control of the Essendon and West Coast clash held at Etihad Stadium.

On the senior AFL panel of twenty-six goal umpires three are female: Sally Boud, Rose O'Dea & Chelsea Roffey. (Michael Craig is now the sole WRFL representative on that panel after David Dixon retired at the end of Season 2016.)

Unfortunately, the growing interest in females within football circles has not led to a mass influx of new female umpires into the WRFL. Of course, there have been some, and the WRFL and the Umpires Association does its best to encourage and support greater participation of females within the field, boundary and goal umpiring groups.

It wasn't that long ago that local football was a male dominated affair. There were many females involved in football clubs but to a large extent they were mainly in the background or found working hard in the canteen. History does credit some wonderful exceptions in the past. As time goes by there will many more females getting involved in football as more opportunities arise. The example of role models will play an important part. Hopefully more females will venture into blowing whistles, running lines and waving flags in the WRFL.

This week's question: A field umpire awards a free kick to a player and an opponent uses abusive and insulting language towards the umpire. What happens next?  
(a) The field umpire warns the player. (b) The field umpire awards a fifty metre penalty.  
(c) The field umpire reports the player, shows them a yellow card, sends them from the field and awards a 50 metre penalty. The answer was (c).

Take note of the WRFL umpires in the games you watch and see if any are female.

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A field umpire, a boundary umpire and a goal umpire were standing on the side of Hoddle Street. Each one of them was trying to individually attract a taxi. Which one was successful? The goal umpire because he was the only one that knew how to flag a taxi.

**The Football Quiz (Number 2 for 2017) Answers are found below.**

1. Which local club did Andrew Venner play for in 1998 and 1999?
2. Name the umpiring grandfather, father and son in the WRFL from 2016.
3. By Round 14 last season how many wins had the Gold Coast Suns notched?
4. Which WRFL team plays home games at Bryan Martyn Oval?
5. Which Swan player won the Brownlow Medal in 1995?
6. Who wears number 7 for the AFL Cats?
7. Smith, Reid, Jones and Kennedy play for which AFL team?
8. What number does Dom Prestia wear for the Richmond?
9. What score did the Bulldogs kick against Geelong at the weekend?
10. Which present running field umpire officiated in the Under 14D Grand Final in 2006?

Con Grouios and Darcy Kirkpatrick were the goalies at Wootten Road Reserve. They were wearing jackets because it was quite overcast, windy and the threat of rain wasn't too far away. Even at half-time some black clouds were gathering. Halfway through the third quarter the sky had cleared and the autumn sun was beginning to really warm up. At three quarter time the goalies had to go over to change an incorrect scoreboard. It was the perfect opportunity to whip off the jackets and get a team official to take them to the umpires' rooms. The only problem was that one of the goalies didn't have a shirt on underneath. How embarrassing! The only way out was for one goalie take the other's jacket into the room and slip on a shirt. All was fine except for the fact that the observer was there and knocked both goalies off for not wearing sweat bands. The rumour has it that the dashing goal umpire was also told to get them but couldn't find them.

The new rooms at Seddon are close to being finished. They should be a great asset to the umpiring fraternity. Still where are we going to put everyone when we have a really big meeting? One suggestion is to extend the social room out to the edge of Harris St.

The WRFL goal umpires have introduced a new concept for field umpires to remember the All Clear. It is **The Two Vees (verbal and visual)**. When there is a score, on most occasions, the field umpire should look at the goal umpire and signal with their hand or hands the All Clear. So next time you hear the goal umpires remind the field umpire about **The Two Vees (verbal and visual)** you will know what they are talking about

**The Football Quiz (Number 2 for 2017) answers.**

1. Altona
2. John Sutton, Steve Sutton. Jarod Sutton
3. One
4. Newport Power
5. Paul Kelly
6. Harry Taylor
7. Sydney Swans
8. Three
9. 12-9-81
10. Terry McGarity

Graeme Hodgart has now broken all ties with Scovell News but has been given the chance as a rookie reporter for The Hanmer Herald. If you have any gossip or stories or dirt then please let him know. It's best if you email him at [ghodgart@hotmail.com](mailto:ghodgart@hotmail.com) and he will pass all the printable material onto Stephen Berry and Dane Cowper. Hopefully there will be a third edition sometime in the month of June or July or August.