

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

Congratulations to Stephen Berry and Dane Cowper for publishing issue 3 of The Hanmer Herald. Some of the content created a bit of a stir among some umpires but it's all good fun especially if you are not mentioned. Please remember that everything you read on the following pages is total fiction. Nothing could be further from the truth. And if you are mentioned then keep in the back of your mind, if you have one, that's it's not really you that is being mentioned, ridiculed and brought down to earth by simple humour.

As you know, this wonderful newspaper only reports on incidents and stories that are about football. Needless to say that the Ice Melting Marathon held at Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh was postponed due to the heat. Last year's champion Roberto Princez is expected to win when the rescheduled games get underway. Although Dame Marrigoos Betek could be a rough outsider if the track is heavy as expected.

Finals. Finally. Final.

The **finals** eventually came **finally**. They do feature heavily in this edition which is the **final** one for 2017. (The budget has been exhausted but Stephen and Dane are now saving their meagre editorial payments and are cutting corners in the spending department in a bid to be able to publish again in 2018. If they are not re-appointed at least they will have some beer money.) Hopefully you enjoy the **finals** and then can **finally** rest knowing that the **final** practise run, appointment and game for 2017 is over. **Finals. Finally. Final.**

Finals: One of the boundary umpires failed to show up for their game so Geoff Tressider ran out to do the game. Being responsible for the umpires at the venue didn't stop him. As he dashed onto the field he threw his mobile phone into the hands of an umpire in the crowd. When it rang ten minutes later the holder of the phone couldn't work out how to answer it. (Obviously Toyota doesn't have any need for mobile phones.) He was able to get Geoff's attention who, without breaking stride, grabbed the phone and answered it while still carrying out the duties of a boundary umpire.

Finals: One young field umpire was quite concerned about the on-going back-chat and general comments by one of the teams in his game. At quarter time he said he was going to tell the team to cut it out. He had taken about ten steps towards the huddle of 100 plus people when several older umpires explained that it was very unwise to do it. "Never go into a team's huddle. Just make mention of it to the players during the next quarter."

Finals: One of the coaches was very pleased with himself. He had filled in all of his appointments for both weeks of the junior finals. It was great being a week ahead which meant that he had less to do the next weekend. Wrong! Out of those 17 appointments he had to make 5 changes due to various reasons. One umpire had coaching responsibilities, one was appointed to a game as a field umpire, one was listed to umpire his brother's game, one was unavailable while another was listed to umpire his own club.

Finals: Young Thomas Curkowskyj was pleased to be given a final in the goals. It was the Under 18 girls' game and the rain had disappeared and the sun was breaking through the clouds. The weather was still quite cold and so the goalies decided to wear jackets. First problem: no green jacket. (Thomas is a thin build and requires an extra small jacket.) He had a white jacket and so that was worn. His partner recognised it as his own old VFA jacket from about 1992. It was old, creased and dirty. Second problem: no green cap. Craig Hill was on hand to lend Thomas his old WRFL cap. It was time to go out and umpire. Two out of three pens were left on the table until someone was reminded that he might need them. As a matter of fact they were also misplaced during the first half. They annoyed Thomas when they were in his pocket so he stuck them in the ground near the base of the right hand goal post. That's where his partner found them at the start of the third quarter. They were returned at three quarter time. Back in the rooms after the game, Thomas's partner found the same 2 pens lying idly on the table when everyone had gone.

One of our spies watched Rene Van Kuyk umpiring with Sal Mirabella when he called for holding the ball which was promptly dropped and kicked through the goal. Rene, were you just a little bit too quick with the whistle? At least it wasn't like the AFL game when a shot for goal to win was ruled ineligible as the umpire had just signalled the end to the game. Still, you can get egg on your face.

It seems like a few of the goal umpires have been taking a tumble recently. Peter Auld was one who hit the dirt. Derek Polden was another. Christine Gent was making good position in the goals at Parkside when a player came from nowhere and tangled with her. She managed to regain her composure and signal the score as the player apologised several times. Christine later said that the observer was bent over in hysterics. Not true! One wag made a comment that it was probably a while since a man had brought her to her knees. (Not exactly sure what was really meant by that comment. Maybe you do!)

Anything can happen in football. Mark Westgarth (not his real name) was returning from a hamstring injury. Interestingly he abandoned the next game he umpired. Did he call the game off because he lost control? No! Did he call the game off due to a lack of fitness? No! Did he call the game off because his injury flared up again? No! A melee developed with about twenty players involved. He grabbed the football and threw it up and no-one made any attempt to go for it. So he called the game off with only 1 minute 42 sec to go!

What did Budgie say about the umpires that did the Div 1 senior grand final last year?

Great comments of the 2017 football season: "I tripped over a giraffe." (Derek Polden after falling over the legs of a giant Div 1 ruckman from Deer Park); "Since when has Miller Slingsby been umpiring Division 1 senior football?" (One puzzled goalie who may have been Peter Auld); "Good stuff, Jolley. That's why you're the purple Wiggle." (Tarneit player to his team-mate); "Hey, umpy! You're going to make the AFL one day." (Werribee Districts' supporter to young goalie, Brent Wood); "My son loves you because everytime he was kicking for goal you were standing right in the middle of the goals." (Mrs Cloke at Parkside to observer); "It's a final and he's left his mouthguard and footy boots at home!" (stunned official at Galvin Park); "I might go and join the goal umpires." (Richard Watt); "Graeme tried to kill me." (Bradley Heffernan making up stories again).

Last issue featured a host of **Forgetful umpires**. Sadly that theme continued with quite a few examples of forgetful umpires occurring over and over again. Unfortunately there is neither space nor time to list the newer editions to this category. So you are spared!

Peter Auld has lost his black football boots. Then he lost his memory, obviously, because he couldn't remember where they might be. It caused one wag to sit and write a poem:

Peter Auld has lost his boots and doesn't know where to find them.
Retrace your path, and don't be daft,
And they'll come home, trailing their laces behind them!

One observer spied Darcy Kirkpatrick kicking for goals during half-time with a friend at Galvin Park during a game in which she wasn't umpiring. Although she kicked several goals and took a couple of marks, she never once bounced the ball. Why not?

Several observers were discussing umpires that they had seen. One name came up and one observer said, "His train has left the station, but he's still on the platform."

The WRFL umpire association held a reunion last week. There were quite a few old timers that turned up to see the new rooms at Hanmer. The life membership certificate was presented to Tim Moloney while Alf Galea was given his certificate for being promoted to Legend status in the WRFLUA Hall of Fame. Those that attended included Jim Rayner, Bob Madigan, Bob Manton, John Manikis, John Henry, Luke Henry, Phil Snow, Alf Galea, Ian Cox, Paul Saville, Jo McGarity, Bernie O'Dwyer, Dave Wright, Sebastian Garro, Joy Cox, Charlie Lombardo, Jarryd Wright, Alan Pascoe and Alf Johnstone. Current umpires included Justin Moloney, Paul Battaglia, Richard Watt, Terry O'Donnell, Peter Auld, Jarod Sutton, Terry McGarity, John Sutton, Tim Moloney, Graeme Hodgart, Jeff Tresidder, Rod Davies, Andrew Fregonese and Leo Keating.

Tim Moloney recalls the first time that he attended training. Ian Cox turned to Alwyn Hiskins (who was in charge of the goalies) and said, "I think we may have found an A Grade goal umpire." He was right!

Bob Taylor parked himself in the forward pocket at Galvin Park oval number 2 for the junior finals. For most of the time he sat in his fold up chair watching the action. When he took a meal break he retreated to his car that was strategically parked in the nearby car park. Not one to miss anything, as he munched on his home made sandwiches and drank sweet tea from his thermos; he kept an eye on the umpires through his trusty binoculars.

The boundary umpire was well equipped as he ran the boundary line at Parkside. He sported a lovely pair of fingerless gloves. Were they necessary? Are they allowed?

One observer thought he had picked the ideal spot to evaluate his charges and had made copious notes. As it was half-time he thought he would move to a new location. As he was reaching for his bag a falcon landed. Ouch! Teeth chattered. Headache. He moved.

There was a slight problem in a junior game at Flemington. At quarter time one club official came to the field umpires and informed them that the time keepers had blown the siren to finish the quarter three minutes prematurely. What should they do? Both team managers were brought into the discussion and they had different opinions. One wanted the three minutes added to the second quarter but as his team were due to kick with the rather strong breeze in that quarter that idea was quickly dismissed. Eventually the field umpires decided that the second quarter would be the same length as the first while the third and fourth quarters would both be the correct regular length. Not everyone agreed but maybe the decision was also influenced by the fact that the two field umpires were running their second consecutive game for the day.

Rumour has it that former WRFL goal umpire in Luke McLean has moved from Geelong and is now somewhere on the Gold Coast doing the field, running the boundary and also waving flags. Wow! They must be really short up north if he has to do all that!

A boundary umpire at a junior final was running the lines when the observer noticed that he was wearing a necklace. Totally forbidden! He made a note of it but noticed five minutes later that the necklace had mysteriously disappeared. Where did it go? Ah, mystery solved. The 'necklace' was actually a hair braid and was now holding back the young boundary umpire's flowing locks.

The observer was busy scribbling down notes about the two goal umpires when he noticed that the two boundary umpires were on the same side of the ground in the third quarter as they had been in the second quarter. Strange. Even stranger was the fact that they also ran the fourth quarter still keeping to the same sides. Did anyone tell them that they should change sides?

Are the WRFL umpires being paid real money? Are wrist bands too expensive or impossible to buy? One in twenty umpires usually fall down in this department! Good ole Richard Watt was seen handing them out to the field and boundary umpires before a final.

The scoreboard read Spotswood 8-8-56 to the visitors 8-2-51. Not correct! At another time earlier in the game it had said Spotswood 4- -29 to the visitors 6-2-38. Mmm...

A familiar face was spotted running water at a Superules game. It was none other than Jackson Carroll. "I was going to play this season but I just never got around to it." Two weeks later he was there again but this time in another role. He and Jake Bokhove were waving flags for one of the games. Jackson was limping quite badly. Maybe he had had a game of football in the meantime and sustained an injury. Jake was very pleased with himself that he had brought along his own flags although his style of waving them was more suited to the Grand Prix than a suburban football match.

Great comments of the 2017 WRFL season: "They don't pay downfield free kicks here." (Number 6 for Tarneit in the reserves); "It wasn't 19 goals in the last quarter but 14 goals in the third quarter." (Jason Sposito referring to an error in the last edition); "We need a Spiderman mask." (Paul Battaglia with an idea to keep out the cold.); "I'm an honest cheat." (John Sutton); "In finals the boundary umpires at the end of each quarter should get the ball. But if the ball is somewhere it shouldn't be, just forget it. The league has plenty. Let them pay for them." (Mark Westgarth); "I've only torn my party dress once." (Tim Moloney politely saying that he once spat the dummy when the appointments for grand finals came out); "Don't stand up, you might hurt your knee." (Craig Hill to Trevor Budge when the panels for senior finals were read out.); "I should be drinking water." (Paul Dimartino with beer in hand); "I'm not a shrinking violet." (Steve Sutton).

Why is there a basketball ring on the netting behind the goals at Albion? The answer is simple. If a player can kick the ball and score a basketball goal they are awarded twelve points. There are only two problems. Firstly, the goal umpire is not allowed to turn around and see if it gone through the hoop. Secondly, how do you signal a 12 pointer?

As umpires and advisers and observers know, if a chance to assist comes along, they are only too happy to lend a hand. At the Div 1 reserves on 2 Sept a goal was kicked and the ball passed over the net. One observer collected the ball and tried to do a Brownless (kicking it over the silo). Alas, he was no Brownless. The ball went slap bang into the net halfway up and rebounded into a nearby car shaking up the surprised occupants. Red-faced, the observer, retrieved the ball and handed it back through a hole in the netting.

Adam Steger was carting the footballs in one of those big red, white and blue striped shopping bags. Harrison Bradley thought it was so amusing that he just had to say, "Hey, Adam. You remind me of a little old lady who's carting around her things."

Some people never learn. All umpires were advised prior to the finals to carefully check their appointments for the date and time as the games may differ from the usual. One field umpire arrived for his game exactly 24 hours early. Needless to say he was not HOLDING his sides when he confessed to seeing the email but not reading it. One goal umpire was beCumming very Violet and Gray when she also did the same trick.

The goalies were on the training track and were walking from one exhaustive exercise to another. They were discussing the finals of last season and how they clashed with some late night viewing of an important overseas sporting event. Sam Polden, who was 18 at the time, innocently said, "I missed it because I had to go to bed at 8:30 (pm)." There was an uneasy silence as the other goalies began to think about what he had just said. He was then quick to point out that the early bed time was only because he had a very early football game the next day and needed to get up at 6 am. (Derek tells us that Sam's bed time is nowhere near 8:30 pm nowadays. It's 8:45 pm but only if he is a very good boy.

Great quotes of the 2017 footy season: "How come you're not getting under the flight of the ball?" (Michael Westgarth to observer who observing a goalie from behind the goals); "Oh, no! Graeme's here!" (Andrew Wilson on spotting the coach of the goal umpires); "The boss won't mind. He's ignorant." (Richard Watt to one goalie); "You need a video tape to look at that again." (Geoff Tresidder on a hard decision that a goalie had made); "They look horrible!" (Umpiring official on seeing an umpire wearing green wrist bands); "It must be boring just sitting around watching goal umpires all day." (Brodie Cameron Smith to observer); "Are you a field umpire or a boundary umpire?" (Dumb water person to boundary umpire on the field), "Am I allowed to have a cuddle?" (Caitlin Kelly to Richard Watt), "I know I look silly." (Tim Moloney reflecting), "Don't write that down!" (Tim Moloney reflecting at a different time but in the presence of The Hammer Herald scribe); "Shut up, Rowdy 2. You talk too much!" (John Sutton to a quiet, bewildered Thomas Gath); "I've done well this year. I haven't made it into the Herald." (S.Sutton)

It really pays to know someone in high authority. For the Division 3 finals at Dempster the WRFL banned all vehicles from parking around the boundary but that did not stop our diligent goal observer who was promptly let in to the sacred area. So he sat there all day, the only car on the fence line. Give him his dues, he did offer to share his vehicle with a field umpires' observer who had been sitting in front of him, freezing, and in the last quarter produced a blanket to keep the said observer warm. We will not embarrass the person by naming him. Only, let it be said, that he is related to the king of the jungle, the lion who is also known as L...

It was a final and Richard Watt must have been nervous before the toss of the coin. In a loud voice he called out, "Captains, thank-you." One of the boundary umpires said, "Hey, Richard, the Yarraville Seddon team aren't out on the ground yet!" Richard had mistaken the Yarraville Seddon Under 19 team huddle, from the previous game just completed, as one of the teams for his game. Silly boy! It was an interesting group of field umpires with Darren Williams wearing a green cap and Thomas Hill having a faded blue cap. One nong took Richard aside and said, "I've got a cap in my bag if you'd like it. And it's a different colour to the other two!" Richard declined with a bit of a laugh.

The security officer thought it was amusing to park his butt on the observer's chair. The observer had just got up and was watching the goalie manage a close contest on the line. As the observer scribbled down some positive comments for his report he saw what the security officer was doing so he completely ignored him ... until ... he left.

Guest writer Bob Taylor (aka Roadrunner) has contributed the following article.

Greetings to all WRFL umpires. As my official season has come to an end I thought I should pass on some of my observations. These may be passé to you and you know all about them but these are my thoughts.

“Observers, Observation season 2017: After 22 years with the VAFA watching substandard umpires do substandard games and myself not being in the best of health I retired from observing in 2014. However my fire was rekindled in 2016 when I attended a Division 2 WRFL final and commented to Mark Westgarth about the high standard of umpiring, Mark invited me to join the WRFL as a Junior Umpire Observer.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the season apart from getting lost in the early days. I have had the privilege of reporting on 80 plus umpires on 130 plus occasions. Some lucky umpires got seen several times. Of the 80 I have seen I classed 35 as potential for promotion and have seen eight of them progress to a more Senior level.

I found there are three levels in the umpiring world: Firstly we have ‘Umpires’ who are those who contribute 100% no matter which grade of football they are umpiring. Secondly we have ‘IF I MUST UMPIRES’. They are the umpires who shrug their shoulders and say, ‘Oh well, I have to do the right thing by the umpires and fill in for the junior games, but I am not going to exert myself.’ Thirdly there are the MERCENARY UMPIRES whose mindset is: ‘I am here for the money and don’t care how poorly I umpired, just give me the dough!’

Some Umpires consider themselves as AVERAGE, Average is the top of the bottom and the bottom of the top.

When I observe I report on what I see, not what the past performances have been, it’s what’s on the day that counts, good or bad.

I will spend the final watching the best of the best do their thing. Anytime I have doubt that I am asking too much of an umpire, I watch the best in action and decide ‘No, if they want to reach the top they have to improve.’

Thanks to all those who have helped me and shown encouragement towards me during the season.

Cheers, Bob Taylor (Aka ‘Roadrunner’)

Editor’s note: Thanks for the article, Bob. Hope to see you out and about in 2018.

James Condos is an interesting character. One spectator asked, “What’s he on?” He does know how to play football but he tries everything to get under the skin of the opposition. After one episode he walked past goalie Daniel Higgins and gave him a smile and a wink.

The Football Quiz (Number 4 for 2017) Answers are found below. (No peeking!)

1. Which FDFL club did Jack Collins play for?
2. Name the two Murray brothers who have umpired in the WRFL in 2017.
3. Which Port Colts identity was the WRFL's CEO from 1999 until 2003?
4. Which WRFL team plays home games at Hogans Road Reserve Reserve?
5. Which year did John Platten first play for Hawthorn: 1976, 1986 or 1996?
6. Who wears number 22 for the North Melbourne team?
7. In 2016 whose AFL list were Jansen, Dawson, Taylor and Mayes on?
8. What number does Jack Watts wear for the Demons?
9. Which present club played in the first four FDFL grand finals in 1931-34?
10. Which Hawk champ (1972-91) came 2nd in their B&F six times but never won it?

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 exactly what they are talking about.

Some field umpires can't take this topic too seriously. Goalie Tim Moloney was looking for the field umpire and was startled when Michael Willcox actually appeared from a position directly behind Tim. Richard Watt was also seen giving the All Clear in a peep-a-boo fashion from behind one of the goal posts. Our game is just too serious, at times!

Recently Andrew Van Keulen took a tumble on the field. He got up quickly, grinning.

And Rene said that they were respectable! What? The gate keepers at Hoppers were Richard Watt, Colin Hood, Peter Auld, Luke McGuinness and Ian Evans. The whole lot were dodgy especially Peter who was seen hugging one of the security guards.

One fairly elderly umpire looked up where Goddard Street was in his trusty 2008 edition of The Melway. There was no Goddard Street listed. It's either time to get a new Melway or simply get a more up-to-date umpire!

Yes, the clubs should supply the umpires with the necessary paperwork but one club says that for two weeks in a row they have had umpires asking for pairs of socks! Really?

One umpiring person says that if he was in charge then he'd order that no spectators are allowed in the centre square and goalies can wear dark gloves on those very cold days.

The Football Quiz (Number 4 for 2017) answers.

1. West Footscray
2. Jason & Nicholas
3. Mark Penaluna
4. Hoppers Crossing
5. 1986
6. Todd Goldstein
7. Brisbane Lions
8. Four
9. Parkside
10. Michael Tuck

Graeme Hodgart is a rookie reporter for The Hammer Herald. If you have any gossip or stories please email him at ghodgart@hotmail.com and he will pass them on to Stephen Berry and Dane Cowper. Hopefully there will be more editions in the 2018 season.