



Dear AFL South East Umpires,

17th May 2024

As we reflect on our performance so far this season, it is important to address certain areas where we have identified opportunities for improvement in our umpiring. Your dedication and hard work are invaluable, and by focusing on these key areas, we can further enhance the quality and consistency of our officiating.

Auditory Offences

Auditory offences **can** be reportable but before umpires make reports against offenders (can be against players or team officials), we have various tools that we can resort to. This includes:

- Paying a free kick
- Paying a 50M penalty
- Sending the offender off by issuing a blue (under 14 and below) or yellow card

If the auditory offence warrants it, we have the ability to lay the report immediately.

The introduction of the audible offences grading chart has meant umpires can clearly grade certain instances of audible obscenities. Below is the chart:

Conduct	Receiver	Volume	Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea
Threatening	Umpire*	Any	4 or more matches (Tribunal)*	N/A
	Another Person	Loud	4 or more matches (Tribunal)*	N/A
		Medium/Low	3 Matches	2 Matches
High-level Abusive/Obscene/Insulting	Umpire	Loud	4 Matches	3 Matches
		Medium or Low	3 Matches	2 Matches
	Another Person	Loud	3 Matches	2 Matches
		Medium or Low	2 Matches	1 Match
Low-level Abusive/Obscene/Insulting	Umpire	Loud	3 Matches	2 Matches
		Medium or Low	2 Matches	1 Match
	Another Person	Loud	2 Matches	1 Match
		Medium or Low	1 Match	Fine & Reprimand

How do we grade conduct?

Threatening conduct means the language conveyed an intention to cause bodily harm. Eg. "I am going to hurt you"

High-level and **low-level conduct** refers to any language that may abuse, insult or offend anyone. To differentiate between the two grades consider the following:

- What was the tone used?



- How did the language make you feel?
- What body language was conveyed?

For these types of offences, what offends people will be different and should be assessed on a case by case basis.

How do we grade receiver?

Very simply, 'umpire' means any umpire on the day, including club umpires. 'Another person' could be anyone including coaches, team officials or spectators.

How do we grade volume?

Loud means that the language could be heard from more than 50 metres away or heard by spectators. This could mean that the language might not be able to be heard from more than 50 metres away, but occurred on the boundary line where a spectator/s has heard this.

Medium or low means the language could not be heard by spectators or more than 50 metres away.

Team Officials behaviour

Coaches are expected to abide by the coaching code of conduct, which all coaches would be aware of. In the case that demonstrate behaviour that is against the code of conduct, AFL South East umpires have the ability to:

- Pay a free kick against the offending team's coaching staff
- Pay a 50M penalty against the offending team's coaching staff
- Send off the exact offender from the offending team's coaching staff by issuing a blue (under 14 and below) or yellow card

Coaches can be reported and disciplined by the AFL South East. For absolute clarity, **any** person listed as an **official** on the team sheet is considered a team official i.e. water carriers, team managers, runners, etc.

Clubs are responsible for the behaviour of their team officials and any abuse towards umpires or opposition players will not be tolerated.

Protection of the ball player

As per the Laws of the Game (the rulebook), umpires should award free kicks to players "who make obtaining possession of the football their sole objective, every opportunity to do so".

To elaborate, a player who is tackled dangerously (refer to previous umpiring directive) or has contact made to them above the shoulders whilst 'going' the football should be awarded a free kick regardless of how minor the incident may occur.

The rationale behind this is so that players are protected from injury. Being a contact sport, we are fully aware that injuries may occur.