



*TOWNSVILLE
UMPIRES
ASSOCIATION*



A Snapshot of 50 Years !

The Early Years!

The inaugural meeting of the Townsville Umpires Association was held 30 April 1967 following a preliminary meeting that had been held 2 weeks prior in order to draft a constitution. There are records that show they were umpiring football in Townsville since 1955 but the Association was not formed until 1967.

FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

Phil Crookes
N S Hewitt
B H Hoger
Keal P McCulloch
S J (Jim) McMillan
John Overell

The man believed to have started it all off was Jim McMillan who wore many hats over the years – some of which were Patron of the League, President of the TAFL, League delegate to QAFL, Delegate to NQARFL and of course the first president of the Association. Described as

having a wealth of knowledge, humble, and very helpful and considerate. He loved a beer and bought many for the umpires!

Starting off with 6 active members in that first year, they ended the year with 18 financial members – made up of 5 field, 9 boundary and 4 goal umpires.

The first AGM was held 11 February 1968, with the first Annual Report being issued after their first year as an Association. Application was also made for affiliation to the Queensland AFL Umpires Association in 1968.

The first subscription fee was \$2.00 with a levy on matches so they could raise funds. They received \$22 in donations which nearly covered their expenses for the year! And by season end had \$71.53 to carry over to the next season! They even had a small scandal of someone misappropriating funds who then had to pay it back!

The association became incorporated in 2007.

Training

Training did not occur like it does now - twice a week. They had a few training sessions per season and the first coach was John Overell and there was a Physical Instructor as well. These days a Regional Umpires Manager (RUM) is appointed by the league and they look after the training and appointments.

Our training venues have been varied and haphazard over the years. Never really having our own grounds to train at and just fitting in here and there where we could or were allowed, even training at

the showgrounds for a little while in the 90s!

In the last few years, we finally have a great arrangement with Brothers Cricket Club in Kirwan where we now have a fixed training venue, using their grounds and clubroom in their off season.

We also have one “compulsory” night a month. Meant for those who play footy as well as umpire, and usually train with their clubs, so they can come along to

umpire training at least one night a month. It is a fairly social evening where we provide a light meal and families and friends are welcome to join in.



Uniforms

The very first uniforms consisted of:

Field Umpires - the approved white shorts and shirt, black socks and white boots!

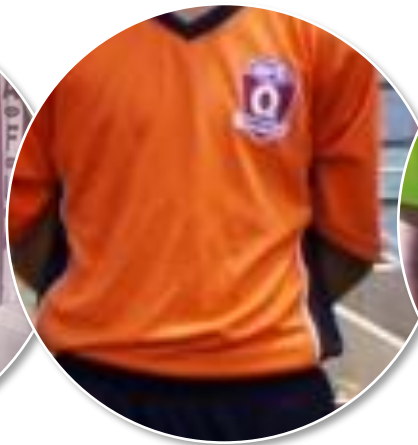
Goal Umpires - the legendary white coats (well laundered of course), white hats, black trousers, white shirt with dark tie, and black shoes and socks.

You could also buy a blazer. They must not have been cheap as you could pay them off via the association! Today we are less formal and we have our grey and green polo shirts to wear to the games!

The uniform did change several times over the years going from black and white to including various colours at different times. In May of 2015 we went to lime green and grey, bringing us into line with AFL umpires.

UNIFORM STYLES

- 1980s - white shirts, yellow shorts, black socks
- Early 1990s - black shorts, white shirt and yellow socks
- 1992 to early 2000s - white shirt and shorts, maroon socks
- 2002 - the white IGA shirt
- 2003-04 - grey shirt
- 2005 - yellow shirt
- 2006 to 2015 - orange shirts, black shorts, orange/ black socks
- 2015 to present - lime green shirt, grey shorts, green socks



Membership

The very first membership numbered 18 including the inaugural 6 committee members. These days we generally get between 40 and 50 active members a year including a few social members.

There is always the struggle of recruiting and retaining new members, especially with the vagaries of the defence force! The last few years has seen a huge increase in juniors and females joining our ranks. We also have siblings, husbands and wives, even entire families umpiring, all of which is great to see.

Current stats for 2017 show that we have 43 financial members including 3 social members.

STATS			
1967		2017	
Committee	6	Committee	6
Financial Members	18	Financial Members	43
Social Members	0	Social Members	3
Females	0	Females	8
Siblings	0	Siblings	10
Families	0	Families	11
Juniors	0	Juniors	18

Logos



The Townsville AFUA logo (left) was probably the first logo as such that the association had. This one adorned the blazer.



Somewhere along the line we seemed to lose our own logo because in more recent years the AFL logo appeared to be adopted with the wording Umpires Association included. The maroon shield is now used state wide by Umpire Associations for game day shirts (with the appropriate location indicated!) so this has been adopted as our latest association logo also.



Social Scene

The social activities for the first year were a BBQ at one of the evening games, and an end of season picnic for wives and families of umpires. While we still have the odd BBQ, we now do all sorts of activities from mini golf, trivia nights, ten pin bowling and lawn bowls, usually culminating in the awards night after season end.



Women in Umpiring

In the early 80s, from what we can gather, Florence Harrison, Cathy Davis and Hilary Broad were the first women to umpire officially sanctioned games here in Townsville - due to a shortage of men umpires! They did the goals.

Cathy's daughter Joanne (Jo or JD) was the first female to umpire senior footy in the field in Townsville, and the first female to get a golden whistle in 1994 (Jo managed to get 2 of them during her umpiring career!)

The first female RUM in Queensland and possibly even in Australia was Kimberley Harding who also hailed from Townsville, and mentored by Doug Pearce, another great stalwart of AFL footy and umpiring in Townsville.

We have seen an increase in women umpiring within our group and in 2015 we had the first all womens umpire team umpiring the local womens grand final. We understand this is a first for Queensland – possibly even in Australia!



Nicole Abercrombie (G); Georgia Rowley (B); Ada Thomas(F); Jen North (F); Eden Newcombe (B); Katrina Orr (G)

Sponsorship

Like any club or association, we rely on sponsorship to help fill the coffers. It is always a bit of a struggle to get sponsors, as umpiring is not as glamorous or high profile as sports teams. But in the last few years we have been privileged enough to have some good sponsors on board, several of whom have stuck with us

for a number of years. We obviously appreciate each and every one that contributes in a sponsoring capacity no matter how big or small. Our sponsors are listed on our website so please visit and check them out!

Supporting Charities

The Association does get involved in supporting charities. Every 2 years we have a Camp Quality day. The umpires can donate all, or part of, that days umpire fees and the Camp Quality Volunteers come along as well and run raffles and shake tins. For a small organisation, we do very well in fund raising for this charity.



We also support any of the footy clubs' days by wearing appropriate colours for charities they may be supporting such as wearing pink and having pink flags for breast cancer days.



Recognition

We have a number of different forms of reward and recognition for the umpires; to acknowledge good team work, a good work ethic and for doing well generally in the spirit of becoming better all-round umpires.

Weekly Awards: These are for various categories such as weekly junior, weekly team effort, good skills at training, to name a few. These are rewarded with vouchers from local businesses.

2017 Alan Harding receives an achievement certificate at training



Certificates of achievement are also handed out to those

attaining milestones in their umpiring.

Weekly awards happened in earlier years as well, also with support from local businesses. There was a weekly Far Kup award and the recipient announced in the weekly footy record for all to see! Nowadays this is decided at the end of the year and recognised by a perpetual trophy donated by Darren Abercrombie (something to do with how many times he won it!).

Number of Games Milestones: These are recognised with a certificate at every 50 games. The highest number of games certificate so far went to Ed Brown reaching 400 in 2016. Would have been interesting to see what some of the earlier umpires would have got to had we had records.

Accreditation: All umpires are now required to be accredited to at least level one or working towards it, to be able to umpire. They can go on to level 2 if so desired.

They receive a AFLQ certificate in recognition of their achieving accreditation.

Presentation/Awards Night: All this culminates at the end of season awards night where umpires are recognised for their achievements over the season as a whole.

Awards functions have changed over the years as well. From being held at the local swimming pool in the

late 80s as an informal afternoon gathering, to BBQs in people's back yards to having more formal functions (but not black tie!) that we have now, held at the RSL or a similar function venue.



2016 Level 1 Accreditation recipients



1988 Presentation Day at Willows Waterworld!! How things have changed! Doug Pearce and Clayton Pressley! Look how young Clayton is!

2016 A little dressier and not poolside! Ryan Powell, Kiah Gray, Campbell Hill



Representative Umpiring

Even though we are a small regional association, we have had umpires that are good enough to represent us at higher levels of the game and who have been selected to go away and umpire at state or national competitions.

In the last few years, we have had two umpires who have met the criteria to be chosen to go through the AFLQ Umpires Academy, showing the calibre of umpire, we are developing here in Townsville.

At various times, we have had umpire exchanges, where our some of our regional juniors were chosen to go umpire local footy in the big smoke, umpiring in awful weather and freezing temperatures in Melbourne, and some of the big city kids

came to regional Queensland to get a taste of regional footy in the dry!



Todd Reinhardt on Exchange in Melbourne umpiring in the EDFL

One of our former umpires Josh Williams now plays AFL at the elite level for North Melbourne. Not quite umpiring but we are still proud of him.

Simon Pressley who umpired in the early 90s was spotted by the talent scouts as having the potential to go a long way in umpiring and moved to

Brisbane to further his career. He made the umpiring rookie list and went on to umpire in 170 AFLQ games, Ansett Cup Games and also won the Golden Whistle in 1990. His brother



1994 U/16 Carnival, at Glenelg Oval, Adelaide. Clayton Pressley front left ranked 5th for the week.

Clayton also represented Townsville in South Australia.



Maddison Moore and Joe Newsham representing us in Dalby 2013 State School Champs – Joe now umpires QAFL games and higher

In recent years Townsville has hosted NAB cup fixtures which has also allowed our umpires to officiate at curtain raisers again enabling them to gain that extra experience at higher levels.

Defence Force

Being a garrison city, we are prone to the vagaries of the defence force. A lot of our umpires are defence force members or children of defence force members. When they get posted in we are glad to have them, and when they get posted out again a few years later we are sad to see them go.

During their postings here, they are often away



with their work, so in any one weekend we can have very few umpires left to officiate games. It is rare we can field a full complement from juniors to seniors without umpires being appointed to multiple games! We have lost some very good umpires due to outward postings, but are glad to have had the benefit of their comraderie and skills even if only for a short while.

Recent Times

Recent times have seen the umpires move with the times! We now have Facebook and in 2016 we finally got our own website!

We have strived to improve our professionalism, our development program for up and coming umpires, and to have as many of our umpires as possible, accredited, as is now required by the AFL.

We are now an Accredited Good Sports Association – Accredited to Level 3

We still often struggle to supply a full complement of umpires some weekends, with umpires doing multiple games in a weekend but we always manage to get through.

We have become a more family orientated association. So not only are new umpires

welcomed to the ranks but so are their families. We currently have whole families who umpire. Once a month at our compulsory night, where we have a light meal and it's a bit of a social evening, families are also welcomed to come along, and the great atmosphere that we are trying to foster abounds.

The association continues to move forward and progress as it needs to, standing it in good stead for the next 50 years.

Over the 50 years the association has been active, there have been over 350 umpires come and go. Imagine if we could have got them all together, what a party it would have been and what stories would have been told, and how many Far Kups would come out of the woodwork!



2017 Grand Final Day - cutting of the 50th Birthday Cake

Notable Trivia

- *Doug Pearce a stalwart and local legend of AFL footy and umpiring in Townsville umpired well over 1000 games including at VFL level in Victoria*
- **Simon Pressley a young Townsville umpire made it to the AFLQ Umpires Rookie list in the 90s eventually umpiring 170 AFLQ games and several Ansett Cup games.**
- Kimberly Harding was the first female RUM in Townsville and in Queensland
- Doug Pearce umpired 8, possibly 10 consecutive Senior Grand finals
- In the 80s, footy in Townsville was played in the summer months
- 1990 Jim Thompson had to call off a game due to too much hostility!
- **Ed Brown has umpired with AFLTUA since the late 90s, is still umpiring and has done over 500 senior games**
- *Jim McMillan the founder of the Umpires Asociation was also heavily involved in getting AFL up and running in Townville.*
- The umpire who umpired the most years from current records is Doug Pearce on 34 years, followed by Ed Brown on 18 years and Phil Pressley on 14 years *(our records are incomplete at this stage)*
- 1990 Phil Pressley and his two sons, Clayton and Simon all umpired in the one grand final. The game had two policemen in attendance to prevent the trouble of the previous year!
- **In 2015 we fielded the first all womens umpire team for a womens grand final in Queensland and possibly Australia**
- Josh Williams who umpired with us back in 2009 now plays AFL Footy for North Melbourne
- **AFLTUA had possibly the only deaf umpire in Australia as one of its number during the 1990s**
- During the 1980s and 90s the League president would be involved in the appointment of umpires for the grand final
- AFL Townsville would probably not still exist if it wasn't for two blokes Doug Pearce and Jim McMillan. At different times over the years, they both wore many hats in both umpiring and the local league.



Life Members

<i>Jim McMillan</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>Rod Foley</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
<i>Doug Pearce (dec)</i>	<i>1990 (TBC)</i>
<i>Tony Bevan</i>	<i>1999</i>
<i>Tony Houlahan</i>	<i>2003</i>
<i>Jim Thompson</i>	<i>2011</i>
<i>Edwin Brown</i>	<i>2013</i>
<i>Ian Spurrell</i>	<i>2014</i>
<i>Peter "Jamesie" James</i>	<i>2016</i>



Our latest life member Peter "Jamesie" James receiving his life membership badge from Ed Brown, also a life member

Those blowing the big whistle in the sky - Absent Friends

Doug Pearce

Bill Harrison

Keeping in touch:

Check out our website and Facebook pages!

Website: www.aftua.com.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aftua/?fref=ts>

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*Celebrating
50 years*
1967-2017

Compiled by Pieta James - Aug 2017