



BFUA 2023 YEARBOOK



Jeep

BFUA Chair Report

Dear Members, Supporters, Friends of the BFUA,

I am truly honoured to present my third Chairperson's Report, reflecting on the remarkable journey we've embarked on in 2023. As I look back on this year, it fills me with excitement and pride to witness the unwavering passion and commitment displayed by our BFUA community, as we continue to strive for excellence and uphold the highest standards of professionalism.

This year marks a significant milestone in our BFUA history, as we celebrate 110 years of dedicated service to our sport and community. We have acknowledged our deep-rooted connection to the community by establishing a Time Capsule, preserving the treasures of our time for generations to come.

Reflecting on the season that unfolded, we were surrounded by positive influences and significant moments. Our season launch, in particular, was a pivotal event as we kicked off the 110th year of the BFUA, inviting all to join in our celebration.



Inclusivity has always been at the heart of what we do here at the BFUA. Our Youth Voice Committee, guided by our Child Safety Officer, Mark Warwick, continued to make a positive impact, representing the voices of our young people. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Ally Steenhuis, Tash Petrov, Sabrina Goodie, Daniel O'Brien, Harry Strawhorn, Rohan McMaster and Will Beechey, plus others who contributed their time and energy.

In line with our commitment to inclusivity, we launched a social committee to organise engaging events that involved all members, their families, and friends. Megan Bourke, Sharyn Runciman, Kelvin King, and Peter Luke deserve our gratitude for their enthusiasm and efforts in making our events truly memorable. In particular, they reinvented the Whistleblower to make it fun and family-friendly.

Our 110th Anniversary at the Ballarat Leagues Club, held in conjunction with the Life Members' Evening, was a testament to the deep bonds within our community. We inducted two new Life Members, Les Veering and Julian Pinder, who have made significant contributions to shape the BFUA into what it is today.

Our Presentation Night was a highlight, with guest speaker Hayden Kennedy, along with David Harris and our AFL Umpire Ambassador Nathan Williamson in attendance. Nathan's ongoing engagement, training visits, and insightful contributions have been invaluable. Hayden shared his journey, emphasising the importance of personal development, rule knowledge, and game management - principles that are non-negotiable on the path to success.



A significant milestone was achieved by our female BFUA members this season, as they became the first all-female panel appointed to officiate the BFNL senior women's grand final at MARS Stadium. Congratulations to those women and girls others who managed the game with finesse. Your professionalism serves as an inspiration to all the females in our BFUA community.

Our local community has continued to support us wholeheartedly, and we express our sincere appreciation to our 2023 key supporters. Your backing is instrumental in our success, and we are grateful for your continued partnership. We also cherish our relationships with institutions like Ballarat Grammar, the City of Ballarat, Redan Football Club, City Oval Bowls Club, and our partnering leagues, whose collaboration is vital to our achievements.

Together the BFUA has actively engaged in numerous activities to promote our organisation and create a respected platform within the community. Our efforts, such as the 2023 Member Survey, club umpire development program, school academies, junior club engagement program, and various outreach initiatives, have strengthened our presence and contributed to our growth.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the 2023 Board and the Operational Leadership team. Your dedication, experience, and passion have played a pivotal role in steering the BFUA in the right direction. Our organisation is a complex entity, and your collective efforts have ensured its strength and readiness for the future

Our Operational Leadership team, led by Billy Mitchell, has demonstrated unwavering professionalism and commitment. Billy's extraordinary dedication to the development of our members and the broader BFUA community is commendable. I am delighted to announce that Billy Mitchell will continue as our Head of Umpiring Operations in 2024.

To all our coaches, mentors, and observers, your contributions are invaluable in shaping our umpiring group. Your dedication to our members' growth and development is commendable, and you are true leaders for change.





As we move forward, we must remain vigilant as current guardians of the BFUA's legacy. I intend to work closely with the 2024 Board to establish a roadmap that embodies our commitment to progress:

- Continually seeking ways to improve
- Recognising and rewarding our contributors
- Sourcing expertise to support our growth
- Fostering inclusivity and diversity
- Exploring new avenues for expansion
- Engaging with other community and sporting bodies for collective learning and best practices.

In addition to our committed operations plan, our goals for 2024 include strengthening our operational management, formalising a facilities subcommittee to steer our search for new home, appointing a female ambassador/liaison, and promoting diversity and inclusion.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude for allowing me to be a part of Team BFUA in 2023. The future holds great promise, and with your unwavering support and dedication, I am confident that the BFUA will continue to thrive.

With warm regards, Deb Sleep

Chair

Respect | Support | Integrity | Resilience

BFUA Head of Umpiring Operations Report

Wow, what a fantastic season as the BFUA continues to go from strength to strength.



In 2023 we had a surge in numbers with 380 registered umpires. This increase was mainly felt in the boundary space where we hit 200 umpires – a massive achievement. Our numbers also grew in the field and goals which will undoubtedly set us up for success in the coming years.

This season we launched several new programs to recruit and support umpire development:

- Pat's and Loreto College A huge thank you to Roger Le Grand and Pat Cincotta for facilitating these academies and creating a pathway from school to umpiring local community footy.
- Club Umpire Development Program thank you to Richard Nash and Adam Coles for conducting online club umpire development sessions for MCDFNL clubs. This is a great way to connect with club

- umpires, support development and create a pathway to umpiring with the BFUA in the future.
- Junior Club Engagement Program thank you again to Richard Nash for connecting with our junior clubs and giving young players them a sense of umpiring. This partnership with football clubs is critical to long-term recruiting and retention of umpires and ensuring the BFUA is embedded in the football community.



We also experimented with different coaching formats, including a practice match at City Oval during preseason where we had the opportunity to rotate new and experienced umpires throughout the game and teach them 'on-the-job'. Spectating umpires also had the chance to observe their peers and learn from coaches at the same time.

Online coaching was conducted more regularlythisseason with multiplesessions run for field, boundary and goal groups, as well as some all-umpire sessions. This format continues to assist with engaging umpires who may be unable to attend training whilst also providing essential coaching to our senior group.

I would like to acknowledge Callan Ward, Brendon Swarbrick and Paul Miesen in their boundary coaching roles. As indicated, the boundary numbers surged this season which brought about new challenges. I thank them for their persistence and efforts to fill all games, providing an engaging training experience and growing our senior boundary umpiring group. We have some fantastic young umpires coming through the ranks which is a testament to your coaching.

Brodie Bennett and Callan Evans had an excellent season as co-coaches in the goals. It is excellent to see so many new and developing umpires with so much support provided. Their feedback to umpires this year was second-to-



none and the environment was highly supportive and encouraging.

Richard Nash and Adam Coles provided a fantastic introduction to field umpiring for our developing umpires. This tight-knit group were highly engaged and their development onfield was evident week to week. I look forward to seeing the continued development of this group in the years ahead.

Thank you to Julian Pinder and John Bond who have assisted me greatly throughout the season and took the lead on skills activities at training. Their knowledge of field umpiring and dedication to training our group has meant we've reached a high level of consistency across our coaching team.

Brock Reid and Brendon Swarbrick ran a solid fitness program across the season and, as always, struck a good balance between fitness and fun. Thank you for running training sessions in such a professional way.

Shane Finch was awarded the Best First Year Field Umpire (Shane McInerney Award) following a fast ascension into Reserves and Senior football. Shane knows football incredibly well given his previous years as a player and has a fantastic communication style. I look forward to coaching him in the coming years.

Noah Quick was the Most Improved Field Umpire following a year of fast development, ending up with the CHFL Senior Grand Final. Noah is hugely coachable and takes pride in reviewing his performances. I cannot wait to see where he can take his umpiring in 2024.

Brent Irvin took out the Best & Most Consistent Field Umpire for the first time. Thank you Brent for your leadership, willing to mentor others and eagerness to improve on the one percenters. You have set a very high standard for our senior field umpire group.

To the BFUA Board: Deb, Chris, Brent, Mark W, Richard, Mark H, Glenn and Mark K – thank you for everything you do and for supporting me in my roles this season.

Lastly, to all our umpires, thank you for everything you do both on and off the field. I am privileged to be part of such a passionate group of umpires, and I look forward to seeing what we can achieve together in season 2024!

Regards,

Billy Mitchell
Head of Umpiring Operations &
Senior Field Coach



BFUA Boundary Coach Report

Firstly let me start by thanking all our boundary umpires and parents and siblings. It is a huge commitment every week and I would like to express my gratitude to you all. Secondly Brendo, a huge thank you. Your skill based training this year raised the bar. The development in the group throughout the year has been great to watch.

What a season 2023 has been, over 200 registered boundary umpires this year, around 70 of this 200 were new umpires joining the BFUA and taking part in their first season, many umpiring at some sort of senior level during the season.

Congratulations to all of our award winners and grand final umpires.

In all we had 11 umpires make their senior debut in the BFNL, with 1 debutant going on to umpire the BFNL senior grand final.

The goal for this year was to try and bring skill and development, as well as fun and enjoyment. After the fitness session at the start of the evening we wanted to move into drills such as ball movement and positioning, signalling and just making sure we got the fundamentals right. I feel that we achieved most of what we set out to accomplish this year with planning already underway moving into next season. We implemented a mandatory 5 meters rule, meaning all umpires (unless otherwise directed) were to come in 5m off the line to throw the ball in. I feel this worked well with less recalls during the year.









Another positive is the large number of female boundary umpires joining our ranks. It was fantastic to see an all female panel for this year's BFLW senior grand final.

Special thanks to Richard Jefferies, Ben Rofe and Paul Miesen for your continued support throughout the season.

Finally to the board, thank you for having the faith in me for this season.

I look forward to working with you all again next season.

In closing, I want to stress again as we did so many times this year, your individual development starts with YOU. We can give you all information you need. During the off season work on any technique issues or fitness requirements to get you ready for a cracking 2024.

Regards,

Callan Ward Boundary Coach

BFUA Goal Coach Report

Thank you to the wonderful commitment and contribution of all our goal umpires for season 2023. Of all our umpires, 14 goal umpires were new to the BFUA and showed to be fantastic, passionate additions to our list of nearly 40 umpires! Through the great work of our coaching and observing team, we were able to see some vast improvement in each and every umpire. We saw many umpires debut in Ballarat Senior football throughout the year getting their first taste of the best quality football in our region!

We would like to congratulate Allan Lepair (his first BFL Senior Grand Final) and Rhys Brehaut on being appointed to the BFL Senior Grand Final for 2023. Their consistency and quality of umpiring was a stand out for the season and set the standard for everyone to look for coming into next year.



We would also like to celebrate our award winners!

- Lisa Donovon who won the Les Baldock Encouragement award. Lisa has been a great addition to our list. She is passionate about goal umpiring and shows a keen interest to learn and improve every game she umpires in.
- Allan Lepair who won the best and most consistent award. Allan performed at a consistently high level for the entirety of the year. He showed not only a willingness for self-improvement but also would help others with their development.
- Cooper James who won the best first year award. Cooper arrived early in the year and showed immediate interest in goal umpiring. Brodie and I were very impressed with his ability to listen and improve very quickly.
- Alex Martin who won the most improved award. Alex was one of our shining lights this season. He arrived early in the season focussed and with a new attitude. We saw huge improvement in his umpiring.

We would also sincerely like to thank our supportive coaching and observing team for season 2023. Barry Eppingstall has yet again been not only a reliable club man for our association but an essential member of the goal umpiring coaching team. Each year Barry kindly gives up his time for the benefit of the goal umpiring list and we are eternally grateful. He has a great approach with our developing umpires. We would also like to thank Rhys Brehaut and Doug Mills for providing some observing for us during the year when they were hampered by their own Their senior experience was injuries. invaluable and greatly beneficial for our young and developing umpires.





We thank our fellow coaches at the BFUA: Billy Mitchell, Adam Coles, Richard Nash, Callan Ward and Brendon Swarbrick. As a team we all worked very hard for our umpires and were in frequent contact with ideas to deliver for our members.

Lastly, thank you to the BFUA board for supporting us and the co-coaching model for season 2023. We believe it was hugely successful and gave each umpire a more focused and in-depth experience with their coaches. Brodie has made the decision to step away from the goal umpire coaching space next year and I want to thank him for his dedication to the role since 2019. Brodie will continue to offer some observing and support in the future.

We are incredibly excited for what next year has to bring for every goal umpire but for now we wish everyone a safe and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Brodie Bennett & Callan Evans
Goal Coaches



BFUA Development Field Report

It was an exciting year for the BFUA First years. By the end of the season we had 10 brand new first year umpires being their journey in field umpiring including 2 female umpires.

Everyone showed rapid improvement and development in their umpiring ability with everyone taking on feedback given, attending training and engaging with the main group alongside senior umpires.

Their hard efforts paid off by the end of the season with everyone being rewarded with a Grand Final and gaining some high level experience.

Stepping into the field is a tough gig at any age. Whether you're an ex-player and didn't want to get injured again, never played a game ever before or simply wanted to try something different, our first year umpires took the year on with both hands and showed real promise. I'd imagine that if they all stick to it, they'll all be umpiring senior football in no time.

Thanks to all that have supported us as coaches in our first year as Development Field Co-Coaches. The experience and knowledge we have gained throughout the



year has been invaluable and we hope to continue bringing in the new umpires into the BFUA with open arms next season. The year had some challenges as



every year presents some, but everyone was able to band together and get things done. Whether it was covering games, running with someone they hadn't before or simply showing your face and being around, thank you to everyone.

Congratulations to all award winners and good luck for next year.

Regards,

Adam Coles & Richard Nash

BFUA Youth Voice Committee Report

The Youth Voice Committee is something you've probably heard of; however, you may be unsure what we have been doing all year. Often referred to as the junior board or the board members of tomorrow, we like to think of us as an unstoppable force to be reckoned with. We are a committee of active umpires from all disciplines, and we tackle situations, set goals, and support each other and the BFUA to be the best it possibly could be.

Now Let me step you through what 2023 has been like for the Youth Voice Committee.

Coloured by situation after situation we tackle many objectives that involve young people in the BFUA.

Every year we set out to have a goal, an objective that we collectively want to achieve for the season. This year it was to create stronger connections between the younger members of the association. Highlighted by the AFL trip down to the Bulldogs vs Saints game at the MCG which was for all members under the age of 18. The trip included meeting the AFL umpires before the match and also umpiring the



Auskick half time matches. This trip gave the younger members of the association an opportunity to form connections out of a game or training context.

This goal, although we have made progress, is still going to be incorporated into the 2024 season of the BFUA so stay tuned to what comes next.

Next year we hope to keep making moves to support the BFUA as it grows in many ways in the future. We are pleased to announce that one of our members, Ally Steenhuis, has been elected to be a member of the BFUA board for a 2-year term. Congratulations to Ally and we can't wait to see what she will bring to the table.

If you have any questions, ideas or concerns please contact us. We would love to hear your input on how we can help you.

Regards Tash Petrov

2023 Junior Award Winners

Congratulations to these high achieving umpires who have shown promising signs for the future! We cannot wait to see where you take your umpiring in the coming years.





Best Junior First Year Field Umpire

Amber Bumpstead, Jackson Chalmers

Junior Field Coaches Award

Elliott Bourke, Charli McLennan

Mentor of the Year Award
Robert Simmonds

Best Junior Field Umpire
Tom Mulcock, Jacob Rae

Junior Boundary Coaches Award Hudson Brennan

Best Junior First Year Boundary Umpire

Aden Norman-Hade, Aria Violini

Best Junior Goal Umpire
Cooper James

2023 Senior Award Winners

Congratulations to our Senior Award Winners who have shown commitment, passion and skill whilst demonstrating the BFUA Trademarks in everything they do.





Barry Eppingstall Club Person of

the Year

Mark Warwick

Training Award

Ryobi Hindle, Daniel O'Brien

Community Umpiring Champion

James Purkis

Les Baldock Goal Umpire

Encouragement Award

Lisa Donovan

Most Improved Goal Umpire

Greg Wakeling

Best First Year Goal Umpire

Dale Chalmers

Most Improved Boundary Umpire

Sean Mason

Best First Year Boundary Umpire -

Steve Perry Award

Willow Klaver

Best First Year Field Umpire -

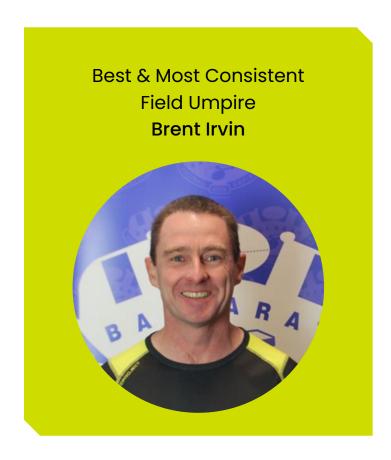
Shane McInerney Award

Shane Finch

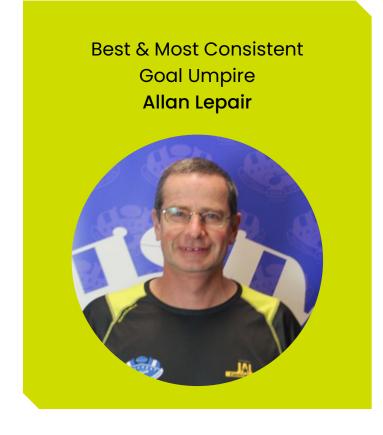
Most Improved Field Umpire

Noah Quick

2023 Highest On-Field Honours









Senior Grand Final Appointments

Ballarat Football Netball League Seniors



Field: Brent Irvin, Brendan Brasser, Adrian Tinetti

Boundary: Sean Mason, Angus Murfett, Brendon Swarbrick, Josh Rofe Goal: Rhys Brehaut, Allan Lepair

Emergency Field: Tyla Reid

Central Highlands Football League Seniors



Field: Peter Brown, Noah Quick,

Peter Every

Boundary: Daniel O'Brien, Jackson

Chalmers, Cree Ward, Noah Cochrane

Goal: Alex Martin, Russell Venn

Emergency Field: Glenn Chiswell

Senior Grand Final Appointments

Maryborough Castlemaine District Football Netball League Seniors



Field: Jack Anderson, Chris Jones, Damian Irvin

Boundary: Charlie Chapman, Emerton Hooper, Riley James, Hudson Brennan

Goal: Peter Weuffen, Richard Eldridge

Emergency Field: Ashley Pittard

Ballarat Football League Womens Seniors



Field: Tash Petrov, Ally Steenhuis, Kate Tomkins Boundary: Aria Violini, Kiana Jenkins,

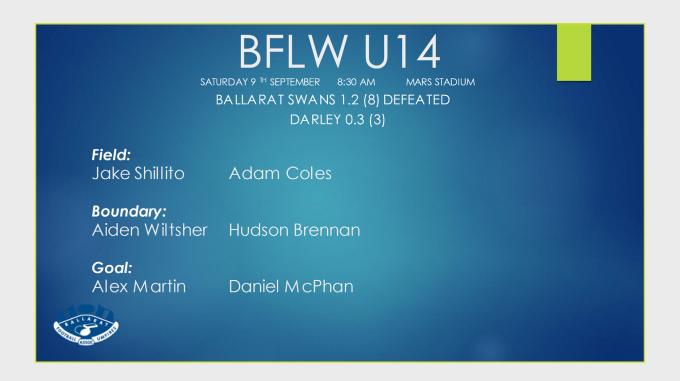
Erica Jones, Willow Klaver

Goal: Lisa Donovan, Suzanne Olsen

BFLW Grand Final Appointments

BFLW U18 SATURDAY 9 TH SEPTEMBER 11:40 AM MARS STADIUM BALLARAT SWANS 4.3 (27) DEFEATED REDAN 1.1 (7) Field: Anna Baxter Connor Ziday Jessica Handley Boundary: Shakira Lual Aliyah Tapster Lana Wilson Tessa Wilson Goal: Deanna Garbutt Harry Donov an-Clancy





Reserves Grand Final Appointments







Junior Grand Final Appointments

MCDFL U11.5

SATURDAY 18^H SEPTEMBER 8:00 AM PRINCES PARK—MARYBOROUGH NATTEBEALIBA VS. NEWSTEAD

Field:

Scott Harrington

Goal:

Eddy Martin Philip McNeil



MCDFL U14.5

Saturday 18^h September 9:20 am princes park–maryborou<mark>gh</mark>

CARISBROOK VS AVOCA

Field:

Rob Harrison Frank Williams

Boundary:

Abraham Harrington Thomas Henderson

Will Couzens Lockie McLennan

Goal:

Eddy Martin Philip McNeil



MCDFL U17.5

SATURDAY 18^H SEPTEMBER 10:50 AM PRINCES PARK – MARYBOROUGH MALDON VS CARISBROOK

Field:

Ashley Pittard Les Vearing John Gervasoni

Boundary:

Lachlan McKay Isaac Drain

Fraser McAinch Fletcher McAinch

Goal:

Peter Hughes Barry Kay



CHFL U15

SATURDAY 18^H SEPTEMBER 8:30 AM MARS STADIUM ROKEWOOD CORINDHAP VS SPRINGBANK

Field:

Riley Gallagher Daryl Devereux Richard Nash

Boundary:

Ky Geljon Duke Pilmoor

Tadhg Lenaghar Ned Porter

Goal:

Greg Reed Wayne Scanlon



















BFL U19

SATURDAY23^{TRD} SEPTEMBER 9:30 AM CITY OVAL- BALLARAT SEBASTOPOL VS (WINNER OF SUNBURYVS EAST POINT)

Field:

Jacob Rae Mark Warwick Xavier Gleeson

Boundary:

Elliott Bourke Hugh Rogan

Ned Murnane Caleb Ortiz

Goal:

Cooper James Criag Stevens



"The Year that Was"

















































Thank you for supporting our amazing sponsors...



























