

BOROONDARA NETBALL ASSOCIATION - UMPIRE TRAINING PROGRAM

AIM:

At BNA, the aim of the Umpiring Development and Training Program is to encourage, create and continually expand a strong, reliable, skilled and confident umpire base. Appropriate structures are in place for all levels of umpires- from new trainees, consolidating umpires, badge trainee and badged umpires. The association motto of "Pathway to the Top" applies for umpires too!

STRUCTURE:

- Once new umpires have completed an online Theory Test, a Level 1 umpire course and have registered with the association, they can begin umpiring with supervision of an umpire mentor.
- Trainee umpires will continue to umpire with supervision until a point in which the mentor deems them competent to umpire alone.

Indications of this level include: an ability to recognize and penalize *some obvious* major and minor infringements, easy footwork infringements, correct throw in decisions, correct centre pass decisions, basic use of hand signals, held ball and over a third. It is not expected that an umpire at this level will penalize all of the infringements all of the time, but they should be able to show they see the obvious ones.

- Umpire Mentors are required to provide *positive* feedback to the trainee umpire including achievements made on the day; things to work on or advice on things that may need more attention; or areas of the game that the umpire has a competent grasp of and may not need to be worked on quite so much. An achievement checklist is provided as a guide. The mentor will advise both the umpire and the Umpire Coordinator (Meg) when the trainee is considered ready to umpire without one-on-one supervision
- Once this level of competency has been achieved, umpires can then umpire alone, but with the constant support of mentors and umpire supervisors. It is extremely important that ongoing training and support to improve the knowledge base and increase confidence. Although no longer under one-on-one training, things to be worked on at this point are consolidation of rule knowledge, a greater ability to penalize *obvious* infringements and a good coverage of the court.
- An umpire supervisor should be present at all times.
- Senior umpire mentors can then identify those umpires from the consolidating/intermediate group, who can be selected to be part of the badge training program. Umpires can also make an expression of interest to join this group.
- These umpires then work one-on-one with senior mentors in weekly, more intensive training until the mentor reaches a decision that the umpire is ready to be tested for their C grade badge. The indicators of this include: reasonable control of the game, good knowledge of the rules, a voice and whistle which are loud and clear, efficient terminology and announcement of decisions, good application of all general rules, apply major infringements consistently, show *awareness* of the advantage rule.
- Umpires in this group are required to sign an agreement to assist in umpiring for tournaments and representative selection sessions as a type of reimbursement of time and effort the association provides them.

General comments for umpire mentors:

While the rules are the same for all umpires, the interpretation and decision making will differ, depending on experience. As an umpire gains more knowledge and experience, they will become more competent in seeing infringements and penalizing them effectively, and decision making will become easier. Umpire mentors are required to provide positive feedback and encouragement. It is important that a trainee umpire is given time and a sufficient workload from which to learn. Working on one thing at a time can assist on establishing a solid knowledge base, and therefore reducing the risk of confusion and feelings of becoming overwhelmed. Before moving on, ensure that the umpire understands and applies rules with confidence. Trainee umpires can not be expected to be perfect, as can anyone else! A good umpire mentor should develop a rapport with the trainee umpires, and speak to them in an appropriate and constructive manner. It is important that they understand what the mentor is saying. Keep assistance simple and be realistic with expectations. Every umpire's needs are different and umpire mentors need to be aware and supportive of these. The aim is create a confident and happy umpire "team".