

The History and Philosophy of Australian Rules Volleyball: A Beginners' Guide

ARVB Beginners' Guide: History

Australian Rules Volleyball was founded in 1963 by Syd Lovibond and Tony Winefield with the assistance of Bob Paddick. In the first year games were played outdoors with unstable net supports and ropes to mark court boundaries. This proved unsatisfactory and from 1964 or year 1 After Volleyball (1 AVB) the game moved indoors (to the University gym on Mackinnon Parade). Originally games were scheduled from 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm on Thursdays, but now commence at 5.00 and conclude shortly after 6.30. In 2003 (40 AVB) the venue moved to Magill.

ARVB Beginners' Guide: The Significant Figures

The Senior Commissioner

The Senior Commissioner (Tony Winefield) is the ultimate authority on all matters concerning the game. The Senior Commissioner (SC) is occasionally assisted by other commissioners (i.e. Junior Commissioners Metzer, Nesar and Venus)

The All-Time Greats

There are four all-time greats, who are entitled to permanent playing rights. Their status recognises their outstanding skill (i.e. size, speed, aggression and violence). The all time greats are Greg O'Leary, Bill Gould, Bob Edgar and Jack Cook.

Ordinary Players (OP)

Ordinary player status may be conferred by the Commissioners on any apprentice player who has demonstrated a satisfactory level of competence and a high level of petulance, preferably by achieving a recognised "walk off". A walk-off will normally be deemed adequate only if timed during a game and preceded by a genuine temper tantrum. Staged walk-offs, while laudable, will not be recognised. (Walk-offs are traditionally rated on a 10-point scale.)

Apprentice Players (AP)

Apprentice players, as implied above, are those whose playing ability is inferior and/or who are incapable of sustained petulance.

Failed Players (FP)

The failed player category comprises all who have never played.

Lapsed Players (LP)

Lapsed players are all former players. They are the lowest ranked of all.

ARVB Beginners' Guide: The 'Rules'

There are no rules - only conventions. In general, except where the SC intervenes directly and makes an unequivocal *ex cathedra* pronouncement, disputes are resolved in the following manner. Where no player concedes the point to the opposition, the point is replayed. Where a player concedes a point to the opposition the point will be so conceded. (Ideally such disputes are conducted with ill-will and petulance).

The 'rules' concerning Netplay (defined as deliberately touching the net while the ball is in play) are attached as an appendix (The Easter Ruling, 22 AVB). Netplay is no longer permitted.

Footplay. Players are permitted to kick the ball. Ball-tampering will not be tolerated.

ARVB Beginners' Guide: The Ethos 1

ARVB differs from most sports in that the normal sporting etiquette concerning fair play, losing with grace, etc is not merely not observed, but is actively discouraged. Instead, petulance, violence, gamesmanship and personal abuse are the qualities most admired and encouraged.

Although points are sometimes won in the orthodox manner, more often they are won as a result of misleading calls, such as "mine", "out", "leave it", or "let it go". Points won in such a manner are particularly satisfying because they lead to an unfortunate opponent being abused and ridiculed by his or her team mates for gullibility and ineptness. In general, in addition to winning, the main purpose of the game is to infuriate and humiliate everyone else on court - team-mates and opponents alike, culminating ideally, in a walk-off (see below).

ARVB Beginners' Guide: The traditions

The Walk-Off

The supreme act of petulance is the walk-off. Walk-offs are much admired and can result in the immediate promotion of an apprentice player (AP) to the rank and status of full ordinary player (OP). Such a walk-off however, would need to be preceded by an uncontrolled temper tantrum and occur during the course of a game. Simulated walk-offs, while admirable in themselves, cannot be expected to attract the highest commendation.

Weaking

The most common form of abuse is the cry of "weak". Indeed, it has become conventional for ARVB players to "weak" one another whenever an opportunity arises. The right to "weak" is strictly hierarchical. The Commissioners have unrestricted weaking rights, but ordinary player are not entitled to weak Commissioners, although they are free to weak one another, apprentice players, failed players and lapsed players. Similarly apprentice players may only weak one another, failed players and lapsed players. Failed players may only weak one another and lapsed players. Finally, lapsed players may only weak one another.

ARVB Beginners' Guide: The Annual Trophy Night

Traditionally the trophy night is held at the home of the SC and trophies are awarded in the following categories: failed player, apprentice player, ordinary player, and open. The most highly esteemed trophy is "most hated" (open category) and players compete fiercely for this award. (Only the SC and JC Metzger have won this highly prestigious award).

Lesser awards include most irritating player, most petulant, least impressive walk-off, most gullible, and the inane laughter award.

ARVB Beginners' Guide: Historical highlights 1

In the early days of ARVB, players would boast, after the game, about red marks going all the way to the shoulder (caused by touching the net). One player however, All-time Great O'Leary (originator of the famed umbrella block) boasted red marks all the way down to the waist. Indeed, on one occasion the great O'Leary cleared the net altogether.

The very first walk-off was achieved by LP Lambros Houssiadas in 1963, accompanied by the unforgettable words "Syd is cheating -bloody Syd."

The worst shot of all time was performed by LP Leo Sosula who pulled the net down thereby allowing a ball that had already been played three times by the opposition and was going into the net to clear the net, thus converting a certain winner into a loser.

ARVB Beginners' Guide: Historical highlights 2

The most amazing shot ever seen on the ARVB court was executed by SC Winefield on Thursday, 14th October 2010 (47 AVB). At game point he was opposed to (then) OP Venus (the tallest player on court) at the net. Soaring like an eagle, the SC cleverly allowed Venus to touch the ball first. Then, with incomparable skill and agility, he coolly headed the ball back over the net, beyond the reach of the hapless Venus and his unfortunate team mates to score a resounding and unforgettable victory. Players and spectators alike were dumbfounded, bedazzled, and awestruck by the sheer brilliance of the shot, which will henceforth be known as 'The Winefield header'.

The Christmas Weaking

The ultimate weaking (to date) was the savage and brutal weaking of LP ("postcards") Conlon by the SC at point blank range in the North Adelaide IPG (formerly 7 day) supermarket on 25th December 2004 (41 AVB).

Conlon was rendered speechless and helpless by the savagery and ferocity of the weaking and was completely unable to respond other than to mumble inanely "very good Winefield".

This will henceforth be known as "The Christmas Weaking."