

Allison Waddington

From: Tim Macmichael <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, 25 June 2019 2:22 PM
To: AFL
Subject: Tim Macmichael Submission to AFL in Tasmania Inquiry

To Legislative Council AFL in Tasmania Committee,

Please find below my submission to your committee on where I feel AFL is at in Tasmania.

I read the article in Page Two of The Advocate today and was urged to send my Facebook post that I posted around this time last year.

I started working for AFL Tasmania in 2001 (been playing AFL since age 5) through to 2006 (then went to teaching) and then also worked for AFL Victoria in the AFL Barwon Region (Geelong) from 2013 - 2016. I have been involved with State Footy since 1998 and for the last two years (not 2019) I was a State U/15 SSA Assistant Coach.

All these thoughts are my own. Some of my thoughts will be flawed, they hopefully will stir up some great conversations on the development (I've always called it 'betterment') of the game and represent my views only. If you need any more further information from me, please do not hesitate to ask.

Regards Tim Macmichael
[REDACTED]

Grassroots to AFL Dream Progression - My stance on the state of affairs in football in Australia By Tim Macmichael

1. NFL

I strongly believe that the AFL will become similar to American football (gridiron) where it will be an elite competition, highly commercialised and a truly national competition.

There will be 20 teams - Present + team each in NT and TAS

Play each other Once + Finals in possibly a conference type style.

2. College

I think Tasmania (in particular) could link in with the University of Tasmania (UTAS Stadium already in existence in Launceston) and become a scholarship type program, just like American colleges.

They would spend four years representing their chosen university (U/20 - U/23) and would focus on study and sport. Really think about the connections Invermay, Sandy Bay and Burnie campuses could connect and reach into the community. Training campuses based out of those three regions as well, with State Training each week/fortnight at Launceston/Hobart.

They would play under the 'Red Lions' banner (Uni logo) or could go for 'Dragons' like St. George in the NRL as it is also on the Tasmanian flag.

The Red Lions would then become the State U/23 team and would play predominately at night. They would play against interstate teams aligned as U/23 teams, hopefully mainly University team aligned as well.

3. Tasmanian State Football

U/13, U/15, U/17 and U/19 age groups represent Next Generation Academies (Tasmania under North Melbourne banner) to play against other academies.

U/12, U/14, U/16 and U/18 age groups represent State Teams (Tasmania under 'The Map' banner) to play against other states/territories.

After that:

U/23 State Team is what elite/talented players strive for (to become drafted/play at the highest level) with possibly x 4-6 Open Age players.

Regional Competitions should revert back to SFL, NTFA and NWFL and underneath those country football leagues and associations.

4. Pre-Season

Elite level (AFL) - Can only start official pre-season in December (no programming and not allowed on Club premises)

Tier 2 (State) - Can only start official pre-season in January (as above)

Tier 3 (Local) - Can only start official pre-season in February (as above)

This is so athletes, players, club officials and volunteers can all have a break (physical and mental) with penalties imposed on Clubs and Players that breach policy.

This is also similar to the NFL where there is no scheduled pre pre-season and they impose sanctions as well. Players are free to do their own preparations without Club environment pressure (would still need to come back 'ready' however).

Time-off would allow players more downtime as a collective but would also accommodate for the Australian tradition of players playing other sports such as Cricket, Tennis, Swimming and summer Basketball (not at the elite however).

5. Injuries

Players to play in what they want/feel comfortable in. Long skins (legs and arms) to be worn (either in black or team colours) and would be on trend just like NFL. No long sleeve tops anymore and T-shirt (soccer style) wouldn't be allowed.

Think about how many soft tissue injuries there are these days. Players train in long skins all the time but are then required to take them off for matches? Doesn't make sense to me. Not sure what we can do about knee injuries however, which leads me to...

6. Concussion

Development in the next 10 years will really highlight the trauma and stress of concussion and the impacts of whiplash, impact to the brain and head knocks.

Science will show what effects it has on the brain and highlight long term effects and causes. Education will also be better. Not sure if technology will evolve as quickly with the development of a helmet that reduces the whiplash action.

7. Female Football

All for equality and inclusiveness but the AFLW competition needs to be seen to be supporting and sustaining development itself and always remain under the AFL banner. Needs to create its own interest (not free entry) and be entertaining at the end of the day.

Rounds of play and finals should be where they all play each other once (9 games plus finals) just like the AFL.

Size of ground to be $\frac{3}{4}$ size of current ground currently used. 15-a-side for all graded competitions including AFLW. 5 - 5 - 5 with all forwards and defenders starting inside 50m arc. X 2 Wings the same but X 3 midfielders (not four). Need to see more goals scored and somehow develop it into a more open and free scoring style of game. Low scores across the board and don't look like getting higher anytime soon currently.

8. Bye Round

Massive opportunity for state league and representative games week before AFL Finals (EJ Whitten game included as part of weekend). VFL Finals or University finals as already previously mentioned. Some more scheduling needs to happen around this time.

9. Coach

The role of the coach will be more managerial style and oversee the different departments. No 'old school' coaches of berating and negativity will cease to exist (will rely on relationship/trust style building) as the main head coach. Line coaching will take over more and even players will be leading their own lines. More fun will be put back into it the game this way. Players will be allowed to laugh and celebrate goals.

10. Tribunal

No matter what the AFL do, you will never eradicate the bump or the punch out of the game. Dangerous tackles will also occur but less of it happening with teaching and training the wrap around tackle (and not dumping...how this generation has always been coached to do). Jumper punch and body punches will still occur (human instinct).

How can we ever say 'don't punch' when 'spoiling' will always remain part of the game i.e a closed fist is part of the game. Bumping and collisions will also occur and player needs to be educated on how to protect themselves better. Penalties for those who demonstrate poor technique/reckless in their approach.

11. Grand Final

It is inevitable that a twilight/night grand final will come into effect (even though most Aussies love the day and build up) as the game does become more commercialized. Entertainment will be more like NFL halftime show. Pre-match games would be great too, like the current Underage sides playing beforehand.

12. Foxtel and Free-to-air TV

You get what you pay for. If you want to watch quality AFL in the future, you'll have to pay for it. Foxtel now is the home of cricket and football will one day too. They will fix the debacle of what is the score review and invest money into 'hawkeye' goal like technology and/or more cameras on the lines. The review system needs investment like the NFL 'Bunker' set-up.

13. Local Football

Local footy mergers with Clubs and Leagues will start to happen in the next decade (2020-2030) due to generational changes/attitudes. Not many of this generation will be 'club loyal' and suit up and play well into their 30's. Retiring at 25 will be more common than the 30-35 age bracket.

Top tier will always exist within all States but the talent pathway will really only be concentrated on and accessible to players between ages of 5 - 25.