



AFL Queensland Umpires Association
PO Box 1230
Coorparoo BC QLD 4151

6th July 2015

Dear Craig,

Following on from our recent meeting with myself and our Vice-President Janie McCullagh, we write to formally express our concern on a number of issues affecting the morale, development and experience of umpires across both the NEAFL/QAFL and Community umpiring groups.

After further discussions with members of both groups and emails from yourself and Gary Fila, it is clear that there are significant communication and operational issues that is resulting in a lack of transparency and subsequent unrest with a growing number of umpires.

Whilst our new agreement for the 2015-16 period has no doubt taken some positive steps forward in some areas including; a split north and south training venue for community umpires with sports trainers at both venues, match day sports trainers for QAFL seniors and an appropriate pay rise to QAFL seniors alongside a general 5% up front increase to other grades, these areas are being let down by consistent and repetitive breaches of other parts of the agreement.

These breaches may be seen as one off instances, however have been a consistent theme towards the umpiring group over a longer period of time which has no doubt heavily contributed to the lack of desire to umpire or attend training as well as overall retention and dropout rate of umpires across both groups.

Our vision as an Association is that all Queensland Australian Football Umpires are to be respected, trusted and capable of officiating to the best of their ability of which we're sure AFL Queensland is also a partner to and trust that the issues raised in this letter are able to be resolved to the betterment of all umpires.

6.2 Observation and performance feedback

In recognition of the importance of timing and regular feedback to the development of umpires, the parties acknowledge and agree that feedback based on an objective criteria should be provided to all regular umpires (expected to officiate in 9 matches or more during a season) at least once throughout the home and away season.

As outlined in your presentation to the group in December, a total of \$5,000 was allocated to coaching/observers for the 2015 season to ensure this took place. A further \$11,000 allocated to coaching staff and \$35,000 allocated to recruitment staff, who all play a role in observing and providing feedback.

During a recent community umpires training session, it was made clear that only 1 umpire in attendance had received any feedback throughout season 2015. This is a great concern as we approach finals with almost the entire group not receiving any feedback leaving them unaware of their standing and where they can improve as we lead into finals.

- Can AFLQ provide justification for the expenditure of the proposed funds and evidence of where umpires have been observed with feedback given?



6.1.2 Finals and Grand Finals Selection Policy

Without limiting the factors that may be covered, the Selection Policies for finals matches will:

- a) *Ensure that umpires selection for finals is based on performance and the Selection Policies only. Specifically:*
 - i. *Selection will be based on merit and performance throughout the season;*
 - ii. *the venue and an umpire's Home Region will not be considered when making the appointments*

As the vast majority of the community umpires group and a large number of QAFL umpires have not had access to feedback, we are unsure on how the selection panel will base their assessment of umpires and how this will be communicated to umpires across both groups.

Further to this, Gary's recent email on July 1 explaining that "Umpires will generally speaking be appointed to the competition finals they umpired a majority of the season in" and goes on to say that "there is a clause to this however and that is if umpires selected to a particular finals panel do not umpire well and in the opinion of the coaches, do not deserve to progress to the following week of finals in that competition, umpires from a higher competition who are potentially finished for the year, could come in and umpire in that competition".

Without giving umpires any feedback during the season, this is open for conjecture and confusion as to what constitutes not umpiring well and not deserving to progress to the following week of finals. We propose that as part of the selection criteria being made available to umpires before finals begin, that agreeable standards be set for what constitutes an acceptable performance by the umpire, particularly for field umpires. Example

| | Free Kicks | Match Management | Fitness |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Excellent | Above 90% | Showed strong initiative | Hard running with triggers |
| Good | 80 – 89% | Managed game well | Ran well |
| Satisfactory | 60 – 79% | Managed game | Ran satisfactory |
| Unsatisfactory | 59% and below | Missed multiple reports | Walking |

If umpires have multiple areas that are unsatisfactory, they may be replaced in the panel by another umpire.

This lack of selection transparency was evident recently through the appointment to the representative games, particularly between QFA South and North and the Women's representative game.

At our recent meeting it was explained that there was no reason why community umpires shouldn't have been involved in those games, however in subsequent email communication we were told a contrasting view that "instructions were to select the very best umpires for representative football"

With no selection criteria or effective communication given to the community umpiring group beforehand, this has led to significant unrest and frustration from a large number of umpires which the Association shares.



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- Can AFLQ provide an outline of the proposed finals selection criteria and a date of when this will be circulated to umpires?

6.1.1 General selection policy

Rules, guidelines and criteria relating to the selection of umpires in each grade and for each discipline shall be developed by the Coaching Staff prior to the commencement of the season (the Selection Policies).

The rules and guidelines will be in writing and made available to all umpires.

Whilst some of the selection policies were explained at the pre-season seminar, these have not been made available in writing to umpires, or at least explained clearly where these can be accessed as the community group have not been given an overview and remain confused as to what these are.

- Can AFLQ provide this and circulate to the wider umpiring community

7 Uniforms

Whilst we as an Association have been briefed that there have been significant issues with the uniform supplier, it has not been made clear to umpires the progress of completing their entitled allocation as per the agreement of a second shirt and cap where appropriate. The Association worked closely with AFLQ on this part of the agreement in good faith to reduce costs and that this would be adhered to, however it remains a considerable issue amongst regular umpires who are missing pieces of apparel.

- Can AFLQ provide justification for the allocated funds on the uniforms that have not been met and an indication of when uniforms will be supplied

We ask for a formal response and explanation of each concern back to the Association by Friday 17th July, to enable our members to be updated at our next General Meeting.

AFLQUA have negotiated and entered into the current agreement in good faith, however we are concerned that the issues highlighted above and agreed upon by both parties need to be urgently addressed.

We trust that AFLQ will be able to deliver a workable solution, however if this is not possible then we will need to consider what our options are to ensure that the items agreed to by both parties are met.

We thank you for your cooperation and look forward to a timely response.

Regards,

Brent Cue

President

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