

GAA GAMES DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

**COACHING YOUTH – MEETING THE
CHALLENGE, RAISING OUR GAMES**

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Opening Statement

The athlete, whatever age, sex or talent, is and should always be, the focus of our attention. But we now understand fully, that the quality of all sporting environments is a direct result of coaching effectiveness

Introduction

- An international perspective = Australia's one indigenous sport, Australian Football (AFL)
- 50+ years parallel careers:
 - I. Education – primary, secondary and tertiary teacher
 - II. AFL player, coach, administrator and media commentator
- My interests/research
 - I. Primary school children – ‘the Motives to Play/Drop Out’
 - II. Professional football – ‘Providing a balanced lifestyle’
 - III. Youth participants – ‘What they want/need’
- Currently involved with:
 - I. AFL Research Board (AU\$.5 million per annum budget)
 - II. Yarra Junior Football League Advisory Board

What is an Effective Sports Coach?

- Conceptual understanding of the coaching process?
 - i. Pat Daly – *‘Coach¹⁰ Model’* – 2011
 - ii. Jean Côté – *‘An Integrated Definition of Coaching Effectiveness & Expertise’* – 2009
 - iii. Cliff Mallett – *‘Coaching Knowledge, Learning and Mentoring in the AFL’* – 2007
 - iv. Craig Mitchell – *‘Coaching Effectiveness – AFL Senior Coach’*–2010
- Relatively simple to define (for me!?)

“One who develops and optimizes the individual and collective talent of athletes whilst, at the same time, positively influencing the person in a holistic sense” David Parkin 2009
- Much more difficult to find, recruit, educate, develop and retain such people

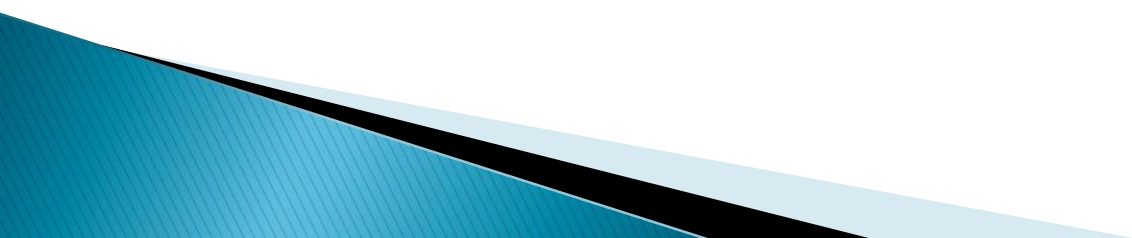


Motives/Drivers/Satisfaction

Primary School Age (Aussie) 5 – 12 years

- Improving their skills
- Playing and using their skills in games
- A good coach relationship
- Being with their friends
- Competing in and trying to win

N.B: Dropping out (80+%) – the coach!



Motives/Drivers/Satisfaction

Secondary School Age (Youth) 13 – 18 years

- Fun (challenge), fast and high scoring
- Peers consider this very skilful
- Team-based social interaction
- Provides recognition and dreams of AFL glory
- Physical nature (courage) – high peer value

N.B: Turned off by too serious and abusive coaches

Yarra Junior Football League

- Decade as league Patron/Advisory Board
- 6000 to 10,000 registered players (2002 – 2011)
- Tackers (U9) to Colts (U16)
- Of 10,000, approx 950 make it through to the Colts
- On average 28/950 → AFL Pathway (Under 18)
- On average 7/28 get drafted to AFL Clubs
- In the decade 4/70/280 have played 100+ AFL games
- Many with dreams – few make it!
- Every second year we workshop the players in representative teams (U12, U14, U16)
- The most significant direction provided to the administrators has been
 - i. to provide us with the best possible coaches for this experience – to make us better footballers
 - ii. to give us a coach who cares about us beyond our capacity to play good football



Motives/Drivers/Satisfaction

Adults 19+ Professional / Semi-Professional

- Recognised as talented sportsperson (high value in Australian society)
- Fame and fortune
- Powerful social affiliations – team/club
- Vehicle to take control of life
- Excitement of the intrinsic challenges – competitions, etc.

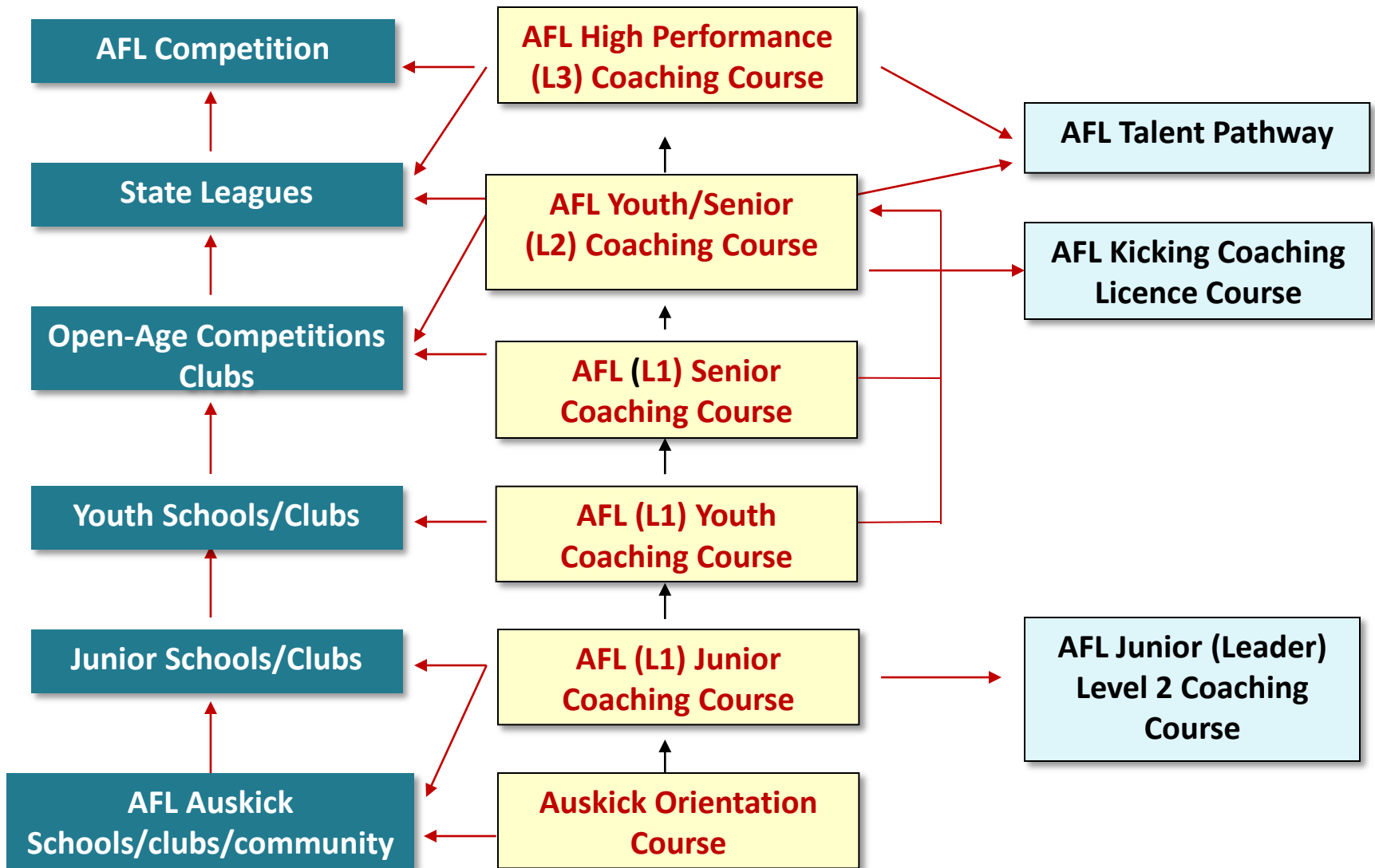
N.B: Coaches very significant, but not as dominant as with children and youth in terms of positive/negative experiences.

Adults start to take more responsibility for their own athletic outcomes.

AFL STRUCTURE



AFL Coaching Development Pathway



A lot of changes occur the day after a player is drafted. The transition from part time amateur to full-time AFL professional is difficult to navigate & fast track



**Pre AFL
Draft**



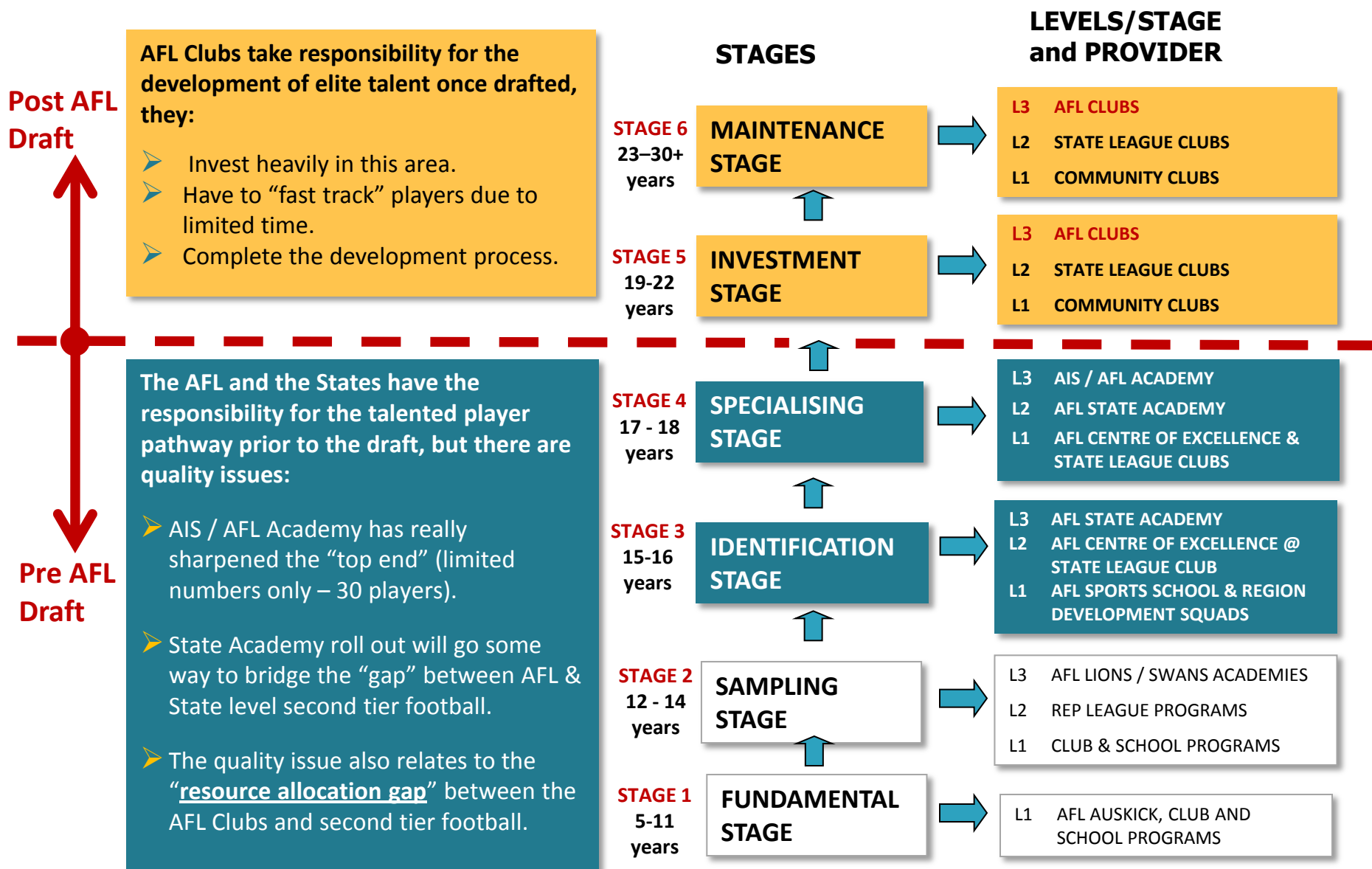
**Post AFL
Draft**



Is the investment in the player's welfare and development prior to the draft sufficient?

A part time Amateur in the TAC Cup	transitioning to	A Full-Time AFL Professional at an AFL Club ..
8 hours a week (train after school) – “5 to 9 regime”	Weekly Contact Hours	Up to 40 hours a week (train during the day) – “9 to 5 regime”
1 part-time Coach with 3 volunteer assistance	Coaching Staff Support	Average of 6 full time Coaches per Club
1-2 part time volunteers with at least 1 at training & matches	Medical Staff Support	Average of 3.5 full time per Club
2-3 part-time or volunteer (possibly still a studying)	Physical Conditioning	Average of 4 full time per Club
Limited time available to have desired impact	Player Welfare and Education on Life Skills/Behaviour	Extensive AFLPA support. Average of 1 full time per Club (Player Development Manager)
Full-time student & possibly some part time work	Outside Commitments	Player appearances & potentially some study
Zero	Player Payments	1st year average of \$80k and later averaging over \$200k
The overall TAC Program costs AFL Victoria approx. \$6.2m annually to support head office admin, umpiring & the 12 TAC Program Talent Areas that each manage a program that engages between 350 & 450 players each year.	Investment in System	AFL Club football department expenditure only - \$215m in total consisting of \$129 million to the players & a further \$86million in football support & coaching costs.
Peer leader surrounded by mates	Peer Group Change	Young stranger starting out in a high profile environment
Minimal acknowledgement	Adulation	Massive recognition and profile
Variable, most in need of upgrade as currently “functional” at best	Facilities	High Quality

We have specified six (6) core stages for talent development to segment our approach



Twice yearly reports on each players are submitted in the following key performance areas

The key performance areas are:

1. Kicking Ability
2. Marking Ability
3. Hand Passing, Vision, Awareness
4. Clean Hands
5. Ball Winning Ability
6. Pace
7. Endurance
8. Recovery and Agility
9. Durability
10. Leadership & Self Discipline
11. Aggressiveness, Intensity and Second Efforts
12. Football Character
13. Competitiveness
14. Football Smarts

The scales for making judgments, which will have a descriptor added, specific to the key performance area are:

5	Rare
4	Excellent
3	Good
2	Marginal
1	Poor

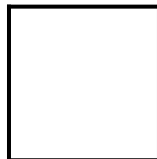
Descriptors for each rating scale are essential for gaining some consistency

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

SCALES

DESCRIPTORS

1. KICKING ABILITY



AFL BENCHMARKS -
Matthew Pavlich
(Fremantle),
Nick Dal Santo (St Kilda)

5

Rare

Consistently kicks with accuracy over short and long distances and under pressure. Outstanding technician with great vision and awareness. Very good on non preferred side.

4

Excellent

Kicking a real feature of his game, only occasionally makes a kicking error with preferred foot, normally under intense opposition pressure. Very capable on non preferred side, excellent decision maker.

3

Good

Strong preferred foot kick, rarely misses short targets and is sound over distance, normally getting the ball to advantage. May struggle at times with opposite foot. Generally a good decision maker.

2

Marginal

Not completely sound with technique so struggles under moderate pressure. Lacks real penetration & precision with his disposal, and at times lacks vision and awareness.

1

Poor

Has flaws in technique and struggles to get the ball to team-mate advantage with any consistency. At times lacks vision and awareness

We are currently developing a comprehensive curriculum for each level based on the current AIS AFL Academy curriculum across 7 core areas

Injury Prevention & Rehabilitation	Physical Conditioning	AFL Football	Skill Development	Nutrition & Recovery	Personal Development	AFL Policies
Medical Screening	Body Composition	AFL Fundamentals and Team Rules	Decision Making Testing	General Nutrition	ACE Introduction	ASADA- AFL Anti-Doping Policy
Medical Assessment	Introduction to Conditioning	Game Strategy and Structures	Personal Learning Style	Nutrition for Performance	Computer Skills	AFL Racial and Religious Vilification
Health Issues	Introduction to Strength Training	Game Analysis	Kicking Analysis & Coaching	Personal Diet Analysis	Study Skills	AFL Illicit Drugs Policy
Stretching & Flexibility	Core Stability (Static & Dynamic)	Performance Analysis	Running Technique Training	Food Diaries	Personal Presentation Skills	AFL Respect and Responsibility Policy
Overuse & Injury Acute Injuries	Body Weight Training	AFL Game Analysis	Movement Analysis	Losing and Gaining Weight	Public Speaking Skills	AFL Member Protection Policy
Balance	AFL Testing & Training Loads	Player Profiling	Application to Performance	Hydration	Personality Assessment	AFL Player Rules & Regulations
Injury Management	Fitness Programs	Team Training Sessions		Recovery Practices	Leadership Skills Development	AFL Code of Conduct
Reading Your Body	Heat and Training	Individual Training Sessions		Drugs and Alcohol	Goal Setting Techniques	AFL Talent Pathway
Travel and Medical Issues	Explosive Power Training	Competition Performance		Travel and Nutrition	Mental Toughness Testing	AFL National Draft Procedures
Wellness	Equipment Training	AFL Club Induction Program			Time Management	AFL Academy Policies
Recovery					Media Training	
Vision and Performance					Educational Support	

The New Rules of Engagement

With youth we are dealing with...

- They want it now!
- Coach does not always know best
- Not easily convinced – require evidence
- Will always question
- Want to know relevance. How does this help me?
- Seem to lose interest quickly
- Don't want to watch – just participate
- Electronic communication of all types
- Much more savvy and educated than us

Need to Know / Do

- Know their personal goals and how they fit into the ‘big picture’
- Be more of a mentor, less of a boss
- Provide opportunities for continual learning and building of skills
- Importance of informal communication (despite electronic forms)
- Provide regular/frequent constructive feedback
- Access to most current technology
- How they process information. Allow for visual, verbal, kinesthetic
- Engage – question, listen, hear and respond

Reference: *“The New Rules of Engagement”* – Michael McQueen - 2010

CONCLUSION

- Teachers, parents and coaches are frustrated, irritated somewhat, and certainly confused when trying to engage with this generation
- Seem to be aware of their rights, but mostly unaware of their responsibilities
- A reputation (in Australia) that today's youth are brash, self-confident, self-reliant and somewhat arrogant, BUT maybe not – maybe a facade
- I believe they're looking for solid adult role models who provide them with the connection to an authentic life
- As a coach, the role you have to play has never been more important and the part you play as an adult in engaging this generation is critical
- This role carries great power and an incredible privilege – the privilege of influence
- You are, in fact, shaping the next generation's potential and our society's future