



WA FOOTBALL COMMISSION

WAFC UMPIRING TALENT PATHWAY REVIEW

November 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West Australian Football Commission (WAFC) Umpiring Talent Pathway is a complex system. It is so connected and integral to all aspects of umpiring that it is arguably the most impactful and influential piece of infrastructure for WAFC Umpiring. This report aims to untangle the complexity of this system to facilitate a better understanding of the pathway and how it can be enhanced to benefit umpiring into the future.

This review used a mixed methods approach to assess the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. It drew on evidence and insights from stakeholders and Umpires, existing reports and other data. Several limitations were encountered in this review; nonetheless valuable evidence and insights were drawn from multiple sources that have informed the key findings and conclusions of this evaluation.

Findings & Recommendations

Stakeholder Perceptions

- Measurement of stakeholder perceptions indicated that there is room for improvement in how the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is perceived across a range of areas. The most significant of these is a lack of awareness about the pathway and its processes, particularly in some umpiring sectors. WAFC Umpiring needs to communicate more effectively about the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway to promote better awareness and understanding.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should conduct a stakeholder perception survey every two years to measure and analyse changes in perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Strategy and Planning

- The WAFC Umpiring Charter is the guiding document for the strategy of umpiring in Western Australia. It provides context to the priorities and objectives of WAFC Umpiring and how these impact the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. The Charter, however, is not well embedded in some umpiring sectors and this impedes Umpiring WA achieving its vision of having more engaged Umpires than football requires.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should evaluate the understanding and implementation of the WAFC Umpiring Charter in all umpiring sectors to ensure it is embedded in those environments.

- The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway requires detailed strategy and supporting documents that outline the operations of the pathway. The development of a

Talent Pathway Plan and Talent Pathway Manual would help clarify the direction of the pathway and improve understanding of its strategy and processes for Umpires at all levels.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a Talent Pathway Plan that is strategic in focus with a three-year timeframe. The plan should align with the National Umpiring Talent Plan developed by the AFL.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop a Talent Pathway Manual that is operational in focus and renewed annually.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should ensure that the Talent Pathway Plan and Talent Pathway Manual are published, promoted and widely available for all umpiring sectors.

Umpire Development

- The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway should be: people first, Umpire-centric, flexible, innovative and connected. These principles provide context to the recommendations made in this report and can guide changes to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway in the future.
- Umpire coaching is the most critical factor in the development and progression of Umpires and requires further review by WAFC Umpiring.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should undertake a review of the strategy and processes related to the Umpire Coach Pathway.

- The development of an Umpire competency matrix would provide a framework where the relevant competencies of each level of the pathway are clearly outlined. It would also demonstrate how these competencies are connected through the levels of the pathway. The need to demystify the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is a strong theme from this review; an Umpire competency matrix would help to achieve that.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop an Umpire competency matrix that outlines the relevant competencies for an Umpire at each level in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Umpire Management Systems

- The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway requires fit for purpose systems to help manage the information that flows through it. A centralised system that can assist in the management of Umpires and the umpiring program would improve

the effectiveness of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway and supports the implementation of key recommendations in this report.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop a business case for the procurement and implementation of an Athlete Management System (AMS) to support the management of Umpires in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

West Australian Football League

- The WAFL Development Squads are the linchpin of the WAFL system as they are the conduits for Umpires to transition from Community Football to the elite pathway. It is crucial that the Development Squads have a clear purpose.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should state in its Talent Pathway Plan the purpose of the Development Squads in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

- The Umpire development framework for the WAFL Development Squads, including what competitions Umpires are appointed to, must appropriately facilitate their long-term development.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should assess the development benefits of each competition that Development Squad Umpires are appointed to.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should state in its Talent Pathway Manual the development benefits of each competition that Development Squad Umpires are appointed to.

- Effective talent identification for the WAFL Development Squads is essential and relies on empowered Junior Community Umpiring Clubs as key partners.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop talent identification processes for Junior Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires that effectively empower the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs as key partners.

- The long-term health of the WAFL umpiring list is a key focus area with several factors complicating list management, which contributes to a perception that Umpires are not managed with appropriate levels of openness, honesty and accountability. The development of a WAFL list management plan, underpinned by a data-driven approach, will ensure the ongoing viability of the WAFL list and help address the servicing needs of the competition.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop a WAFL list management plan that is strategic and long-term in focus. The plan should align with the Talent Pathway Plan developed by WAFC Umpiring.

Junior Community Umpiring Clubs

- Junior Community Umpiring Clubs have an important role in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway, as they are responsible for engaging Umpires in the game and retaining their interest in the long-term. Umpires with a strong connection to their role will more likely possess the level of commitment required to progress in the pathway.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop guiding principles for Junior Community Umpiring Clubs that state how a Club achieves its core purpose of fostering a love for umpiring.

- Junior Community Umpiring Clubs operate in a challenging environment where they are striving to increase Umpire numbers to cater for the growth in football. This tests their ability to dedicate energy to the development of talented umpires. Junior Community Umpiring Clubs are essential in promoting opportunities for their Umpires and facilitating talent identification in partnership with WAFC Umpiring. They can also support the training of psychosocial skills, which is a critical area in talent development and should commence as early in the pathway as possible.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should state in its Talent Pathway Plan the purpose of Junior Community Umpiring Clubs in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway, with a focus on the introduction and development of psychosocial skills.

Perth Football League

- The Perth Football League is Western Australia's largest Community Football competition and engages a broad range of Umpires. There is a perception that the Perth Football League is undervalued as a development competition and that the contributions of those involved is not recognised as readily as other sectors.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should state in its Talent Pathway Plan the purpose of the Perth Football League in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

- The Perth Football League is a valuable development competition and has a role to play in the development and identification of talented Umpires. It should be realistic for those Umpires to progress to the highest level of competition possible.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop structures and processes that facilitate the identification and development of talented umpires in the Perth Football League with a pathway to the WAFL.

- The Perth Football League is a valuable competition for WAFL Development Squad Umpires where they can gain different experiences and challenges relevant to their stage of development.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should ensure that the Perth Football League is utilised as an effective development competition for WAFL Development Squad Umpires and that it is resourced appropriately to achieve this.

- It is essential that there are improved relationships between Umpire management and Umpires in the WAFL and Perth Football League. A focus on greater social interaction, facilitated by the respective Umpire associations, would contribute to stronger relationships. This also benefits the transition of Umpires between the leagues.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop processes that facilitate the transition of retiring Umpires from the WAFL to the Perth Football League.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should engage the relevant Umpire associations to collaborate on social opportunities that will enhance the relationships between Umpires in the WAFL and Perth Football League.

Regional Community Umpiring Clubs

- Regional Community Umpiring Clubs are, at best, on the very periphery of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. The Clubs vary greatly in size, structure and capacity and have different challenges that must be addressed.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should undertake a review of the strategy and processes related to Regional Community Umpiring Clubs in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

- The key mechanism for the development of talented regional Umpires is through West Australian Country Football League (WACFL) carnivals. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that these carnivals are utilised effectively.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should ensure that WACFL carnivals are utilised as effective development and talent identification opportunities for regional Umpires.

- The Peel Football and Netball League supports the development of WAFL Development Squad Umpires from that region through the provision of different experiences and challenges relevant to their stage of development.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should ensure that the Peel Football and Netball League is utilised as an effective development competition for WAFL Development Squad Umpires and that it is resourced appropriately to achieve this.

Boundary and Goal Umpiring

- Boundary and Goal umpiring should be prioritised equally to Field umpiring and resourced according to their needs. The introduction of formalised Boundary and Goal umpiring programs for Junior Community Umpiring Clubs is one way in which the pathway can be strengthened.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop formalised and appropriately resourced Boundary and Goal umpiring programs in Junior Community Umpiring Clubs.

Diversity in Umpiring

- Umpires from a diverse background, including female Umpires, have different needs and challenges and their development should be supported in a way that is Umpire-centric and flexible.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should develop talent identification and development processes for diverse Umpires in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

- An AFL and University of Sydney report recommends a parallel umpiring talent pathway for girls and women. WAFC Umpiring should assess the feasibility of this in order to support the development of female Umpires in the game.

Recommendation: WAFC Umpiring should assess the feasibility of a parallel umpiring talent pathway for female Umpires as recommended in the AFL and University of Sydney report.

This evaluation found that the implementation of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is characterised by its complexity and that there are a range of factors influencing its outcomes. The report identified opportunities for improving the structure, design and implementation of the pathway. These recommendations across 10 key domains will enhance the umpiring experience at all levels. That said, the greatest challenge is ensuring the sustainability of the system so that the quality people involved are supported to continue their extraordinary contributions to umpiring and the game in Western Australia.

1. INTRODUCTION

The WAFC (West Australian Football Commission) Umpiring Talent Pathway for Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires and Umpire Coaches has evolved over many years. The WAFC determined that it would be beneficial to undertake a review of the current talent pathway and processes.

The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is an extensive system that extends from Junior Community Football to the Australian Football League (AFL). It is broad in purpose and scope but, at its core, it is the structure that integrates all levels of umpiring into a cohesive pathway that facilitates an Umpire's ongoing involvement in the game.

This review concentrates its focus on the talent identification and development (TID) processes which relate to the method of an Umpire moving into, and/or progressing through, the high performance pathway to an elite or mastery status.

The purpose of this evaluation is to document the elements of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway and to assess the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of the pathway against its intended objectives and outcomes. The evaluation:

- Documents the current umpiring TID processes for Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires in Western Australia.
- Make recommendations as to areas of improvement in regards to the current umpiring TID processes in Western Australia.

The review examines the relevant umpiring TID processes for all levels of football in Western Australia up to the AFL. The review excludes TID processes for Umpire Coaches.

The most significant theme from this review is that there are quality people involved in umpiring at all levels of the game. The people that hold management, coaching and other support roles are extremely committed, passionate and have the best interests of umpiring at heart. The same can be said about Umpires at all levels.

This review has also shown that these passionate people are under great pressure. Umpiring relies on a core group of people who go above and beyond in their roles. Whether their role is directly related to talent identification and development or not, they all play a part in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

It is clear that this is unsustainable in the long term and, with an increasingly complex environment, there is a high risk that these committed people cannot maintain this level of output and may be lost to the game altogether.

The sustainability of umpiring is a broader issue for WAFC Umpiring, and the game itself, and goes to the heart of the themes and findings that have emerged in this review. These are opportunities and challenges that must be considered with a matter of urgency.

The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is a topic that elicits strong and passionate feelings. It is an area that most people in umpiring have an opinion on. The author acknowledges these passions and expresses gratitude to those that engaged in this review.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dan Gibbons', written in a cursive style.

Dan Gibbons
Talent Pathway Review Project Lead
November 2021

Biography

Dan has been involved in football umpiring for 20 years after starting as a junior Umpire in his early teens. In later years, Dan has undertaken management and coaching roles at various levels. This includes ten years as the Umpire Manager of the Demons District Football Umpires Association and three years as Head Coach of the WAFL Field Umpire Development Squad. Dan is a life member of the Demons District FUA and the WAFC Metro Central (Demons District) Regional Development Council. In his professional career, Dan is an experienced manager in a variety of sports. Dan was employed as the WA Cricket Match Officials Manager and was also a member of the WA Cricket State Umpire Panel. Dan is currently employed by Rowing WA.

2. METHODOLOGY

To understand the effectiveness and impact of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway, this review has undertaken a process and impact evaluation, utilising a range of research methods and data sources, as described in this section and accompanying appendices.

The review consisted of two stages prior to the delivery of an interim and final report.

The first stage was a review of existing literature and documents including:

- relevant WAFC documentation;
- relevant AFL documentation;
- relevant documentation from other state AFL competitions;
- documentation available from other sports; and
- any other relevant sources of information, such as government bodies.

The second stage was consultation with relevant groups and individuals including:

- examination of existing WAFC surveys and other sources of feedback;
- creation and distribution of surveys to a range of stakeholders; meetings with community umpiring groups and management;
- meetings with relevant individuals with background or experience in this area;
- meetings with relevant WAFC Umpiring staff; and
- meetings with relevant AFL or other State competition staff.

Following the exploratory stages of the review, the author determined to deliver the review report in two parts.

The first part of this report details the current structure and processes of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway for Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires.

The second part of this report details a range of themes, issues and findings that were identified throughout the conduct of the review. These themes are discussed in detail with a range of recommendations made.

As with any evaluation, a number of limitations were encountered during the evaluation activities:

- Impact of COVID-19. The ongoing public health crisis associated with the COVID-19 pandemic limited the ability of this review to engage with umpiring stakeholders in other States, particularly those States whose workforce have been affected by the economic repercussions of the pandemic.
- Data quality and limitations. Some data quality issues that limit analysis were identified in relation to the coherence and interpretability of data sources.

- Scope of the review. There was a wide range of areas related to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway that became apparent during the review. Some of these were not directly captured in the terms of reference of this report. Therefore, in the interests of clarity and time, the author has made references to these areas in the report without going into greater detail. WAFC Umpiring may determine, and should be encouraged, to explore these issues in more depth at another time.

3. TALENT DEVELOPMENT THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

The Pathway

There has been a significant amount of research into athlete development, talent identification and talent pathways. The concept of a sport 'pathway' is itself a controversial one as it implies that an athlete undertakes a consistent, linear route to sporting success. The reality is far from that.

In terms of the development of officials or Umpires, there is little academic research underpinning the real-world practices associated with talent identification and development. This is a clear gap that impacts officiating worldwide.

The use of the term 'pathway' is well established in the lexicon of umpiring development. While there may be issues associated with this term, in the interests of consistency and familiarity, the author has chosen to utilise it throughout the report.

Development Frameworks

In recent years, sport practitioners have embraced an integrated approach to sport and athlete development as organisations strive to balance 'sport-for-all' and elite sport agendas. This has necessitated a holistic view of sport development that encapsulates athletes from their entry to the sport through to the highest levels of achievement.

The most notable of these approaches is the *Foundations, Talent, Elite and Mastery* (FTEM) framework (Gulbin, Croser, Morley & Weissensteiner, 2013)¹, which was developed by a group of multidisciplinary sport practitioners in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). It has now become one of the most prominent development models in Australian sport.

People participate in sport for many different reasons. Some are interested in maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle while others enjoy the challenge of competing against their peers. A rare few set their sights on competing at the highest level in their chosen sport.

FTEM integrates three key outcomes of sport: active lifestyle, sport participation and sport excellence. In this way, the model is more holistic than traditional models that tend to consider the stages of the pathway in isolation.

The framework consists of four macro phases of athlete development, which are further differentiated into 10 micro phases. These are Foundations (F1, F2 and F3);

¹ Gulbin, J. P., Croser, M. J., Morley, E. J., & Weissensteiner, J. R. (2013). An integrated framework for the optimisation of sport and athlete development: A practitioner approach. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 31(12), 1319–1331. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2013.781661>

Talent (T1, T2, T3 and T4); Elite (E1 and E2); and Mastery (M). An illustration of these phases is represented in Figure 1.

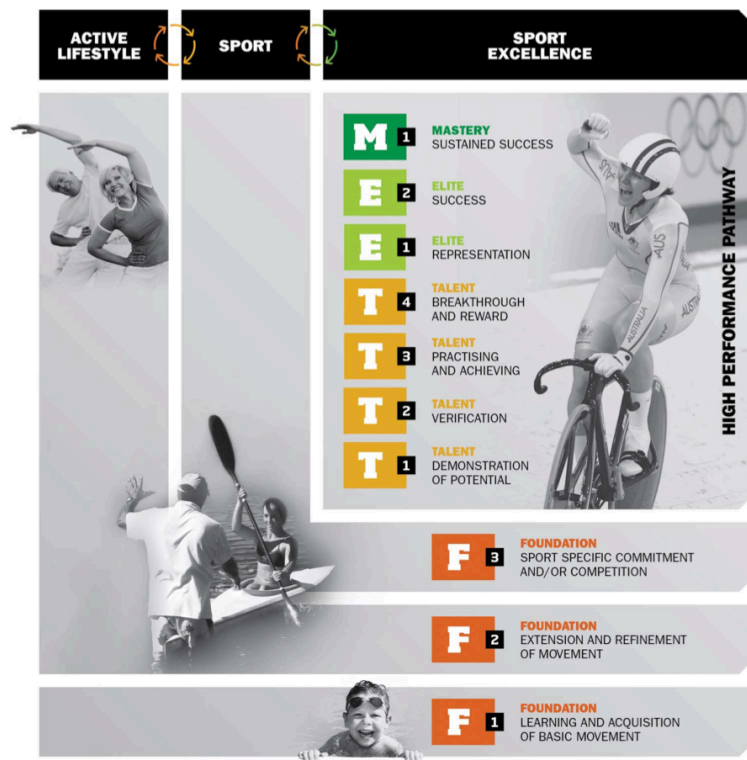


Figure 1. The integrated FTEM (Foundations, Talent, Elite, Mastery) framework for the optimisation of sport and athlete development. Image courtesy of the Australian Sports Commission, <http://www.ausport.gov.au>

The FTEM framework is not chronological and does not utilise fixed age boundaries which feature in other development models. The creators of the framework contend that age boundaries are largely arbitrary and do not reflect the inherent variability in athlete development.

The framework has a non-linear design reflective of the multiple entry and exit points in an athlete’s development journey. In this way, an athlete can jump particular phases or even oscillate left and right across the framework according to their motivations and aims. The timeframes of transition can also be compressed or extended depending on the sport and individual.

The framework categorises the relevant research and expectations of athletes throughout the pathway. It also provides practical methods for developing sport systems to support athlete development. This enhanced understanding of sporting pathways helps administrators to improve the experiences of people throughout the pathway.

The FTEM framework is focussed on athletes but the principles can also apply to sport officials. With this in mind, the FTEM framework is a tool that may assist WAFC Umpiring to develop a whole-of-sport model for umpire development. The practical application of this is shown in Ski & Snowboard Australia’s *Athlete Pathway*

Framework (Appendix A). This document outlines the stages in an athlete's pathway, the associated programs at each level and the selection factors considered for each discipline of that sport.

Psychosocial Skills in Talent Development

Talent development practices often overwhelmingly focus on an individual's physiology, such as aerobic capacity or strength, and access to sport specific knowledge and skills as the critical factors in an athlete's progression. These are key priority areas in umpire development as well.

However, developing talent into productive achievement takes more than effort or even exceptional ability. At all stages in talent development, non-cognitive or psychosocial skills are essential to continued involvement, and growth, in a chosen pursuit (Olszewski-Kubilius, Subotnik, Davis, & Worrell, 2019)².

The term psychosocial skills encompass a range of mental and social skills that have psychological components and social effects. These skills, such as self-regulation, communication and resiliency, are malleable and can be actively developed and enhanced over time.

Sport has more highly evolved mental skills programs than other domains but the focus on developing these critical skills tends to commence relatively late and is focussed on individuals that have already demonstrated the potential to advance to elite levels (Olszewski-Kubilius, Subotnik, Davis, & Worrell, 2019).

The authors of the study referenced above categorised the relevant psychosocial variables into a development framework with three key stages: the transition of abilities into competencies, competencies into expertise, and expertise to creative productivity or eminence. The authors contend that the required psychosocial skills vary with the stage of talent development.

The study created a comprehensive list of 35 skills grouped into seven categories: Creative Risk Taking, Social Skills, Metacognitive Self-Regulation, Motivational Self-Regulation, Emotional Self-Regulation, Cognitive Self-Regulation, and Insider Knowledge (Appendix B). These skills were then applied practically to different domains (academics, sport, music, etc), benchmarking the psychosocial skills relevant to each development stage.

The development of psychosocial skills has clear application to umpiring, as the types of skills referenced are essential factors in umpire development. It would be

² Olszewski-Kubilius, P., Subotnik, R. F., Davis, L. C., & Worrell, F. C. (2019). Benchmarking Psychosocial Skills Important for Talent Development. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 2019(168), 161–176. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20318>

beneficial to devise a methodology linking these skills to the FTEM framework so as to outline what skills are relevant to the development stage of an Umpire.

Author Comments

This report has briefly touched upon some relevant theoretical areas for Umpire development. These areas and further research into athlete development, particularly with an officiating focus, holds tremendous value for WAFC Umpiring and would inform its Umpire development strategies and practices.

This report has highlighted the practical application of the FTEM framework as a tool for sporting stakeholders to plan, deliver and review athlete pathways. The clear benefit of the FTEM framework is that it integrates all levels of the pathway and is reflective of the range of ways that an individual engages in sport. As this report demonstrates, the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is complex and often incongruent. A framework that helps bring sense to this pathway will be beneficial to all those involved.

Over the course of this review, the importance of psychosocial skills has become increasingly apparent. The author believes that these concepts have significant application to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway but their relevance can be easily overlooked. The devotion of greater attention and focus on this area will bring benefit to Umpires at all levels of the pathway.

The comments above are not a comprehensive theoretical review of all of the concepts relevant to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. They are intended, however, to serve as a reminder of the importance of underpinning strategies and processes with empirical evidence. This is a practice that would serve WAFC Umpiring well as the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway continues to evolve.

4. THE WAFC UMPIRING TALENT PATHWAY

4.1 Overview

The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is complex. Complexity is not a criticism; it is merely a reflection of how the pathway has evolved and its current state of being. Complexity is a challenge though. It is a challenge for WAFC Umpiring, for the management of the respective leagues and for Umpires at all levels.

This report makes an effort to untangle the layers of complexity that characterise the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

The first part of this section examines the key sectors in umpiring and how these operate within, and interact with, the pathway.

The second part looks at the disciplines of Field, Boundary and Goal umpiring to better understand their respective pathways.

This report summarises the various levels and layers of the pathway into a coherent representation of the current state of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

4.2 Umpiring Sectors

This section outlines the main umpiring sectors and competitions in Western Australia. These sectors are the focus of this report.

Western Australian Football League

The Western Australian Football League (WAFL) is the premier football competition in Western Australia catering for male and female players. In the male competition there are three grades - League, Reserves and Colts. Similarly, in the female competition there are three grades - League, Reserves and Rogers Cup. There are also underage development competitions for players from 14 years of age.

The WAFL appoints Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires to matches in the competition. Each Discipline is divided into three Squads (High Performance Team, Talent Academy and Development Squad). These Squads cater to the experience and development stage of the Umpires. The Umpires undertake a formal development program with weekly training sessions and significant expectations around their own personal development, such as off-season strength and conditioning training.

Senior Community Football

The most significant Senior Community Football competition in the metropolitan area is the Perth Football League (PFL). The Perth Football League is the largest independent community football league in WA, administering competitions and programs, and providing support and resources for the benefit of seventy member clubs and more than 12,500 participants who take part in male, female, Colts and All Abilities competitions.

The Perth Football League has Panel Umpires and Pool & Club Umpires. Panel Umpires are appointed to matches in A to C Grades. These Umpires undertake a formal development program with twice-weekly training sessions. Pool and Club Umpires are nominated by a club and appointed to matches in lower grades of the competition. These Umpires do not undertake ongoing formal development with the exception of accreditation and some professional development requirements.

Junior Community Football

There are nine Junior Community Umpiring Clubs in the metropolitan area. These are linked together into three metropolitan Conferences (North, Central and South). The Junior Clubs are managed and operate separately to each other, although there is increasing collaboration within each Conference.

The Junior Community Umpiring Clubs recruit and develop Umpires that are appointed to junior community football competitions for male and female players in age groups ranging from Year 3 to Year 12.

The Umpires at this level are extremely varied in age and experience with inexperienced, teenage Umpires joining experienced, mature aged Umpires in officiating games. These Umpires undertake a formal development program with weekly training sessions.

Regional Community Football

There is a diversity of Regional Community Umpiring Clubs servicing junior and senior regional competitions in Western Australia. These Clubs are varied in their formality and composition. Some larger competitions maintain formal Umpiring Clubs with Umpires appointed to relevant grades and age groups. These Umpires undertake a formal development program with ongoing training. Other competitions utilise Club Umpires with a less formal approach taken to umpire development.

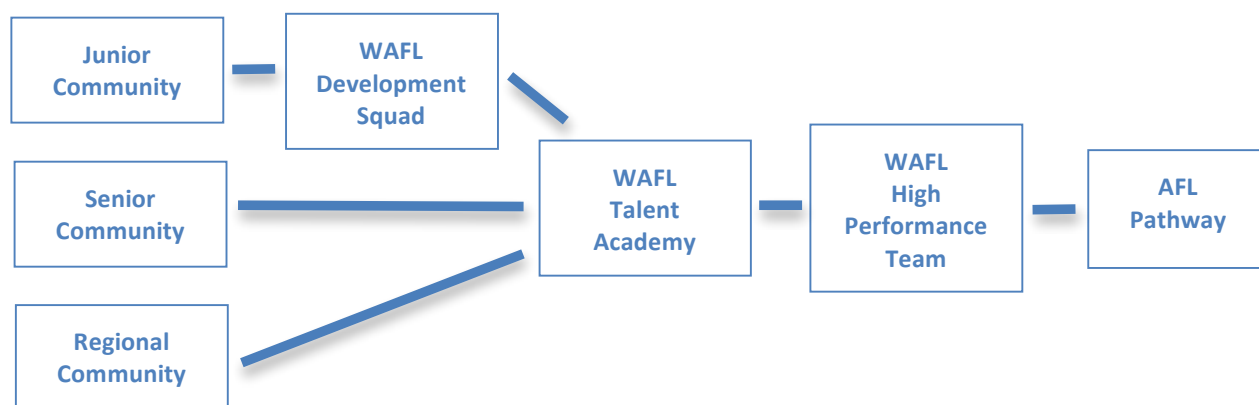
Other

In Western Australia, there is a range of other competitions, such as school football competitions managed by WAFC Umpiring. These competitions do not have their own formal programs with Umpires engaged in those competitions also umpiring in Junior or Senior Community football.

4.3 Umpiring Pathway

This section outlines the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway for Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires. The pathway has been depicted in diagrammatic form with explanatory notes. For illustrative purposes, this diagram best represents the levels of the pathway and how they interact currently. It is not intended to be representative of the experience of every Umpire in the pathway. It also cannot represent the fluid movement of Umpires at a particular time or throughout their involvement in umpiring.

General Pathway



Explanatory Notes

- Field Umpires have the most defined pathway with Umpires generally following a more standardised journey through the different levels as depicted above.
- Boundary Umpires have a less defined start to the pathway with a lack of Junior Community Umpiring Club programs. Boundary Umpires are therefore more likely to commence umpiring in Senior Community football. The age and experience level of the Umpire will then determine whether they join the WAFL Development Squad or WAFL Talent Academy in the future.
- Goal Umpires also have a less defined start to the pathway as they also lack Junior Community Umpiring Club programs. Goal Umpires are also more likely to commence umpiring in Senior Community football. They also umpire for longer in those competitions, where they are able to obtain more match experience, before potentially transitioning to the WAFL Talent Academy.
- Boundary and Goal Umpires also have a less defined pathway in the WAFL with the Development Squads and Talent Academies being more fluid in composition and program delivery in comparison to Field umpiring.

5. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Stakeholder Perceptions

A key component of this review’s consultation measured perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway and elicited feedback on relevant areas through stakeholder surveys.

The following groups were surveyed: Junior Community Umpiring Clubs (4 responses), Senior Community Umpiring staff (8), WAFL Umpires (59) and Senior Community Umpires (26). In total, there were 97 responses to the survey.

The surveys included quantitative and qualitative feedback. The following is a summary of the key trends that emerged in the quantitative feedback that measured stakeholder perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway (See Appendix C for the survey templates). All responses are out of a rating of 5.00.

Perceptions of Stakeholders

Based on your experience and environment in which you operate, to what extent do you agree/not agree with the following statements: (Rating out of 5)					
	<u>Junior Umpiring Clubs</u>	<u>Senior Community Umpiring Staff</u>	<u>WAFL Umpires</u>	<u>Senior Community Umpires</u>	<u>Overall</u>
<i>Number of Responses</i>	4	8	59	26	97
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well designed, developed and delivered.	3.25	2.63	3.69	2.81	3.10
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpiring stakeholders (e.g. umpire management, umpire coaches, umpire associations, etc).	4.00	3.00	3.81	2.77	3.40
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpires.	2.75	2.88	3.64	2.42	2.92
WAFC Umpiring is effectively supporting the development of umpires at all levels of the umpiring pathway.	2.50	2.63	3.66	2.65	2.86

The survey indicates that there is room for improvement in how the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is perceived across a range of sectors and areas.

The highest rated area was how umpiring stakeholders, such as Umpire management and coaches, understand the pathway. This indicates there is a perception that the pathway is relatively well understood by these stakeholders.

The lowest rated area was how WAFC Umpiring is effectively supporting the development of Umpires at all levels. There were particularly low ratings across all stakeholders, outside of the WAFL Umpires, which indicates there are significant concerns about how Umpire development is supported across the pathway.

The sector with the best perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is the WAFL Umpires. They had the highest ratings across three of the four areas, which reflects their greater involvement and understanding of the pathway, as well as receiving better support compared to other sectors.

The sector with the poorest perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is the Senior Community Umpires. In particular, there is a low rating for how the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is understood by Umpires. This trend is also seen in other sectors, which suggests there is a significant effort need to improve Umpires' understanding of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

The Junior Umpiring Clubs had a particularly strong rating for how the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is understood by umpiring stakeholders. This suggests that those surveyed have a strong understanding of the pathway and their role in it. Of most concern, was the low rating for how WAFC Umpiring is supporting the development of Umpires at all levels in the pathway. This rating suggests this sector requires immediate attention from WAFC Umpiring to better understand and address their concerns.

Perceptions of WAFL Umpires

Based on your experience and environment in which you operate, to what extent do you agree/not agree with the following statements: (Rating out of 5)			
	<u>Field</u>	<u>Boundary</u>	<u>Goal</u>
<i>Number of Responses</i>	30	15	14
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well designed, developed and delivered.	3.83	3.40	3.71
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpiring stakeholders (e.g. umpire management, umpire coaches, umpire associations, etc).	4.06	3.26	3.85
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpires.	3.80	3.20	3.78
WAFC Umpiring is effectively supporting the development of umpires at all levels of the umpiring pathway.	3.96	3.13	3.57
Based on your experience and environment in which you operate, to what extent do you agree/not agree with the following statements: (Rating out of 5)			
	<u>HPT</u>	<u>TA</u>	<u>DS</u>
<i>Number of Responses</i>	24	24	11
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well designed, developed and delivered.	3.62	3.66	3.90
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpiring stakeholders (e.g. umpire management, umpire coaches, umpire associations, etc).	3.79	3.79	3.90
The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpires.	3.66	3.54	3.81
WAFC Umpiring is effectively supporting the development of umpires at all levels of the umpiring pathway.	3.37	3.70	4.18

An analysis of the WAFL Umpires survey showed some clear trends according to the Umpires' discipline and level of umpiring.

Field Umpires have the best perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway while Boundary Umpires have the poorest perceptions. It was also evident that Development Squad Umpires reported higher overall ratings and the High Performance Team reported the lowest overall ratings.

The underlying causes of these trends warrant further research and analysis, potentially via a larger scale perception survey of the WAFL Umpires.

Perceptions of Senior Community Umpires

The overwhelming majority of responses were received from Field Umpires in the Senior Community Umpires survey. This makes a comparison of the umpiring disciplines statistically unreliable. It would be beneficial to gather more feedback from Boundary and Goal Umpires through a larger scale perception survey of the Senior Community Umpires.

Author Comments

The key learning from survey feedback is there are clear concerns about stakeholder perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. This may be exacerbated by the way in which WAFC Umpiring communicates about the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. While it is outside the scope of this review, it would be beneficial for WAFC Umpiring to undertake a review of its broader communication strategies, particularly relating to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

The survey feedback is of significant value to WAFC Umpiring and it would be beneficial to conduct regular stakeholder perception surveys. These could be combined with other annual surveys in order to maximise the responses received. A thorough review of the content of the surveys may inform the way in which WAFC Umpiring approaches a range of areas, such as stakeholder communication.

Recommendations

1. WAFC Umpiring should conduct a stakeholder perception survey every two years to measure and analyse changes in perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

5.2 Strategy and Planning

WAFC Umpiring Charter

WAFC Umpiring has determined a clear strategy for umpiring in the state by adopting the *WAFC Umpiring Charter* in 2020.

The Charter sets out the purpose of Umpiring WA: “to create a great environment to develop great people” and the vision: “we will have more engaged Umpires than football requires”.

This charter deliberately utilises the phrase ‘Umpiring WA’ to emphasise that all umpiring stakeholders are responsible for the achievement of the stated purpose and vision rather than it be the sole responsibility of WAFC Umpiring.

While the Charter does not directly relate to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway, it does provide context to the overall priorities and objectives of WAFC Umpiring and this impacts TID processes at all levels in the pathway.

During consultation for this review, the *WAFC Umpiring Charter* was sometimes mentioned by various stakeholders when contextualising the strategy of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. However, reference to the Charter was most commonly utilised by WAFC Umpiring staff or WAFL Umpiring coaches and support staff. Other stakeholders did not generally refer to the Charter, which suggests that it is not as strongly embedded in those environments.

In order to effectively achieve the purpose and vision of ‘Umpiring WA’, all umpiring sectors need to strongly support the Charter and its principles. This would also help guide the overarching strategy for the WAFC Umpiring Talent pathway.

Recommendations

2. WAFC Umpiring should evaluate the understanding and implementation of the WAFC Umpiring Charter in all umpiring sectors to ensure it is embedded in those environments.

Talent Pathway Plan and Manual

Currently there is no documented strategy for the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway nor is there a manual documenting the operations of the pathway.

The lack of a documented strategy may contribute to stakeholders lacking clarity about the strategy underpinning the pathway. During the consultation process, it was evident that stakeholders could not consistently articulate the strategy for the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. This may contribute to the perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway in certain sectors as discussed earlier.

The development of a *Talent Pathway Plan* by WAFC Umpiring would help address this problem. The purpose of this plan would be to determine the guiding principles for the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. The plan, developed in consultation with stakeholders, should be strategic in focus with a three-year timeframe.

At the time of writing this review, the AFL is developing a *National Umpiring Talent Plan*. It would be advisable that the WAFC Umpiring *Talent Pathway Plan* aligns with the AFL's plan while taking into account local factors.

In addition to the *Talent Pathway Plan*, WAFC Umpiring should also develop and publish a *Talent Pathway Manual*. The purpose of this manual is to set out the operational aspects of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway for each season.

The football landscape is ever changing and there will be new priorities and opportunities that emerge yearly. The utilisation of the *Talent Pathway Manual* will allow for flexibility and adaptability while ensuring the operational aspects of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is aligned to the strategy outlined in the *Talent Pathway Plan*.

Once the above documents are developed they must be published, promoted and widely available for the broader umpiring community. This will promote a better understanding of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Recommendations

3. WAFC Umpiring should develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a Talent Pathway Plan that is strategic in focus with a three-year timeframe. The plan should align with the National Umpiring Talent Plan developed by the AFL.
4. WAFC Umpiring should develop a Talent Pathway Manual that is operational in focus and renewed annually.
5. WAFC Umpiring should ensure the Talent Pathway Plan and Talent Pathway Manual are published, promoted and widely available for all umpiring sectors.

5.3 Umpire Development

Core Principles

The author has developed a set of principles that are relevant to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. These principles have emerged during the course of this review but are in no way intended to be exhaustive. The principles provide broader context to this report and can guide changes to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway in the future.

The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway should be:

People first – the interests of the individual are at the forefront of every decision made. This is summed up in the WAFC Umpiring Charter, which says, “We exist to create a great environment to develop great people”. The development of great people is the key outcome for umpiring in Western Australia. The development of great Umpires is a bonus.

Umpire-centric – the development needs of the Umpire is the key priority. Umpires require a pathway that provides structure and challenge, is aligned to the Umpire’s development stage and has a long-term focus. There must be a supportive learning environment that helps to underpin a strong culture. All structures and processes must be tested against the question – does this meet the development needs of the Umpire?

Flexible – an individualised approach to Umpire development requires flexibility. A one-size fit all approach will fail to accommodate the needs of too many Umpires. However, a flexible approach should not lack strategy and structure. The pathway must have clearly defined strategies and processes that allow for a tailored approach to Umpire development. The pathway must also be fluid so that it can meet the motivations and capacity of the Umpires involved.

Innovative – we must be comfortable taking risks and challenging the status quo. The modern-day challenges facing umpiring require the ability to look at things differently. We must not be afraid of trying something new or doing something differently. We must look outside of what we know and embrace the lessons that will come from a new or different approach.

Connected – everyone has something to offer in the pathway. An umpiring first approach, where all stakeholders acknowledge each other’s unique contributions, will ensure we have a system that prioritises the Umpires’ best interests. A pathway with complete alignment in strategy and process, where there is clarity of purpose, will underpin the future growth of umpiring at all levels of the game in Western Australia.

Role of Umpire Coaching

The development of Umpires at all levels is inextricably linked to the quality of the Umpire management and coaching. This was evident in the stakeholder surveys with Umpire coaching identified as the most critical factor that influences the development and progression of Umpires.

While the focus of this review was the TID processes for Umpires, it was apparent that the quality of Umpire coaching influences the quality of umpire development – you cannot develop talented Umpires without having talented Umpire coaches to support them.

It is crucial therefore that the recruitment, retention and development of Umpire coaches is a high priority for WAFC Umpiring. A review of the strategy and processes for the Umpire Coach Pathway would be a logical and worthwhile exercise to undertake in conjunction with the review and implementation of the recommendations in this report.

Recommendations

6. WAFC Umpiring should undertake a review of the strategy and processes related to the Umpire Coach Pathway.

Umpire Competency Matrix

A common consideration that emerged during this review was the concept of a matrix that would articulate the competencies for an Umpire at each level in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. These competencies are commonly seen as areas of knowledge and skills that are relevant to umpiring.

There are forms of competency assessment utilised already at different levels of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. For example, in the WAFL, all Field Umpires undertake in-game assessment by an Umpire Coach. Over the course of the season, the accumulated feedback provides a view of the Umpire's overall competency at that level. This type of feedback and assessment occurs in different forms at each level of the pathway.

The Umpire competency matrix would provide a framework where the relevant competencies at each level of the pathway are clearly outlined. It would also demonstrate how these competencies are connected and advance through each level of the pathway. The Umpire competency matrix could also provide a consistent framework for how Umpires should be assessed at each level.

The development of an Umpire competency matrix for the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway would be challenging. Umpire coaching is a generally subjective exercise and it would be difficult to completely eliminate this. An Umpire competency matrix

would potentially promote greater objectivity by having more measurable outcomes. This must be balanced against the need to maintain a flexible approach that is relevant to the stage of the individual Umpire.

The use of an Umpire competency matrix would have several benefits for the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

It would assist in the identification of talented Umpires, particularly in Junior or Senior Community football, where the relevant stakeholders can assess and benchmark those Umpires against the relevant competencies. For example, a Junior Umpire Coach can assess a junior Umpire according to the competencies of a Development Squad Umpire.

It would provide Umpires at all levels a better understanding of the competencies that are required to umpire at a higher level. For example, in the WAFL, a Development Squad Umpire would have more understanding about the competencies of a Talent Academy Umpire. This would allow the Umpire to identify the focus areas that are relevant to their own personal development.

It would provide greater clarity to list management processes, particularly in the WAFL. The ability to assess each Umpire against the relevant competencies would provide a more objective and clearer understanding of that Umpire's progression in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

The development of an Umpire competency matrix should take into account the following considerations:

- The Umpire competencies should be linked to each level in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway, possibly through the FTEM framework, as this provides a clearer structure.
- The competencies should encompass all elements that are relevant to umpiring, including the psychosocial factors discussed earlier in this report.

The Umpire competency matrix was an idea, in one form or another, that was consistently raised by a range of stakeholders during this review. The development of this matrix should therefore be a high priority for WAFC Umpiring in the short term.

Recommendations

7. WAFC Umpiring should develop an Umpire competency matrix that outlines the relevant competencies for an Umpire at each level in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

5.4 Umpire Management Systems

Current Systems and Processes

This review has established that the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is a complex ecosystem. Any complex ecosystem requires mechanisms to manage the extensive amount of information that flows through it.

Currently, there are a range of different processes that are used to manage this flow of information and interactions that occur. Some of these processes are ad-hoc or not fit for purpose. They also operate in isolation to each other when there is a clear need for the processes to interact with, or link into, each other. These processes often require significant manual input by a range of people, which is time consuming in an already challenging environment.

For example, injury management of WAFL Umpires is undertaken through the use of an online spreadsheet with several people required to input and update the information. This does not connect into other processes, such as appointments, without the direct intervention of the Umpire or another person. As the system also presents as cumbersome and time-consuming it is utilised inconsistently.

The lack of a suitable system also prevents a range of Umpire management processes from being carried out appropriately. For example, the management of personal wellness relies on a strong relationship between the Umpire and coach that facilitates open and timely sharing of information. When this occurs, personal wellness issues can be managed effectively. However, these issues are very complex and require ongoing management from a range of support persons. At the moment, there is no system that supports the management, or maintenance of a historical record, of these issues. This presents clear risk management concerns.

Umpires at many levels of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway have touch-points with a range of different organisations that have responsibility for their management. This is most apparent at certain levels in the WAFL where Umpires may be involved in several competitions. For example, a Development Squad Umpire officiates in WAFL competitions and with a Junior Community Umpiring Club where they are managed and coached by different people and processes.

The above presents a range of challenges, which are reflected and discussed elsewhere in this report. From a system point of view, there is currently no mechanism to support the management of the Umpire across different levels or organisations. There are also no processes that support the sharing of information between the relevant support persons without deliberate intervention by the Umpire or the support persons. It is therefore unsurprising that information can slip through the gaps, which ultimately impairs the management of that Umpire.

The issues discussed above have resulted in an environment where the Umpire has overwhelming responsibility for their own management. This is beneficial to a

degree as it promotes personal responsibility and self-management skills that are key to being a high-performance Umpire. However, there is a risk that many Umpires are unable to effectively drive their own management and development is particularly true for the significant amount of young Umpires involved at all levels.

It is clear there is a strong need for a system that allows for the collection and sharing of information related to the management of the Umpire. This would bring significant benefits in how Umpires are managed in the long-term and also provide for greater efficiencies for those responsible for Umpire management.

Athlete Management System

This review has demonstrated the need for a centralised system that can assist in the management of Umpires and the umpiring program. An Athlete Management System (AMS) is a platform for the collection and analysis of athlete monitoring and performance information. The aim of an AMS is to support management and coaches to manage and enhance athlete health and performance.

The principal benefit of an AMS is that it collates all of the current and historical information related to the Umpire and makes it accessible to all involved in that Umpire's management. This ultimately improves the quality of the support that is provided to the Umpire.

An AMS will typically cover a range of areas including: availability, athlete profiles, workload monitoring, strength and conditioning plans, training logs, wellness questionnaires, anthropometry and performance testing, injury risk assessments, schedules and electronic medical records.

Athlete Management Systems are used worldwide in semi-professional and professional sport. These systems are also increasingly being used with officials and Umpires in professional sport.

The cost of procuring a suitable AMS needs to be addressed via a clear business case. There also needs to be an assessment as to what level in the pathway an AMS is utilised but, at a minimum, it should be implemented for all WAFL Umpires, including the Development Squads.

The utilisation of an AMS in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway will help address a range of issues that are central to the effectiveness of the pathway and will also support the implementation of key recommendations in this report.

Recommendations

8. WAFC Umpiring should develop a business case for the procurement and implementation of an Athlete Management System (AMS) to support the management of Umpires in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

5.5 West Australian Football League

Overview

The WAFL is the central component and main driver of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. The WAFL demands a significant amount of attention and is well resourced in comparison with other levels, which is reflective of its standing as the premier competition in the state.

This review has sought to examine the WAFL as a key driver of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway and assesses how it interacts with other components of the pathway. The WAFL has its own opportunities and challenges and some of these have surfaced during the course of this review. However, it was outside the scope of this report to examine the WAFL's TID processes in detail. Rather, this review has focussed on several key issues that are of critical importance to the WAFL and the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Role of the Development Squads

The Development Squads for Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires are an important part of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway as they are the primary conduits for Umpires into the WAFL. It is therefore integral that these are functioning effectively.

The Development Squads have very different histories with the squads for Boundary and Goal Umpires only introduced in 2020 while there has been a squad for Field Umpires since the mid-2000s. The introduction of the Development Squads for Boundary and Goal Umpires is a significant advancement for those disciplines, which historically have had more limited pathway opportunities.

The primary role of the Squads is to bridge the gap between Junior Community Football and the WAFL. This is achieved through a development program that focuses on improving an Umpire's physical capability, knowledge and skills in order to be prepared to umpire WAFL Colts.

The secondary role of the Squads is to service a range of competitions, particularly the Public Schools Association (PSA), WAFL Futures and WAFLW. This encompasses a large number of games across a season, which demonstrates the integral servicing role of the Development Squads.

This highlights one of the most obvious challenges for the Development Squad – how to balance Umpire development and competition requirements. At the moment, the servicing of the competition is the key driver rather than the development needs of the Umpires. This does provide greater opportunities for the Umpires but may also contribute to a less optimal development environment.

The outcome of this is that the Development Squads are larger than is suitable for the resources (predominately coaches) of the programs. This is particularly the case for the Boundary and Goal Squads that do not have a dedicated Coach.

The above issue also drives the composition of the Development Squads, which consist of a broad range of Umpires who are at the stage of developing their fundamental umpiring skills. This approach can be compared to historical iterations of the Development Squads where the program arguably had a more targeted or advanced development approach for a smaller group of Umpires.

While these approaches have their own merits, it is crucial that the purpose of the Development Squads in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is clearly stated in the proposed *Talent Pathway Plan*. These principles will then help to guide how the Development Squad programs are formulated, including the number and type of Umpires that the program caters for and what competitions best align with their development needs.

One of the most pertinent issues regarding competition servicing relates to the benefits of the PSA competition and the Perth Football League. The relevancy of the Perth Football League as a development competition is discussed in more detail in the Perth Football League section of this report. At the moment, the Development Squad Umpires predominately service the PSA 1st XVIII (Field, Boundary & Goal Umpires) and 2nd XVIII (Field Umpires only) competitions.

The PSA is a high level competition that has a proud history. It is a strong development league for the AFL and there is professional infrastructure around the school teams, including experienced coaches. The style of football provides clear challenges to the Umpires, most notably in player management. In recent years, the competition has garnered significant media attention with all 1st XVIII matches live streamed by *The West Australian* newspaper.

The PSA 1st XVIII is a strong and competitive competition that offers the Development Squads significant value as a stepping stone competition from Junior Community football to the WAFL. On the other hand, the PSA 2nd XVIII competition, where a two Field Umpire system is utilised, lacks development value with WAFC Umpiring encouraged to consider the merits of servicing that competition.

These discussions underline the importance of WAFC Umpiring assessing the merits of every competition that the Development Squads service. In an Umpire-centric model, where the development needs of the Umpires are prioritised, it would be beneficial to outline what the benefits of each competition are. It is important that Umpires are exposed to a variety of competitions where they gain a range of different experiences. However, in respect to managing Umpires' workloads and ensuring their development is maximised, it is essential that a clear rationale for each competition is developed with this outlined in the WAFC Umpiring *Talent Pathway Manual*.

The sole recruitment area for the Development Squads is the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs. This has led to a situation where the Development Squads consist of Umpires typically between 16 to 21 years of age with at least several years of umpiring experience. The Squads do not cater for older or more experienced Umpires with the Perth Football League being the more suitable competition for those Umpires to potentially progress to the WAFL. With this being the case, it is essential that there are strong linkages between the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs and the Development Squads.

The talent identification of Umpires for the Development Squads has largely been conducted through the end of season WAFL Talent Carnivals. While these carnivals are of significant benefit, there are some drawbacks in limiting talent identification just to these. This is particularly true for Boundary Umpires who are not appointed to the Talent Carnivals as the last possession rule is utilised. The Talent Carnivals are also a single point in time assessment of an Umpire, which does not take into account their rate of development and cannot fully assess the psychosocial attributes and skills that are highly relevant to their future progression.

In order to ensure the right Umpires are identified at the right time, it is beneficial for talent identification to be ongoing throughout the season. While this would be a burden on resources, there is value in WAFC Umpiring talent coaches attending junior games to observe Umpires on a regular basis. This should complement the talent identification process leading into the Talent Carnivals where Umpires can be assessed in an appropriate match environment.

With the WAFC Umpiring talent coaches having limited connection with junior Umpires throughout the season, the most important part of the talent identification process is the involvement of Junior Community Umpiring Clubs. Junior Community Umpiring Clubs should be the key drivers in the talent identification process with the support of WAFC Umpiring to facilitate this. Junior Community Umpiring Clubs are also best able to assess the 'character' components of an Umpire, such as their commitment and trustworthiness.

The role of Junior Community Umpiring Clubs is to foster a love for umpiring. The Clubs do not have the capacity to dedicate significant resources to talent development, but they can support Umpires to develop a strong connection with umpiring. Junior Community Umpiring Clubs can also bring a greater focus on the development of psychosocial skills, which are critical to the future success of the Umpire in the pathway. With a particular focus on the competencies outlined in the Umpire competency matrix, Junior Community Umpiring Clubs can be a key component in talent identification.

Junior Community Umpiring Clubs are influential in promoting aspiration in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. They must be empowered to support their Umpires that they have established strong, trusting relationships with. A key component of the success of this approach is to ensure that Junior Community Umpiring Clubs remain involved in the Umpire's development once they are in the Development

Squad. This is Umpire-centric and collaborative, which helps to strengthen the relevant levels of the pathway and the connections between them.

Recommendations

9. WAFC Umpiring should state in its *Talent Pathway Plan* the purpose of the Development Squads in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.
10. WAFC Umpiring should assess the development benefits of each competition that Development Squad Umpires are appointed to.
11. WAFC Umpiring should state in its *Talent Pathway Manual* the development benefits of each competition that Development Squad Umpires are appointed to.
12. WAFC Umpiring should develop talent identification processes for Junior Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires that effectively empower the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs as key partners.

List Management

The management of the WAFL umpiring list is a keenly discussed and, at times, a controversial topic. One of the key questions that emerged during this review was - how should an Umpire be managed when it is determined they will not progress further in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway? The answer to this question is fundamentally simple – Umpires deserve honesty.

The survey responses show this to be true; Umpires want to know where they are placed in the pathway and how they can progress. If it is determined they will not progress further, then they want to be told in an open and timely manner. Following this, the Umpire should also be supported to remain engaged in another discipline, role (e.g. Umpire coach) or at another level in the pathway.

The reality, however, is not that simple. There are a range of factors that complicate the list management process and may contribute to a perception that Umpires are not managed with the level of openness, honesty and accountability that might be expected.

The key factor is the ongoing balance between servicing the competition and developing Umpires. There is a shortage of Umpires in the WAFL system with this felt more acutely at some levels and in some disciplines. WAFL Umpires fulfilling other umpiring roles, particularly in Junior Community football, exacerbates this. This situation, and the fear that the Umpire will discontinue umpiring, can preclude honest conversations with them about their progress in the pathway. In the long term, the resulting lack of clarity with the Umpire can cause the most harm.

The other complicating factor in the list management process is a lack of information. This was discussed earlier in the report where it was shown there is a lack of indicators to truly assess the progress of the Umpire and potentially project their future in the pathway. This is potentially confusing for the Umpire and causes the Umpire coach to often rely on subjective assessments that only serve to exacerbate this confusion. The utilisation of an Umpire competency matrix and Athlete Management System would go a long way to addressing this issue.

Umpiring, at WAFL level, is a part-time pursuit or hobby. This makes umpiring a transient environment where an Umpire's ongoing involvement is influenced by external factors, such as study or work. WAFC Umpiring maintains an Umpire-centric and supportive approach to managing these sorts of factors, which is entirely appropriate.

At a macro level this can make long-term list management planning very challenging. However, a strategic approach to this issue is important in managing the ongoing viability of the WAFL list and to ensure the servicing needs of the competition are met. The development of a WAFL list management plan, utilising a data driven approach, is an important priority for WAFC Umpiring.

Recommendations

13. WAFC Umpiring should develop a WAFL list management plan that is strategic and long-term in focus. The plan should align with the *Talent Pathway Plan* developed by WAFC Umpiring.

5.6 Junior Community Umpiring Clubs

Talent Identification and Development

Junior Community Football is a challenging environment where Umpire management and coaches are subject to a range of different, and often competing, demands. The most pressing of these is the need to supply competent Umpires to service the number of games of football. This is a challenge at all levels of the game but is perhaps most acute in Junior Community Football where there has been significant growth in competitions in recent years. This contributes to a situation where the overwhelming focus is to 'just get Umpires on the park'. With this in mind, it is inevitable that the development of Umpires, particularly those considered talented, cannot be prioritised.

This goes to the core of a key question that has emerged from this review – are junior Umpires sufficiently prepared to enter the talent pathway? It is questionable whether junior Umpires are emerging with the requisite physical capabilities, knowledge, umpiring abilities and psychosocial skills to enable a rapid progression through the pathway. And if they are, then this is not consistent across the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs.

The bigger question, however, is whether this should be a focus and priority for the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs. With a significant competition servicing responsibility, it is probably unrealistic to expect the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs to focus on talent development, especially with the current level of resourcing.

It is the author's opinion that the core business of Junior Community Umpiring Clubs is to promote connection with umpiring and to foster a person's love for umpiring in the long-term. A focus on this objective will help to achieve Umpiring WA's vision to have more engaged Umpires than football requires. It is essential that the core purpose of Junior Community Umpiring Clubs is established and that the Clubs receive the necessary support to achieve this.

Having established its core role, it is relevant to consider what part Junior Community Umpiring Clubs should play in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. Fostering a love for umpiring is incredibly important to begin with as it sets the foundation for the level of commitment that must be possessed to progress in the pathway. Beyond this, the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs will ideally support Umpires that have an interest in progressing in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

From a talent identification perspective, this support consists of promoting the concept of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway and facilitating the appointment of Umpires to talent identification opportunities in competition fixtures and/or carnivals. With rigorous processes and strong communication between the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs and WAFC Umpiring, the right Umpires will be identified at the right time to effectively engage them in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

From a talent development perspective, there are a variety of mechanisms currently in place, with some Junior Community Umpiring Clubs offering additional support to Umpires interested in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. For example, one Club utilises a personal development plan to help facilitate the Umpire's development. The author contends that this type of additional support is of value, but it ultimately draws resources from the Club's core focus.

Junior Community Umpiring Clubs can, however, support a critical area in talent development - the training of psychosocial skills. As this review has already established, the development of these skills is critical to an Umpire's progression and this should commence as early in the pathway as possible. The way in which Junior Community Umpiring Clubs can best support this should be explored further.

This report has discussed the role of community football in engaging and supporting a wide variety of Umpires who are motivated to umpire for a range of different reasons. It is important there is a strong development framework around Umpires at a community level to foster their enjoyment of umpiring and engagement with the sport in the long term.

Junior Community Umpiring Clubs have an important role to play in the development of talented Umpires in their formative years. However, it is imperative this role is targeted in a way that provides most value to the Umpires while supporting the Junior Community Umpiring Club's capacity to achieve its broader purpose.

Recommendations

14. WAFC Umpiring should develop guiding principles for Junior Community Umpiring Clubs that state how a Club achieves its core purpose of fostering a love for umpiring.

15. WAFC Umpiring should state in its *Talent Pathway Plan* the purpose of Junior Community Umpiring Clubs in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway, with a focus on the introduction and development of psychosocial skills.

5.7 Perth Football League

Purpose of the Perth Football League

The Perth Football League has played a key role in the development of Umpires over many years with countless Umpires progressing through the ranks to the WAFL competition.

Over recent years, WAFC Umpiring has assumed greater responsibility for the management of umpiring in the Perth Football League, thereby increasing its engagement with this sector.

Nevertheless, there is a perception that the Perth Football League is undervalued as a development competition for Umpires. This perception has a historical basis and has evolved to a point where some stakeholders believe that the Perth Football League is perceived as a lesser competition.

The stronger engagement between WAFC Umpiring and the Perth Football League is a relatively recent development, which has already resulted in positive outcomes, such as improved inter-personal relationships between key stakeholders in those organisations.

However, the long-standing perceptions about the Perth Football League contribute to the Umpire management and Umpires in that league feeling that their contributions are not valued as strongly as other sectors. Furthermore, the Perth Football League is not positioned or generally perceived as a significant development pathway for Umpires.

The quality of umpiring in the higher grades of the Perth Football League, where Panel Umpires are appointed, has increased rapidly in recent years. An improved culture, which has increased the retention of Umpires in a quality environment, has facilitated this. This means there are strong and experienced Umpires officiating in this competition, along with well qualified Umpire coaches providing appropriate development.

Recommendations

16. WAFC Umpiring should state in its Talent Pathway Plan the purpose of the Perth Football League in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Talent Identification and Development

The Perth Football League engages a variety of Umpires with many of these, probably the vast majority, satisfied with umpiring at their current level of competition. These Umpires are involved in the game for a variety of reasons, such as personal satisfaction, fitness, income etc, and are not focussed on progression in

the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. These Umpires still have an essential role to play in the game and in the pathway itself.

All Umpires should receive appropriate development support that enables them to umpire to the best of their ability and to enjoy their umpiring experience. This is essential for the development of the umpiring group as a whole and to ensure that there is an effective environment for recruiting and retaining Umpires.

There are Umpires with ambitions to progress in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway that require additional development support. These Umpires are often older and have commenced umpiring in the Perth Football League or, at some stage, transitioned from the WAFL Development Squad. These Umpires should be supported to continue their development in order to transition to the WAFL, if that is appropriate.

There are some notable examples in recent years, across all disciplines, where Umpires have successfully transitioned from the Perth Football League to the WAFL Talent Academies where they are competent in umpiring WAFL Colts level and higher. These are important examples and should be promoted so Umpires in the Perth Football League understand and believe these opportunities are achievable.

There are fewer recent examples of Umpires that have transitioned from the WAFL Development Squads to the Perth Football League and then returned to the WAFL pathway at a later stage. This could contribute to perceptions that an Umpire that has exited the WAFL Development Squad does not have the opportunity to return the WAFL. It is clear these opportunities should be facilitated, as some Umpires will benefit from a different environment where they can gain other experiences and address the deficiencies that once prevented their progress in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. These Umpires should be given every opportunity and support to do so.

The structures and processes around the identification and development of talented Umpires in the Perth Football League is ad-hoc and often relies on the Umpire to drive their own opportunities. This has contributed to a perception that the promotion of Umpires from the Perth Football League to WAFL is not a realistic outcome for many. This a detrimental outcome for the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway because capable and experienced Umpires are not achieving their full potential at the highest level of competition possible.

Recommendations

17. WAFC Umpiring should develop structures and processes that facilitate the identification and development of talented umpires in the Perth Football League with a pathway to the WAFL.

WAFL Development Squad and the Perth Football League

Throughout the course of this review, there has been feedback from a range of stakeholders that the Perth Football League could be better utilised as a development pathway, particularly for Field Umpires.

In recent years, Field Umpires in the WAFL Field Development Squad have primarily umpired in the Public Schools Association (PSA) competition. This has potentially limited their exposure to the Perth Football League, where there is the opportunity to gain match and player management skills in a senior competition. The enhancement of these skills is vital in a Field Umpire's long-term development and should be developed prior to an Umpire officiating in WAFL Colts.

It is the author's view that the debate between the value of the PSA and Perth Football League competitions is not a zero-sum game; one competition should not be prioritised at the expense of the other. In a mature and effective talent pathway, that values flexibility and fluidity, there is room for both.

This review has already emphasised the importance and benefit of Umpires having a diversity of experiences across a variety of competitions. The Perth Football League is a competition that provides that variety for all disciplines of umpiring and for Umpires at different stages in their development.

The Perth Football League must utilise an appropriate development framework in order to maximise its value as a development competition. This should replicate the structure and processes of the WAFL Development Squads to ensure that an umpire's experience is not diminished. For example, Field Umpires must utilise a 3-umpire system and have access to match day coaching and match vision like in the PSA competition. The provision of this level of development support will likely require additional or re-allocated resources within the Perth Football League.

Recommendations

18. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that the Perth Football League is utilised as an effective development competition for WAFL Development Squad Umpires and that it is resourced appropriately to achieve this.

Transition of WAFL Umpires to the Perth Football League

This review considered how an Umpire transitions from the WAFL to the Perth Football League, following the Umpire's retirement from the WAFL. In order to facilitate the retention of Umpires, it is beneficial for them to be offered the opportunity to umpire in the Perth Football League, where the level of commitment and competition may better suit their circumstances.

At the moment, this process appears to be ad-hoc and largely driven by the Umpire seeking out those opportunities in the Perth Football League or the Umpire being recruited by a member of the Perth Football League who they may have a prior relationship with. Where an Umpire has an existing relationship with a member of the Perth Football League, they are more likely to join that competition following their retirement from WAFL.

It is clear that retaining Umpires in the long-term by facilitating their transition from WAFL to the Perth Football League is a beneficial outcome for all involved. It would be advantageous if WAFC Umpiring establishes a formal process that ensures this effective transition.

This review has also identified there is scope to improve the relationship between the Umpire management and Umpires in the WAFL and Perth Football League. While this issue is largely outside the terms of this review, the author believes an improvement in these relationships would benefit the transition of Umpires between the leagues. The author suggests that the relevant Umpire associations be engaged to help facilitate the enhancement of those relationships through greater social interaction (e.g. social events) between the groups.

Recommendations

19. WAFC Umpiring should develop processes that facilitate the transition of retiring Umpires from the WAFL to the Perth Football League.

20. WAFC Umpiring should engage the relevant Umpire associations to collaborate on social opportunities that will enhance the relationships between Umpires in the WAFL and Perth Football League.

5.8 Regional Community Umpiring Clubs

Overview

Regional Community Umpiring Clubs are, at best, on the very periphery of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. While there is no real mechanism to support the development of talented regional Umpires, there are notable examples of Umpires that have progressed to the WAFL in recent years. These Umpires are often from major South West leagues and their life circumstances, such as university study, have led to them relocating to the metropolitan area. In these cases, the Umpires have been supported to continue umpiring and progress to a higher level.

This review has highlighted some key findings below but was largely unable to consider the regional Umpire pathway systems and processes to any significant degree. It is entirely possible there is great-untapped potential from Umpires in regional football. There is, however, a range of complex challenges that are unique to this area. To address this, a review of the strategy and processes of the regional umpiring pathway should be undertaken in conjunction with the development of the broader *Talent Pathway Plan*.

Recommendations

21. WAFC Umpiring should undertake a review of the strategy and processes related to Regional Community Umpiring Clubs in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

WA Country Football League Carnivals

The West Australian Country Football League (WACFL) manages several representative competitions and carnivals, such as the Country Football Championships. These are held in the metropolitan area and provide players an opportunity to represent their region at various levels. These carnivals are also an opportunity for regional Umpires to umpire representative football. WAFC Umpiring currently utilises these carnivals for the talent identification of regional Umpires. This is a convenient method for talent identification but there is a risk that it only targets Umpires that have the willingness and means to attend the carnivals. Nevertheless, WAFC Umpiring should continue to focus on effectively utilising these carnivals for talent identification, while also exploring new TID processes.

Recommendations

22. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that WACFL carnivals are utilised as effective development and talent identification opportunities for regional Umpires.

WAFL Development Squad and the Peel Football and Netball League

The Peel Football and Netball League (PFNL) is a WACFL affiliated league but, unlike other competitions, its proximity to Perth facilitates the ongoing involvement of PFNL Umpires in the WAFL. The PFNL therefore provides development and talent identification opportunities for Umpires to progress to the WAFL through either the WAFL Development Squad or Talent Academy.

In relation to the WAFL Development Squad, the PFNL provides similar development benefits as the Perth Football League does for metropolitan Umpires. It is therefore advantageous for WAFC Umpiring to facilitate WAFL Development Squad Umpires continuing to umpire in the PFNL where possible and for the PFNL to receive appropriate support as a development competition. The provision of this level of development support may require additional or re-allocated resources within the Peel Football and Netball League.

Recommendations

23. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that the Peel Football and Netball League is utilised as an effective development competition for WAFL Development Squad Umpires and that it is resourced appropriately to achieve this.

5.9 Boundary and Goal Umpiring

Overview

Historically, Boundary and Goal umpiring in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway have not been prioritised to the same level as Field umpiring. While this has been addressed to some degree in recent years, particularly at the WAFL, there are still significant differences in how the disciplines are supported. As a matter of principle, each discipline should be valued equally in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

A key theme that has emerged is whether the talent pathways and processes should be replicated for each discipline. As mentioned above, all disciplines should be prioritised equally and be resourced according to their needs. The pathways and processes for each discipline should be consistent but this does not mean they need to be identical. Field, Boundary and Goal umpiring have different needs and operate in quite distinct environments. The TID processes for each discipline should be crafted in a way that supports the best outcomes for the particular discipline, while maintaining alignment with the strategy of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Junior Community Umpiring Club Programs

The most obvious deficiency in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway for Boundary and Goal umpiring is the lack of formalised programs in all Junior Community Umpiring Clubs. Some clubs do a considerable amount in this space and a few have delivered programs for many years. These Junior Community Umpiring Clubs have had greater success in developing talented Boundary and Goal Umpires that have progressed in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Nevertheless, Field umpiring is prioritised much higher than the other disciplines in Junior Community Football. This has a historical basis and is reflective of the overwhelming demands for Field Umpires in this environment, with club volunteers filling the positions of Boundary and Goal Umpires.

Junior Community Football is an important recruitment area and breeding ground for talented Field Umpires. Boundary and Goal umpiring could reap the same benefits if there were formalised programs in all Junior Community Umpiring Clubs.

Furthermore, junior Umpires would also benefit, as it would generate more tangible opportunities for them to progress in a discipline other than Field umpiring. At the moment, those opportunities are more limited and facilitated less readily as compared to Field umpiring.

Junior Community Umpiring Clubs would also gain a new recruitment stream that enables them to recruit more Umpires and grow their Clubs. It is also likely that Boundary and Goal umpiring programs would attract more diverse Umpires compared to Field umpiring.

The introduction of Boundary and Goal umpiring programs in Junior Community Umpiring Clubs does present some challenges. As has been discussed, these Clubs already have significant resourcing constraints. Some Clubs may also not have internal human resources that can support Boundary and Goal umpiring programs. These are all valid concerns that would need to be addressed. It is inevitable that an increase in financial and human resources would be necessary to support Junior Community Umpiring Clubs to deliver effective Boundary and Goal umpiring programs.

The introduction of Boundary and Goal umpiring programs in Junior Community Umpiring Clubs is a significant opportunity to enhance the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway for Boundary and Goal Umpires. It will also bring a range of benefits to umpiring as a whole and contributes to achieving Umpiring WA's vision of having more engaged Umpires than football requires.

Recommendations

24. WAFC Umpiring should develop formalised and appropriately resourced Boundary and Goal umpiring programs in Junior Community Umpiring Clubs.

5.10 Diversity in Umpiring

Overview

Fostering diversity in umpiring is a key objective of WAFC Umpiring and the AFL. Diversity in umpiring is outside the scope of this review but does merit further commentary in regard to its interaction with the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

The structure and processes of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway has historically been identical for all Umpires. However, with an increasing number of Umpires from diverse backgrounds, it is necessary to consider how the pathway could be modified to better cater for those Umpires. As has been mentioned, all Umpires should be prioritised equally and be resourced according to their needs. The pathways and processes for diverse Umpires should be consistent with all other Umpires but this does not mean they need to be identical.

Diverse Umpires have different needs and experiences to other Umpires. The TID processes for diverse Umpires should be crafted in a way that supports the best outcomes for each person, while maintaining alignment with the strategy of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. This approach is Umpire-centric and flexible, which are key principles of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Recommendations

25. WAFC Umpiring should develop talent identification and development processes for diverse Umpires in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Females in Umpiring

The AFL, in conjunction with the University of Sydney, has recently undertaken a review into the experiences of female Umpires. The study titled *Girls and women in Australian football umpiring: Understanding registration, participation and retention* recommends the investigation of the feasibility of a parallel umpiring talent pathway for girls and women across State League & Talent Pathway competitions and the AFLW competition. WAFC Umpiring should assess how this study and the associated recommendations should be applied to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Recommendations

26. WAFC Umpiring should assess the feasibility of a parallel umpiring talent pathway for female Umpires as recommended in the AFL and University of Sydney report.

5.11 Recommendations List

Stakeholder Perceptions

1. WAFC Umpiring should conduct a stakeholder perception survey every two years to measure and analyse changes in perceptions of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Strategy and Planning

2. WAFC Umpiring should evaluate the understanding and implementation of the WAFC Umpiring Charter in all umpiring sectors to ensure it is embedded in those environments.

3. WAFC Umpiring should develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a *Talent Pathway Plan* that is strategic in focus with a three-year timeframe. The plan should align with the *National Umpiring Talent Plan* developed by the AFL.

4. WAFC Umpiring should develop a *Talent Pathway Manual* that is operational in focus and renewed annually.

5. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that the *Talent Pathway Plan* and *Talent Pathway Manual* are published, promoted and widely available for all umpiring sectors.

Umpire Development

6. WAFC Umpiring should undertake a review of the strategy and processes related to the Umpire Coach Pathway.

7. WAFC Umpiring should develop an Umpire competency matrix that outlines the relevant competencies for an Umpire at each level in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Umpire Management Systems

8. WAFC Umpiring should develop a business case for the procurement and implementation of an Athlete Management System (AMS) to support the management of Umpires in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

West Australian Football League

9. WAFC Umpiring should state in its *Talent Pathway Plan* the purpose of the Development Squads in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

10. WAFC Umpiring should assess the development benefits of each competition that Development Squad Umpires are appointed to.

11. WAFC Umpiring should state in its *Talent Pathway Manual* the development benefits of each competition that Development Squad Umpires are appointed to.

12. WAFC Umpiring should develop talent identification processes for Junior Field, Boundary and Goal Umpires that effectively empower the Junior Community Umpiring Clubs as key partners.

13. WAFC Umpiring should develop a WAFL list management plan that is strategic and long-term in focus. The plan should align with the *Talent Pathway Plan* developed by WAFC Umpiring.

Junior Community Umpiring Clubs

14. WAFC Umpiring should develop guiding principles for Junior Community Umpiring Clubs that state how a Club achieves its core purpose of fostering a love for umpiring.

15. WAFC Umpiring should state in its *Talent Pathway Plan* the purpose of Junior Community Umpiring Clubs in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway, with a focus on the introduction and development of psychosocial skills.

Perth Football League

16. WAFC Umpiring should state in its *Talent Pathway Plan* the purpose of the Perth Football League in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

17. WAFC Umpiring should develop structures and processes that facilitate the identification and development of talented umpires in the Perth Football League with a pathway to the WAFL.

18. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that the Perth Football League is utilised as an effective development competition for WAFL Development Squad Umpires and that it is resourced appropriately to achieve this.

19. WAFC Umpiring should develop processes that facilitate the transition of retiring Umpires from the WAFL to the Perth Football League.

20. WAFC Umpiring should engage the relevant Umpire associations to collaborate on social opportunities that will enhance the relationships between Umpires in the WAFL and Perth Football League.

Regional Community Umpiring Clubs

21. WAFC Umpiring should undertake a review of the strategy and processes related to Regional Community Umpiring Clubs in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

22. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that WACFL carnivals are utilised as effective development and talent identification opportunities for regional Umpires.

23. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that the Peel Football and Netball League is utilised as an effective development competition for WAFL Development Squad Umpires and that it is resourced appropriately to achieve this.

Boundary and Goal Umpiring

24. WAFC Umpiring should develop formalised and appropriately resourced Boundary and Goal umpiring programs in Junior Community Umpiring Clubs.

Diversity in Umpiring

25. WAFC Umpiring should develop talent identification and development processes for diverse Umpires in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

26. WAFC Umpiring should assess the feasibility of a parallel umpiring talent pathway for female Umpires as recommended in the AFL and University of Sydney report.

6. CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates that the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is central to the mission and vision of WAFC Umpiring. The evaluation includes findings in 10 domains including: Stakeholder Perceptions, Strategy and Planning, Umpire Development, Umpire Management Systems, West Australian Football League, Junior Community Umpiring Clubs, Perth Football League, Regional Community Umpiring Clubs, Boundary and Goal Umpiring, and Diversity in Umpiring. This section provides an overview of the findings and highlights potential opportunities for enhancement and improvement that are made on the basis of these findings.

Findings & Recommendations

Stakeholder Perceptions

Measurement of stakeholder perceptions indicated that there is room for improvement in how the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is perceived across a range of areas. The most significant of these is a lack of awareness about the pathway and its processes, particularly in some umpiring sectors. WAFC Umpiring needs to communicate more effectively about the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway to promote better awareness and understanding. The effectiveness of this should be measured by regular stakeholder perception surveys, which will guide how WAFC Umpiring approaches a range of areas.

Strategy and Planning

The *WAFC Umpiring Charter* is the guiding document for the strategy of umpiring in Western Australia. It provides context to the priorities and objectives of WAFC Umpiring and how these impact the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. The Charter, however, is not well embedded in some umpiring sectors and this impedes Umpiring WA achieving its vision of having more engaged Umpires than football requires. The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway also requires a strategic plan and supporting documentation that outline the operations of the pathway. The development of a *Talent Pathway Plan* and *Talent Pathway Manual* would help clarify the direction of the pathway and improve understanding of its strategy and processes for Umpires at all levels.

Umpire Development

The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway should be: people first, Umpire-centric, flexible, innovative and connected. These principles provide context to the recommendations made in this report and can guide changes to the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway in the future. This section also outlined the importance of Umpire coaching as the most critical factor in the development and progression of Umpires. One of the challenges of Umpire coaching is the subjectivity of the role, particularly in relation to the competencies of Umpires. The development of an Umpire competency matrix would provide a framework where the relevant competencies of each level of the pathway are clearly outlined. It would also demonstrate how these competencies are connected through the levels of the pathway. The need to demystify the WAFC

Umpiring Talent Pathway is a strong theme from this review; an Umpire competency matrix would help achieve this.

Umpire Management Systems

The WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway requires fit for purpose systems to help manage the information that flows through it. The need for a centralised system that can assist in the management of Umpires and the umpiring program is clear. The procurement and implementation of an Athlete Management System would address this. An AMS would be a significant investment in improving the systems and processes that underpin the effectiveness of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway and supports the implementation of key recommendations in this report.

West Australian Football League

The WAFL is the central component and main driver of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. The WAFL Development Squads are the linchpin of this system as they are the conduits for Umpires to transition from Community Football to the elite pathway. It is crucial that the Development Squads have a clear purpose and the Umpire development framework, including what competitions Umpires are appointed to, appropriately facilitates their long-term development. Effective talent identification is also essential and this relies on empowered Junior Community Umpiring Clubs as key partners. The long-term health of the WAFL umpiring list is also a key focus area with several factors complicating list management and contributing to a perception that Umpires are not managed with appropriate levels of openness, honesty and accountability. The development of a WAFL list management plan, underpinned by a data-driven approach, will ensure the ongoing viability of the WAFL list and help address the servicing needs of the competition.

Junior Community Umpiring Clubs

Junior Community Umpiring Clubs have an important role in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway, as they are responsible for engaging Umpires in the game and retaining their interest in the long-term. Umpires with a strong connection to their role will more likely possess the level of commitment required to progress in the pathway. With this purpose established, WAFC Umpiring needs to develop principles that guide how Junior Community Umpiring Clubs foster this love for umpiring. The Clubs operate in a challenging environment where they are striving to increase Umpire numbers to cater for the growth in football. This tests their ability to dedicate energy to the development of talented Umpires. Junior Community Umpiring Clubs do have a part to play in talent development but this must not detract from their capacity to achieve their broader purpose. They are, however, essential in promoting opportunities for their Umpires and facilitating talent identification in partnership with WAFC Umpiring. They can also support the training of psychosocial skills, which is a critical area in talent development and should commence as early in the pathway as possible.

Perth Football League

The Perth Football League is Western Australia's largest Community Football competition and therefore engages a broad range of Umpires. The relationship

between WAFC Umpiring and the Perth Football League has historically been challenging although WAFC Umpiring has increased its engagement in recent years. Nevertheless, there is a perception that the Perth Football League is undervalued as a development competition and that the contributions of those involved is not recognised as readily as other sectors. The Perth Football League is a valuable development competition and has a role to play in the development and identification of talented Umpires. It should be realistic for those Umpires to progress to the highest level of competition possible. The Perth Football League is also a valuable competition for WAFL Development Squad Umpires where they can gain different experiences and challenges relevant to their stage of development. To address the challenges above, it is essential that there are improved relationships between Umpire management and Umpires in the WAFL and Perth Football League. A focus on greater social interaction, facilitated by the respective Umpire Associations, would contribute to stronger relationships. This also benefits the transition of Umpires between leagues, ultimately strengthening each competition.

Regional Community Umpiring Clubs

Regional Community Umpiring Clubs are, at best, on the very periphery of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. The Clubs vary greatly in size, structure and capacity and have different challenges that must be addressed. Clubs in closer proximity to Perth can more readily facilitate opportunities for their Umpires. For example, the Peel Football and Netball League supports the development of regional Umpires in the WAFL Development Squads in a similar manner to the Perth Football League. However, there is no consistent approach to the development of talented regional Umpires, except for identification opportunities through WACFL carnivals. WAFC Umpiring should ensure that these carnivals are utilised effectively, while also assessing how Regional Community Umpiring Clubs could be better supported in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway.

Boundary and Goal Umpiring

Boundary and Goal Umpiring have historically been prioritised less than Field umpiring in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. This has been addressed to a degree but there are still significant differences in how the disciplines are supported. The disciplines should be prioritised equally and resourced according to their needs. The structures and processes should meet the needs of those disciplines while maintaining alignment with the strategy of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. The introduction of formalised Boundary and Goal umpiring programs for Junior Community Umpiring Clubs is one way in which the pathway can be strengthened. This would present some challenges, particularly in resourcing, but ultimately contributes to achieving Umpiring WA's vision of having more engaged Umpires than football requires.

Diversity in Umpiring

Umpires from a diverse background, including female Umpires, have different needs and challenges and their development should be supported in a way that is Umpire-centric and flexible. With this in mind, WAFC Umpiring should develop TID processes for diverse Umpires in the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway. Furthermore, an AFL and

University of Sydney report recommends a parallel umpiring talent pathway for girls and women. WAFC Umpiring should assess the feasibility of this recommendation in order to support the development of female Umpires in the game.

Overall Evaluation Conclusion

This evaluation found that the implementation of the WAFC Umpiring Talent Pathway is characterised by its complexity and that there are a range of factors influencing its outcomes. The report identified opportunities for improving the structure, design and implementation of the pathway. These recommendations across 10 key domains will enhance the umpiring experience at all levels. That said, the greatest challenge is ensuring the sustainability of the system so that the quality people involved are supported to continue their extraordinary contributions to umpiring and the game in Western Australia.

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Appendix A. Ski & Snowboard Australia's Athlete Pathway Framework

12 June

Ski & Snowboard Australia Athlete Pathway Framework				High Performance Partners							
				   							
SSA LTAD STAGE	FUNDAMENTALS			LEARN TO TRAIN	TRAIN TO TRAIN		TRAIN TO COMPETE		TRAIN TO WIN		
AIS FTEM STAGE	NON ELITE (Foundation Movement)				PRE ELITE (Potential to be Elite)				ELITE (Senior International)		
AIS FTEM PHASE	Learning and Acquisition of Basic Movement Foundations	Extension and Refinement of Basic Movement Foundations	Sport Specific Commitment and/or Competition	Talent Verification	Demonstration of Potential	Practicing and Achieving	Breakthrough and Reward	Senior National Representation	Podium Success	Sustained Success at E2	
	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	E ₁	E ₂	M ₁	
											
SPORT AUSTRALIA ATHLETE CATEGORY					EMERGING Level 5	DEVELOPING Level 4	PODIUM POTENTIAL Level 3	PODIUM READY Level 2	PODIUM Level 1		
SPORT AUSTRALIA ATHLETE CATEGORY DEFINITION					Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who is considered capable of progressing to at least Level 4—Developing in the next two years.	Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who is considered capable of progressing to at least Level 3—Podium Potential in the next two years.	Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who is considered capable of progressing to at least Level 2—Podium Ready in the next two years.	Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who placed fourth to eighth at the most recent BME and considered capable of progressing to Level 1—Podium in the next two years.	Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who has a medal performance in the past 24 months at a BME and considered capable of a medal at the next Olympic or Paralympic Winter Games.		
TIER 1 SPORTS	AERIAL SKIING	Elite Gymnastics			Elite Gymnastics	VIS Aerials Program		OWIA Aerials Program	OWIA Aerials Program		
	MOGUL SKIING	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs		NSWIS Mogul Skiing Program	OWIA Mogul Skiing Program	OWIA Mogul Skiing Program		
	PARK & PIPE	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs		NSWIS Park & Pipe Program		OWIA Pro Athlete Contract		
	SNOWBOARD CROSS	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs		NSWIS Snowboard Cross Program	OWIA Snowboard Cross Program	OWIA Snowboard Cross Program		
	PARA-ALPINE	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools/ DWA/ Talent Transfer	SSA Pathway Programs/ DWA/ Talent Transfer	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Para Alpine Emerging Program		SSA Para Alpine Program	SSA Para Alpine Program		
	PARA-SNOWBOARD	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools/ DWA/ Talent Transfer	SSA Pathway Programs/ DWA/ Talent Transfer	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Para Snowboard Emerging Program		SSA Para Snowboard Program	SSA Para Snowboard Program		
SKI CROSS	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP / Pathway Programs / SSA NAST		OWIA Ski Cross Program	OWIA Ski Cross Program			
ALPINE SKIING	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP / Pathway Programs / SSA NAST			OWIA Individual Athlete Support			
CROSS COUNTRY	First Experience on Snow	Schools, Clubs, States	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Junior NXCST	SSA NXCST		SSA NXCST			
SNOWBOARD PARALLEL	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Pathway Programs			SSA Pathway Programs			

Ski & Snowboard Australia Athlete Pathway Framework				SKI & SNOWBOARD AUSTRALIA		High Performance Partners						
SSA LTAD STAGE	FUNDAMENTALS			LEARN TO TRAIN	TRAIN TO TRAIN		TRAIN TO COMPETE		TRAIN TO WIN			
AIS FTEM STAGE	NON ELITE (Foundation Movement)			PRE ELITE (Potential to be Elite)				ELITE (Senior International)				
AIS FTEM PHASE	Learning and Acquisition of Basic Movement Foundations	Extension and Refinement of Basic Movement Foundations	Sport Specific Commitment and/or Competition	Talent Verification	Demonstration of Potential	Practicing and Achieving	Breakthrough and Reward	Senior National Representation	Podium Success	Sustained Success at E2		
	F ₁	F ₂	F ₃	T ₁	T ₂	T ₃	T ₄	E ₁	E ₂	M ₁		
SPORT AUSTRALIA ATHLETE CATEGORY				EMERGING Level 5		DEVELOPING Level 4		PODIUM POTENTIAL Level 3		PODIUM READY Level 2		PODIUM Level 1
SPORT AUSTRALIA ATHLETE CATEGORY DEFINITION				Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who is considered capable of progressing to at least Level 4—Developing in the next two years.		Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who is considered capable of progressing to at least Level 3—Podium Potential in the next two years.		Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who is considered capable of progressing to at least Level 2—Podium Ready in the next two years.		Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who placed fourth to eighth at the most recent BME and considered capable of progressing to Level 1—Podium in the next two years.		Individual athlete in an Olympic or Paralympic discipline, who has a medal performance in the past 24 months at a BME and considered capable of a medal at the next Olympic or Paralympic Winter Games.
TIER 1 SPORTS	AERIAL SKIING	Elite Gymnastics			Elite Gymnastics	VIS Aerials Program		OWIA Aerials Program	OWIA Aerials Program			
	MOGUL SKIING	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs		NSWS Mogul Skiing Program	OWIA Mogul Skiing Program	OWIA Mogul Skiing Program			
	PARK & PIPE	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs		NSWS Park & Pipe Program		OWIA Pro Athlete Contract			
	SNOWBOARD CROSS	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs		NSWS Snowboard Cross Program	OWIA Snowboard Cross Program	OWIA Snowboard Cross Program			
	PARA-ALPINE	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools/ DWA/ Talent Transfer	SSA Pathway Programs/ DWA/ Talent Transfer	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Para Alpine Emerging Program		SSA Para Alpine Program	SSA Para Alpine Program			
	PARA-SNOWBOARD	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools/ DWA/ Talent Transfer	SSA Pathway Programs/ DWA/ Talent Transfer	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Para Snowboard Emerging Program		SSA Para Snowboard Program	SSA Para Snowboard Program			
	SKI CROSS	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP / Pathway Programs / SSA NAST		OWIA Ski Cross Program	OWIA Ski Cross Program			
	ALPINE SKIING	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP SSA Pathway Programs	SSA ETP / Pathway Programs / SSA NAST			OWIA Individual Athlete Support			
	CROSS COUNTRY	First Experience on Snow	Schools, Clubs, States	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Junior NXCST		SSA NXCST		SSA NXCST		
	SNOWBOARD PARALLEL	First Experience on Snow	Snowsport Schools	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Pathway Programs	SSA Pathway Programs				SSA Pathway Programs		

SSA - Generic Selection Factors

PERFORMANCE	Competition performances during the preceding 12 month period
	Achievement of annual Individual Performance Plan (IPP) performance targets
	On track to meet long term IPP performance targets
	Achievement of benchmark scores in athlete physical testing evaluation
POTENTIAL TO PROGRESS	Athlete performance profile
	Capable of progressing into the next level of AWE Athlete Categorisation within the nominated time frame
COMPLIANCE	Independent expert evaluation & coach recommendation
	Adherence to SSA Athlete Agreement
POSITIVE INTANGIBLES	Adherence to IPP
	Self motivation & passion for the process of a high performance program
	Ability to perform at a level consistent with present skill level regularly in competition
	Coachability & receptiveness to feedback
PERSONAL EXCELLENCE	Emotional intelligence & self awareness
	Ability to access and take advantage of athlete services
	Injury prevention & management
	Well being
	Self responsibility, organisation & planning

SSA - Para Snowsport Generic Selection Factors

PERFORMANCE	Competition performances during the preceding 12 month period
	Achievement of annual Individual Performance Plan (IPP) performance targets
	On track to meet long term IPP performance targets
	Achievement of benchmark scores in athlete physical testing evaluation
POTENTIAL TO PROGRESS	Experience at IPCAS competition
	Athlete performance profile
	Capable of progressing into the next level of AWE Athlete Categorisation within the nominated time frame
COMPLIANCE	Independent expert evaluation & coach recommendation
	Depth of field in classification
	Age of athlete and length of time with impairment
POSITIVE INTANGIBLES	Adherence to SSA Athlete Agreement
	Adherence to IPP
	Self motivation & passion for the process of a high performance program
	Ability to perform at a level consistent with present skill level regularly in competition
PERSONAL EXCELLENCE	Coachability & receptiveness to feedback
	Emotional intelligence & self awareness
	Ability to access and take advantage of athlete services
	Injury prevention & management
	Well being
	Self responsibility, organisation & planning

Glossary of Terms

AIS	Australian Institute of Sport
AOC	Australian Olympic Committee
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
BME	World Championships, Olympic Winter Games/ Paralympic Winter Games, or Nominated Equivalent
DTE	Daily Training Environment
DWA	Disabled Wintersport Australia
EC	Europa Cup
FIS	International Ski Federation
FTEM	Foundation Talent Elite Mastery - AIS Pathways Model
LTAD	Long Term Athlete Development
IPC	International Paralympic Committee
NAC	Nor-Am Cup
NAST	SSA National Alpine Ski Team
NC	Australian National Championships
NSO	National Sporting Organisation

NIN	National Institute Network (NSWIS, VIS, QAS, WAIS, ACTAS)
NSWIS	New South Wales Institute Of Sport
NXCST	SSA National Cross Country Ski Team
OWG	Olympic Winter Games
OWIA	Olympic Winter Institute of Australia
PWG	Paralympic Winter Games
PA	Paralympics Australia
SA	Sport Australia
SSA	Ski & Snowboard Australia
VIS	Victorian Institute of Sport
WC	FIS World Cup competition OR equivalent
WCH	World Championships
WJC	World Junior Championships
WPAS	World Para Alpine Skiing
WPSB	World Para Snowboard

Appendix B. Psychosocial Skills Relevant to Talent Development

Reference: Olszewski-Kubilius, P., Subotnik, R. F., Davis, L. C., & Worrell, F. C. (2019). Benchmarking Psychosocial Skills Important for Talent Development.

Creative risk taking

Accepting ambiguity
Open to experience
Working within constraints
Elegant problem finding and formulation
Developing a personal style/niche
Transformational ideas

Social Skills

Eliciting and showing respect
Empathy and compassion
Collegiality
Reliability
Conscientiousness
Ability to work in teams or be a leader as appropriate
Professionalism
Charisma

Meta-Cognitive Self-Regulation

Time management, organisational skills
Knowing strengths and weaknesses
Work-life balance
Making talent area a priority
Capitalising on strengths and compensating for weakness

Motivational Self-Regulation

Goal setting
Commitment, perseverance, persistence
Self-efficacy, self-confidence
Rage to master

Emotional Self-Regulation

Regulation of arousal/relaxation
Coping for challenge
Coping for failure/resiliency
Anxiety management

Cognitive Self-Regulation

Focussing attention/distraction and concentration control
Use of appropriate learning/practice strategies
Teachability

Insider Knowledge

Presentation Skills
Tasteful self-promotion
Networking
Reputation management
Knowing the “game” and how to play it

Appendix C. Stakeholder Surveys

Target Group	Junior Community Umpiring Clubs
Question	Answer
<p>1. Based on your experience and environment in which you operate, to what extent do you agree/not agree with the following statements:</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well designed, developed and delivered.</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpiring stakeholders (e.g. umpire management, umpire coaches, umpire associations, etc).</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpires.</p> <p>WAFC Umpiring is effectively supporting the development of umpires at all levels of the umpiring pathway.</p>	<p>1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree <for each statement below></p>
<p>2. A new umpire in your group tells you that they want to become an AFL umpire in the future. Based on your knowledge of the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway, how would you explain the process by which they could become an AFL umpire?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>3. How would you describe your role/ your club's role in supporting the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway and the development of umpires?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>4. What are the strengths of the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>5. What are the weaknesses of the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>6. What could WAFC Umpiring do to improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>

7. What could your club do to improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?	Paragraph answer
8. What are the three main priorities that we should focus on in the next 12 months that would improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?	Short answer
9. Please provide any additional comments that have not been covered above.	Paragraph answer
10. If you are happy to be contacted by WAFC Umpiring to discuss your comments and ideas further please provide your details. If you wish to remain anonymous please do not fill in this section.	Name: Mobile: Email address:

Target Group	Senior Community Umpiring staff (Perth Football League)
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Question	Answer
<p>1. Based on your experience and environment in which you operate, to what extent do you agree/not agree with the following statements:</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well designed, developed and delivered.</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpiring stakeholders (e.g. umpire management, umpire coaches, umpire associations, etc).</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpires.</p> <p>WAFC Umpiring is effectively supporting the development of umpires at all levels of the umpiring pathway.</p>	1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree <for each statement below>
2. A new umpire in your group tells you that they want to become an AFL umpire in the future. Based on your knowledge of the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway, how would you explain the process by which they could become an AFL umpire?	Paragraph answer
3. How would you describe your role/ your	Paragraph answer

organisation's role in supporting the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway and the development of umpires?	
4. What are the strengths of the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?	Paragraph answer
5. What are the weaknesses of the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?	Paragraph answer
6. What could WAFC Umpiring do to improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?	Paragraph answer
7. What could your organisation do to improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?	Paragraph answer
8. What are the three main priorities that we should focus on in the next 12 months that would improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?	Short answer
9. Please provide any additional comments that have not been covered above.	Paragraph answer
10. If you are happy to be contacted by WAFC Umpiring to discuss your comments and ideas further please provide your details. If you wish to remain anonymous please do not fill in this section.	Name: Mobile: Email address:

Target Group	WAFL Umpires
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Question	Answer
What team are you a member of?	High Performance Team Talent Academy Development Squad
What is your discipline?	Field Boundary Goal
1. Based on your experience and environment in which you operate, to what extent do you agree/not agree with the following statements: The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway	1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree <for each statement below>

<p>structure and processes are well designed, developed and delivered.</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpiring stakeholders (e.g. umpire management, umpire coaches, umpire associations, etc).</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpires.</p> <p>WAFC Umpiring is effectively supporting the development of umpires at all levels of the umpiring pathway.</p>	
<p>2. A new umpire to the WAFL tells you that they want to become an AFL umpire in the future. Based on your knowledge of the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway, how would you explain the process by which they could become an AFL umpire?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>3. What are the most critical factors that influence the development and progression of an umpire through the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway (select no more than 3)?</p>	<p>Multiple choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation level Age Bouncing/throw in ability Family/friend support Game environments Injury/illness Pay Rates Personal attributes (e.g. communication skills) Physical fitness Umpire Coaching Other: <fill in>
<p>4. What could be done to promote a better understanding of how an umpire progresses to each level in the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>5. How should an umpire be managed when it is determined that they won't reach the next level in the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>6. What could WAFC Umpiring do to improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>

7. What are the three main priorities that we should focus on in the next 12 months that would improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?	Short answer
8. Please provide any additional comments that have not been covered above.	Paragraph answer
9. If you are happy to be contacted by WAFC Umpiring to discuss your comments and ideas further please provide your details. If you wish to remain anonymous please do not fill in this section.	Name: Mobile: Email address:

Target Group	Senior Community Umpires (Perth Football League)
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Question	Answer
What is your discipline?	Field Boundary Goal
<p>1. Based on your experience and environment in which you operate, to what extent do you agree/not agree with the following statements:</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well designed, developed and delivered.</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpiring stakeholders (e.g. umpire management, umpire coaches, umpire associations, etc).</p> <p>The WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes are well understood by umpires.</p> <p>WAFC Umpiring is effectively supporting the development of umpires at all levels of the umpiring pathway.</p>	1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree <for each statement below>
2. A new umpire to the PFL tells you that they want to become an AFL umpire in the future. Based on your knowledge of the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway, how would you explain the process by which they could become an AFL umpire?	Paragraph answer

<p>3. What are the most critical factors that influence the development and progression of an umpire through the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway (select no more than 3)?</p>	<p>Multiple choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation level Age Bouncing/throw in ability Family/friend support Game environments Injury/illness Pay Rates Personal attributes (e.g. communication skills) Physical fitness Umpire Coaching Other: <fill in>
<p>4. What could be done to better facilitate the progression of an umpire from Senior Community to the WAFL?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>5. What could be done to better support an umpire moving to the PFL after exiting the WAFL?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>6. What could WAFC Umpiring do to improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>7. What are the three main priorities that we should focus on in the next 12 months that would improve the WAFC Umpiring talent pathway structure and processes?</p>	<p>Short answer</p>
<p>8. Please provide any additional comments that have not been covered above.</p>	<p>Paragraph answer</p>
<p>9. If you are happy to be contacted by WAFC Umpiring to discuss your comments and ideas further please provide your details. If you wish to remain anonymous please do not fill in this section.</p>	<p>Name: Mobile: Email address:</p>

Appendix D. Consultation List

The following stakeholders were consulted for the *Talent Pathway Review*.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Sector</u>
Damian Anderson	Community Umpiring Development Manager	Australian Football League
Terry Battle	Senior Community Field Umpiring Head Coach	Perth Football League
Duncan Bradbury	Strength & Conditioning Head Coach	West Australian Football League
David Crute	State Umpiring Manager	WAFC Umpiring
Adam Davis	Umpires List and Talent Manager	Australian Football League
Cam Douglas	Community Umpiring Manager & State Field Umpiring Head Coach	WAFC Umpiring
Jack Fahey-Gilmour	Head Coach	Swan Districts Junior Community Umpiring Club
Jake Gaspar	Head Coach	Claremont Junior Community Umpiring Club
Greg Gilbee	Umpire Education and Appointments Coordinator & State Boundary Umpiring Head Coach	WAFC Umpiring
Ryan Harder	State Goal Umpiring Head Coach	West Australian Football League
Shane Harris	State Umpiring Manager	South Australian National Football League
Dillon Jane	Senior Community Goal Umpiring Head Coach	Perth Football League
Paul Mannix	WAFL Field Talent Academy Head Coach	West Australian Football League
Dean Margetts	WAFL & Talent Pathway Manager	WAFC Umpiring
Alex Pannell	Senior Community Field Umpiring Match Day Coach	Perth Football League
Graham Regan	Senior Community Field Umpiring Match Day Coach	Perth Football League