

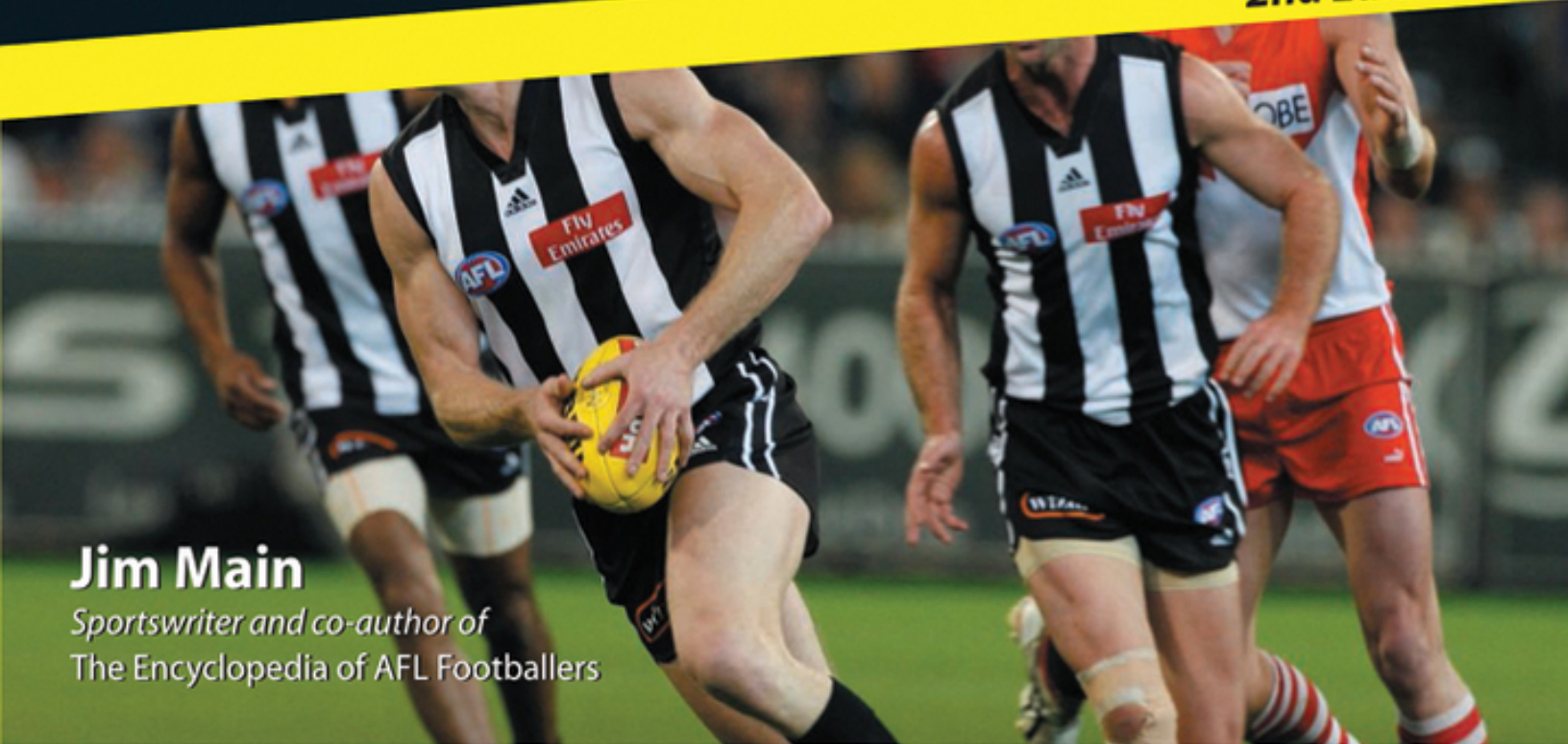


Everything from the fundamentals to the finer points of
playing, watching and coaching AFL!

Aussie Rules

FOR DUMMIES®

2nd Edition



Jim Main

*Sportswriter and co-author of
The Encyclopedia of AFL Footballers*

A Reference for the Rest of Us!®



Everything from the fundamentals to the finer points of
playing, watching and coaching AFL!

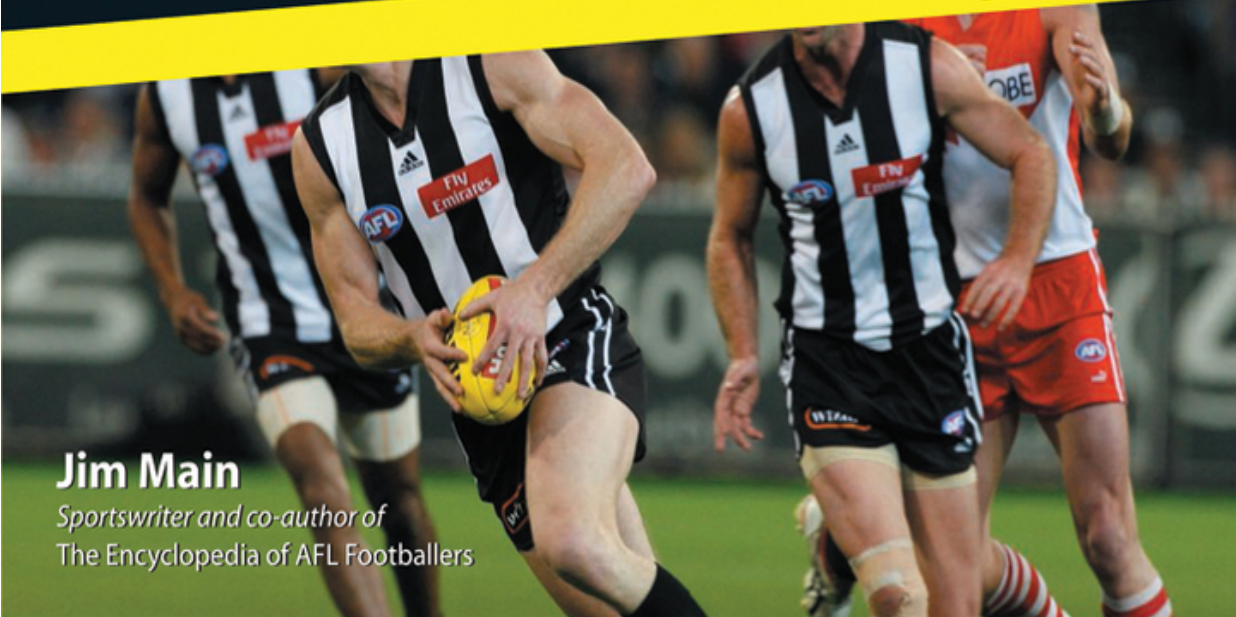
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by Jim Main



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About the Author

Jim Main is one of Australia's best-known sports writers and is a noted football historian. He abandoned a law degree course at the University of Melbourne for his preferred career of journalism, but later graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (majoring in history) from La Trobe University.

Although Jim spent his formative years in journalism as a general reporter and subeditor, he eventually gravitated to sports writing. After working on the Melbourne *Herald*, he moved to England and worked on London's *Daily Express* from 1970 to 1971. During this time he was granted leave of absence to cover the 1970 Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh for the News Limited group. Soon after his return to Australia, Jim won a Walkley Award (Australian journalism's most prestigious award) and moved to sports writing in general, and the Aussie Rules scene in particular.

Jim went on to serve as Melbourne sports editor of the *Australian* for more than a decade, while simultaneously pursuing a freelance career, producing more than 60 books and regularly contributing articles to the *Australian* and *Inside Football*.

His sports-writing career includes covering three Commonwealth Games (Edinburgh in 1970 and 1986, and Brisbane in 1982), the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and various assignments in England, Ireland, the United States and Japan.

Jim's published books include two Australian murder anthologies, a travel guide to Europe, and numerous Aussie Rules, tennis and cricket titles. His football books include *The*

Encyclopedia of AFL Footballers and *This Football Century* (both with Russell Holmesby), *Whatever It Takes* (with Jim Stynes), *Fallen: The Ultimate Heroes* (with David Allen) and *Pants: The Darren Millane Story* (with Eddie McGuire). In 2003, he was inducted into the Melbourne Cricket Ground Media Hall of Fame for his contribution to the coverage of sports at the MCG.

Dedication

To all those who have been part of my life in Aussie Rules, and especially to my wife, Libby, for her unswerving loyalty and patience.

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We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

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Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of *Aussie Rules For Dummies*, your handy guide to a uniquely Australian form of football, officially known as Australian Rules Football and affectionately called Aussie Rules.

Aussie Rules may be the most popular sport in Australia today, but that's not because it's an easy game to play or follow. You have to understand quite a lot about the rules, the plays and even the history of the game just to carry on a polite social conversation, let alone start kicking goals. No worries!

Aussie Rules For Dummies guides you through the ins and outs and behind posts of the entire sport from the viewing stands to the grounds and even behind the scenes. Whether you're fully acquainted with this exciting game or a beginner keen to understand what on earth its devoted fans are shouting about, this book introduces you to all the details and nuances of Aussie Rules.

About This Book

This book helps you find out just what you want to know about Aussie Rules in general, and the AFL (Australian Football League) in particular. However, it's not a book to read from start to finish, from page to page, although you can do this if you want. Rather, the book has been written and designed so that you can pick it up to find out about any aspect of Aussie Rules at any given time. Say, for example, you're watching an AFL game on television and something happens to make you think, 'Why is that?' This book can help you discover the answer.

If you prefer, you can skip around first and learn the rules, and then go to where I explain how to develop the skills of the great Australian football code. Feel free to flip from page to page and absorb the information in your own time.

Whether you're an established AFL star or a newcomer to the game doesn't matter — there's something for you in this book.

Why You Need This Book

This friendly yet comprehensive guide to Australia's most loved code of football provides a detailed explanation in plain English of the rules of Aussie Rules and how they came into being, techniques and strategies for actually playing the game, and key facts and figures to back you up in any game debate.

If you attend a lot of Aussie Rules games or watch them on television and ask everyone around you a lot of questions, you may eventually get a fair understanding of the rules and history of the game. But when one fan tells you one thing and another gives you a slightly different answer, sooner or later you want to know the right answer from a reliable authority. *Aussie Rules For Dummies* can help you discover information about Aussie Rules that many diehard fans are yet to learn.

If you're eager to start playing, or already play but want to improve your form, this book is full of tips and tricks of the game to help you become a well-rounded player. I also provide lists of great players, past and present, who can serve as inspiring role models for players at every skill level.

Archaeologists centuries from now may come across weird and wonderful figures such as 15.10 (100) d. 15.8 (98) and scratch their heads. Unless, of course, they happen to unearth a copy of

this book; then they'll be able to decipher what a score in Aussie Rules actually means. Even if you already know how Aussie Rules scoring works, you may find some other aspects of the game as puzzling as 40th-century archaeologists may find them.

How This Book is Organised

This book is divided into sections called, cleverly enough, parts. These parts are divided into chapters. Each part covers a different aspect of the game. I start with the basics in Part I and build from there, making this your easy-to-follow guide to Aussie Rules. The following list explains what's in each part.

Part I: Before the First Bounce

If you're a newcomer to Aussie Rules, this part is the place to start — right at the beginning of the book. In this part, I explain the many benefits of following or playing Aussie Rules, as well as the basics of the game — the rules, the scoring system. You find information on what equipment you'll need to play the game and how to read, rather than climb, a ladder.

Part II: Playing the Game

Now, I really get down and dirty by explaining the nitty-gritty of the game. The part starts off with a chapter on the various playing positions. The terms 'centre half-back' and 'ruckman' will soon make sense and you'll be able to identify those players when watching a game. Thinking of becoming an Aussie Rules champion? In this part, you'll also find chapters covering the skills involved — kicking, and marking, handballing, bouncing

and running, baulking and defending, and tackling — and routines for you to practise each.

Part III: Taking Your Game to the Next Level

This part takes you through the different levels of playing Aussie Rules, from Little League and AFL Auskick, right through to the senior ranks, as well as the great big football world of suburban and country competitions around the country and the game as it's played around the world. I also cover how the 'draft' works, training, how to avoid and treat injury, and information you need if you want to coach.

Part IV: The Australian Football League

The indigenous Australian code of football is known officially around the world as Australian Rules Football, but the game's governing body is the Australian Football League (AFL). In this part, I define the AFL and its development, including the historical influences on its formation in the late 19th century.

I also cover the people who run the game at AFL level and how they make their decisions. Aspects of each of the 16 AFL clubs — including their history and champions — are discussed at length, too, as well as the various medals they can win and the grounds they play on.

Part V: The Spectator Sport

So, you don't want to play Aussie Rules. You just want to go to a game or even watch it on television. No worries! You can be involved in a lot of different ways. In this part, you'll find information on how to join a club and follow the AFL competition via the various media available — newspapers, radio, television and the Internet. I show you how to get involved in tipping competitions and assess a football form — basically all the important and fun aspects of being a spectator.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

This part is my favourite, as I get to name who I believe to be the ten best players and goal kickers, and which teams and games I think are the best — ever! Writing this part was a labour of love, but it was far from being an easy task. This part is sure to stir discussion and even controversy.

See what you think.

Part VII: Appendixes

Here, you'll find some helpful reference material. You'll find lengthy lists of the premiership and medal winners, as well as books that I highly recommend for further reading. And, to get you in the know, I've included a list of the lingo used in the stands and the umpires' signals. Enjoy!

Icons Used in This Book

You'll find the following icons throughout the book, which signify particular information: