



# AFL NORTHERN TERRITORY LTD.

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## CENTRE CIRCLE - UMPIRES COMMENT

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Edition 10

This week I would like to explain to the public about the “Ruck Contests” as we have a fair few new big men to this season NTFL competition. It has great to see the big men battle it out in the ruck to give first use of the ball to the midfielders, but they must do it legally and saying that though if a ruckman elects **not** to jump and his opponent jumps higher than him in one motion and doesn't turn their back, it is NOT a free kick. The below article is from Shaun Ryan a current 2 time AFL Grand Final Field Umpire talking about “Ruck Contests” on [www.afl.com.au](http://www.afl.com.au).

### Ruck Contests

*Over the duration of a match ruck contests are a frequent occurrence, and as players fight for position under the flight of the ball free kicks regularly occur as opposing ruckman strive for an advantage over their opposite number. AFL field umpire Shaun Ryan explains how to approach ruck contests and what you should be looking for...*

When we talk about ruck contests the primary thing that we need to have in the forefront of our mind is that the ruckman who wants to contests the ball shall be given every opportunity to do so. So really, from an umpire's point of view, if you bring it back to the bare basics you should be looking out for the ruckman who is trying to prohibit the other ruckman from contesting the ball.

Obviously, centre bounces, field bounces and boundary throw-ins are the three ruck situations that occur during a match and each of these situations throw up there own common occurring free kicks.

In terms of centre bounces, free kicks that often occur are blocks with the arms and with the leg, chopping of the arms, ruckman producing an unrealistic attempt to contest the ball, and one ruckman blocking the other's run by running under the flight of the ball.



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In field bounces similar free kicks can occur to those in centre bounces, however, in addition to these, other common free kicks include holding the man and teams using two ruckman.

Obviously, because the two ruckman generally stand next to each other when contesting field bounces, there is a chance one ruckman will grab his opponent's jumper or rap his arm around his waist which is not permitted. In regards to two ruckman, players are not permitted to use one ruckman to block their opponent and then have a team mate acting as the second ruckman to come over the top and contest the ruck.

In boundary throw-ins similar types of free kicks occur to those in field bounces, but another common free kick which generally occurs is one ruckman taking the ball out of the ruck. If a ruckman does this he must immediately dispose of the football by way of kick or handball. An attempt to kick or handball in this situation is not good enough as a ruckman who takes the ball out of the ruck is deemed to have had a prior opportunity.

A good indicator to use when judging a player's intention is his eyes. Looking at his eyes is going to help you to determine whether his objective is to impede the other ruckman or to contest the ball. However, remember that a player's eyes are a guide only, do not pay a free kick solely on where his eyes are.

Another good indicator to use for centre bounces is the line of the ball. If you bounce the ball straight and one ruckman runs under the flight of the ball then obviously there is going to be a chance that a free kick for a block might occur.

In field bounces it is important to work hard and back out quickly positioning yourself 10-15 meters away from the contest so that you have a good view. Similarly during boundary throw-ins, you need to work hard early in order to obtain a good side on position.

You should also do your homework before the game. By knowing who the ruckman are going to be you can be prepared for how they will likely go about contesting the ruck. For example, you can work out if there is a jumping ruckman versus one that doesn't jump and is happy to use his arms.

By doing your homework you will be prepared for the types of free kicks likely to occur.





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## AFLNT Umpires Recruitment

We are currently in desperate need of **more Boundary & Junior Field** umpires at the moment, so if you're interested in giving umpiring a go then please call the AFLNT on 8980 4811 during business hours or come down to TIO Stadium on Monday or Wednesday Nights from 5.40pm.

## Milestone Avenue- Round 9:

- Michael Wadrop – League Goal Debut – Southern Districts v Darwin
- Darren Witham – 300<sup>th</sup> Goal Umpiring Game
- Craig Blake -150<sup>th</sup> Umpiring Game
- Lyndon Bradshaw – 100<sup>th</sup> U/18 Umpiring Game
- Richard Waterson – 100<sup>th</sup> Umpiring Game
- John Colwill – 50<sup>th</sup> Reserves Field Umpiring Game
- Tempe Cotterill – 50<sup>th</sup> Umpiring Game

Mark Noonan  
Umpiring Development Manager  
AFL Northern Territory

