



**Field Umpire Positioning Guidelines –
Three Field Umpire System**



MANUAL: POSITION – OPERATION OF THE THREE UMPIRE SYSTEM

Introduction

The principal aim of the Three Umpire System is to enable umpires to accurately adjudicate contests in all areas of the ground. The information included in this manual is a guide to the operation of the Three Umpire System with a focus on the initial positioning of umpires in set play situations and responsibilities with regard to control and change of control.

In the course of general play an umpire's positioning may vary in a match taking into account:

- Ground conditions (size and dimensions)
- Weather conditions (wind, rain and sun)
- Playing conditions (playing styles)

For reference purposes the ground is divided into three unequal zones with each umpire assuming responsibility for "their" zone at any particular time in the match. In the course of play all three Umpires continually adjust their position enabling the umpire to be in a safe and appropriate viewing position for all contests. The observation capacity of the umpires is increased within their zone as a result of better positioning and co- operation with each other.

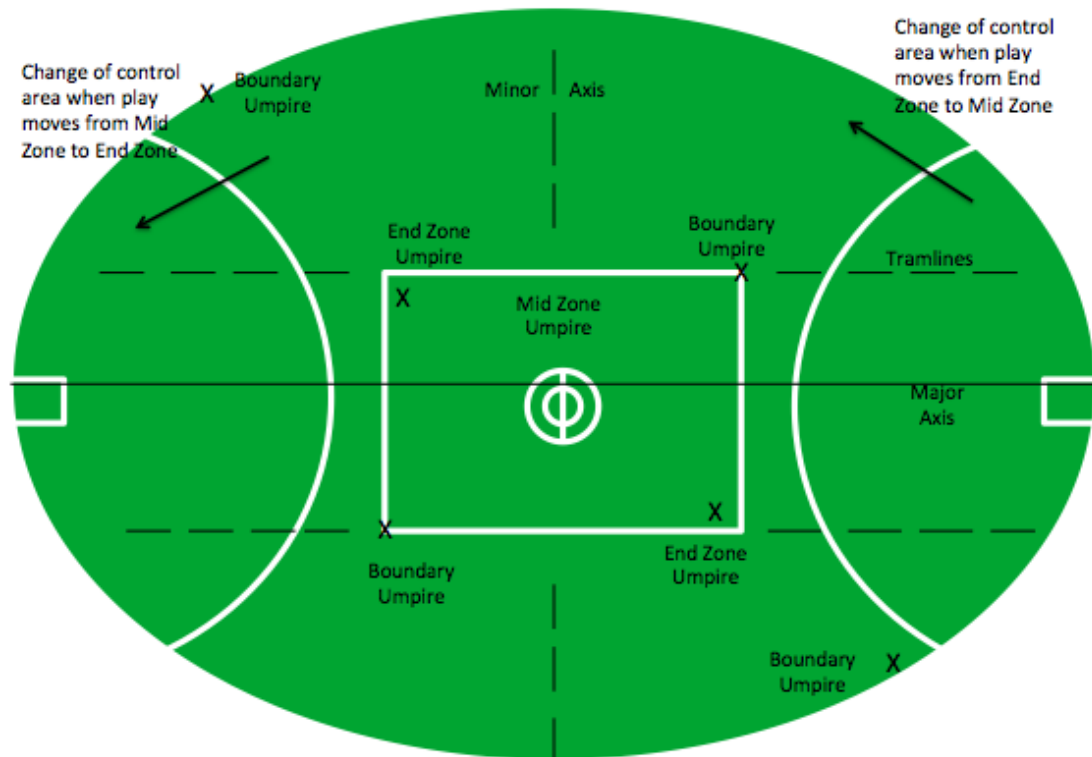
A key feature of the Three Umpire System is when the play enters the End Zone from the Mid Zone, the Near End Zone Umpire **must not** be on or near the major axis. The benefit for the players is that it creates more space for them in the area commonly known as "the centre corridor". The umpire benefits from the reduced likelihood of being contacted by players wishing to contest the ball in "the corridor".

The Three Umpire System allows for flexibility allowing each umpire to vary his initial position subject to the ensuing play.

Definitions

Backward of Mark:	Just behind the adjacent line of the mark.
Centre Corridor:	The area between the “tram lines” extending along the length of the ground.
Change of Control:	The umpire relinquishes control.
Change of Control Area:	When the ball is moving from the End Zone to the Mid Zone it is the area on ground between centre square line extended to the boundary and the 50m line. When the ball is moving from the Mid Zone to the End Zone it is the area on ground inside the 50m line.
End Zones:	Area between the goal line and an imaginary line extending from the top of the 50m line to the boundary.
End Zone Umpire:	The umpires in the end zones.
Far End Zone Umpire:	The umpire in the end zone furthest from play.
Near End Zone Umpire:	The umpire in the end zone nearest to play.
Major Axis:	Straight line extending from centre of goal at both ends passing through centre.
Mid Zone:	All the area between the two 50metre lines. (Mid Zone expected to work 45 – 45)
Mid Zone Umpire:	The umpire in the mid zone.
Minor Axis:	Straight line extending from wing to wing passing through centre.
The Controlling Umpire:	The umpire in control of play.
Non Controlling Umpire:	The two umpires not in control of play.
Tramline:	Imaginary straight lines, extending from both of the sides of the centre square to the boundary lines at both ends of the ground parallel to the major axis.
Set Play:	Resultant play from a stoppage in play such as a mark, free kick, ball up and boundary throw in.

Playing Field — 3 Umpire Positions



Centre Ball Up

Centre Ball Up Positioning

The Mid Zone Umpire should make his approach along the minor axis for the centre ball up.

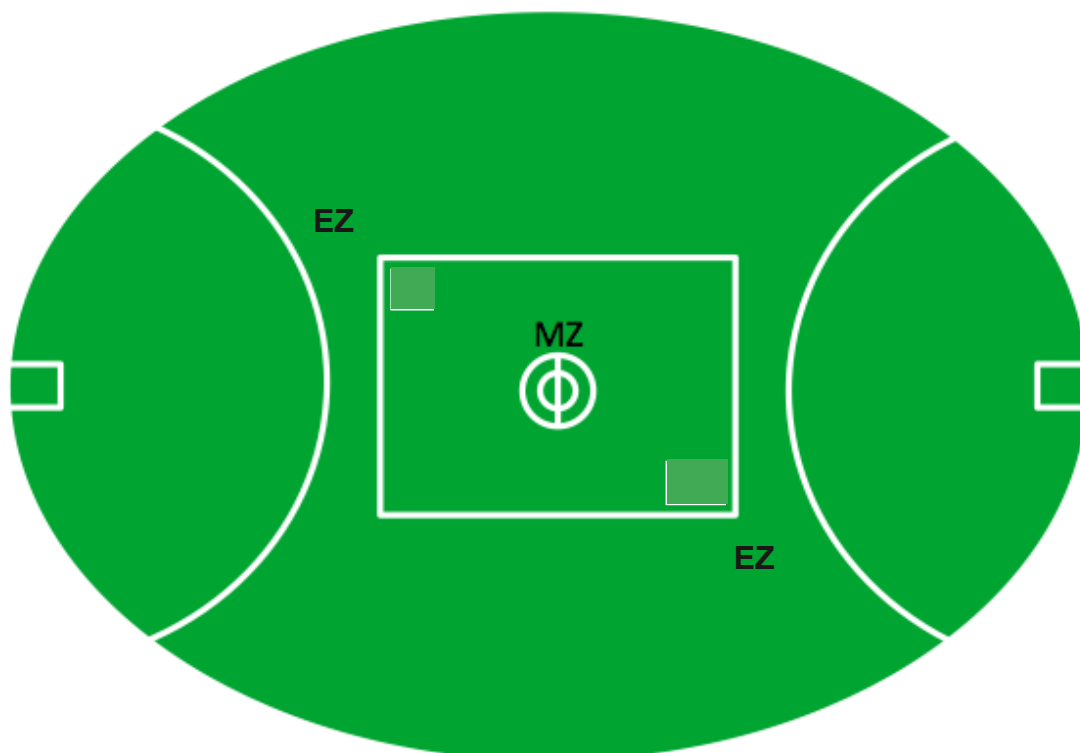
The End Zone Umpires should position themselves just inside the centre square diagonally opposite each other and on the opposite side of the ground to that of the Boundary Umpires.

If required they should have a presence at either end of the ground (i.e CHF or FF) prior to the commencement of the game should players begin to scuffle.

If required to attend an incident the End Zone Umpire may vary his position from the corner of the centre square.

After throwing the ball up, the Mid Zone Umpire shall back off along the minor axis, (as indicated to players), and make position according to the next act of play.

End Zone Umpires should adjust their position according to the next act of play. They should remain on the same side of the ground as their initial position following the bounce and should endeavour to move towards their immediate End Zone along the tramline or wider towards the boundary line.



Rotation of Positions

The Mid Zone Umpire will change position with the non-controlling End Zone Umpire after each goal, and as the need arises throughout the game. Out of bounds near the 50m arc, after a point has been scored, set plays around the 50m arc also give an opportunity to rotate positions.

If one End Zone Umpire has a succession of goals (a guide may be 2–3 goals), he may initiate a change with the Mid Zone Umpire. Similarly in situations where one Mid Zone Umpire has had long periods of umpiring he may initiate a rotation of position with the End Zone Umpire after a behind has been scored or at a boundary throw in near the 50m arc.

Whilst rotating positions Umpires should ensure all areas of the ground are kept under observation.

Awarding of Free Kicks at Centre Ball Up

All umpires have a responsibility to award all free kicks they observe at centre ball ups including 5 in centre square infringements. End Zone Umpires need to be aware of players running from outside the square, infringing opponents and or holding around the centre bounce.

Any Field Umpire can award a free kick prior to the commencement of a quarter. *(General guide, as teams take up their position prior to the start of each quarter.)*

After a goal has been scored and before the ball has been bounced, all three umpires are empowered to penalise infringements.

Once the Mid Zone Umpire is in possession of the ball for the ensuing centre bounce, he becomes the Controlling Umpire.

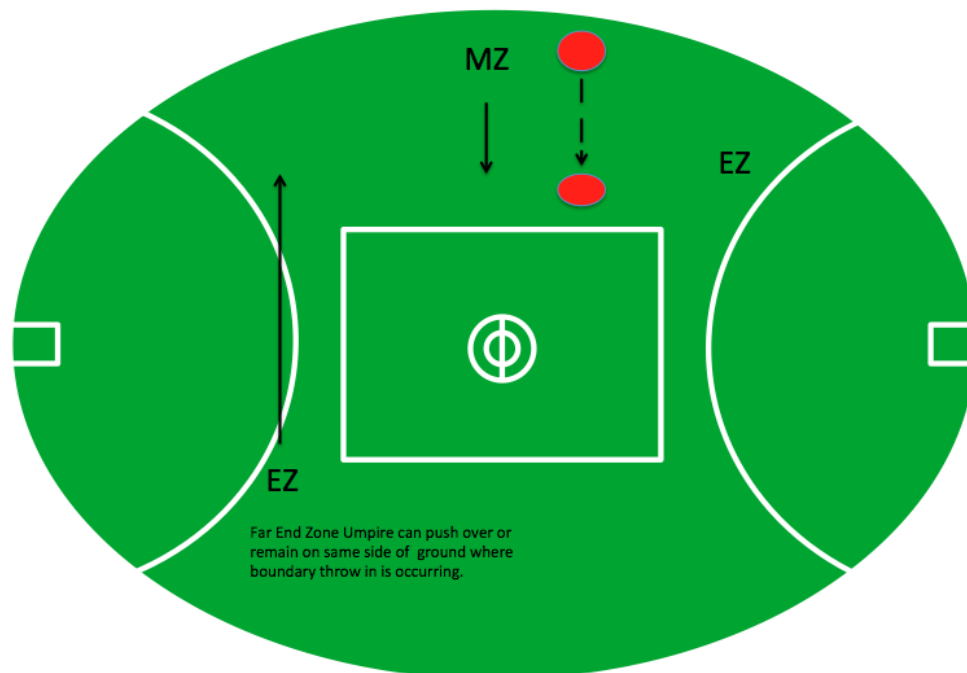
End Zone Umpires should determine which end they shall commence the next quarter based on time spent in respective End Zones during the previous quarter.

Penalties Awarded at Centre Ball Up

- Infringements awarded by Field Umpires in the centre square take precedence over centre square infringements awarded by Boundary Umpires.
 - Where two penalties are awarded to one side, the most advantageous penalty is to apply.
 - Where penalties are awarded to opposing sides for encroachment, play shall recommence with a centre ball up. Refer Law 11.3.4 (d)
 - There shall be no advantage applied when out of zone free kicks are paid.
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Boundary Throw In

Boundary Throw In Mid Zone



Mid Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

The Mid Zone Umpire should start to the side of the contest, 10-12 m, to the side of the boundary umpire, anticipating movement to a position 15 - 20 m side-on to the contest, on the long side of the ground. It is essential that he has a clear and uninterrupted view of the contesting players. He may vary his initial position subject to the ensuing play.

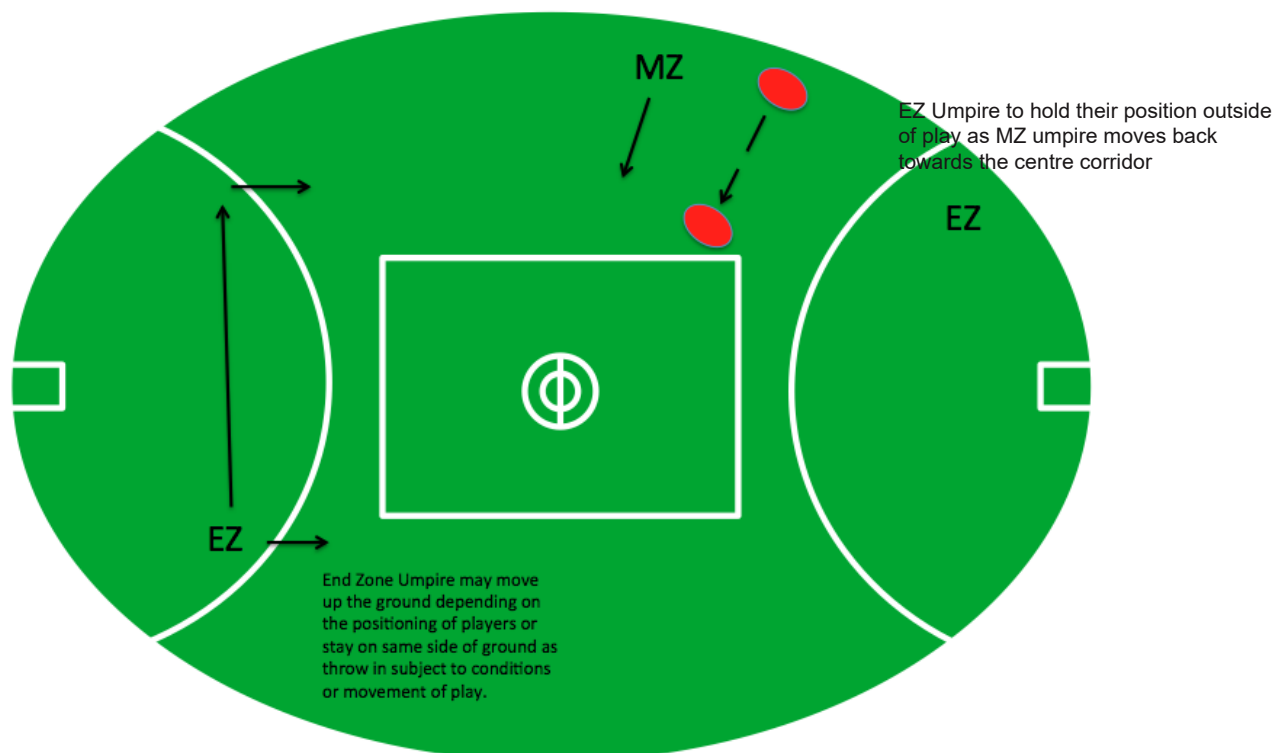
Following the ruck contest his position is determined by the ensuing direction of play. There will be occasions when he remains outside play. If the ball is in dispute in the area of the ruck contest he can use this opportunity to work his way inside play.

End Zone Umpires

The Near Zone Umpire must take up a position approximately 30 - 40 m from the throw in on or outside "the tramline" on the same side as the boundary throw in and remain on that side of the ground until a set play situation allows them to adjust position.

The Far Zone Umpire can take up a position on or outside "the tramline" on the opposite side from the boundary throw in and remain on that side of the ground until the next act of play or a set play situation allows them to adjust position. The system allows flexibility for the umpire to remain or push over to the same side of the as the boundary throw in, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play.

Boundary Throw In Mid Zone – Close to the 50m Arc



Mid Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

The Mid Zone Umpire should take up an initial position to the front of the contest, 10-12 m, to the side of the boundary umpire, anticipating movement to a position 15 - 20 m side-on to the contest, on the long side of the ground. It is essential that the MZ umpire has a clear and uninterrupted view of the contesting players. He may vary his initial position subject to the ensuing play.

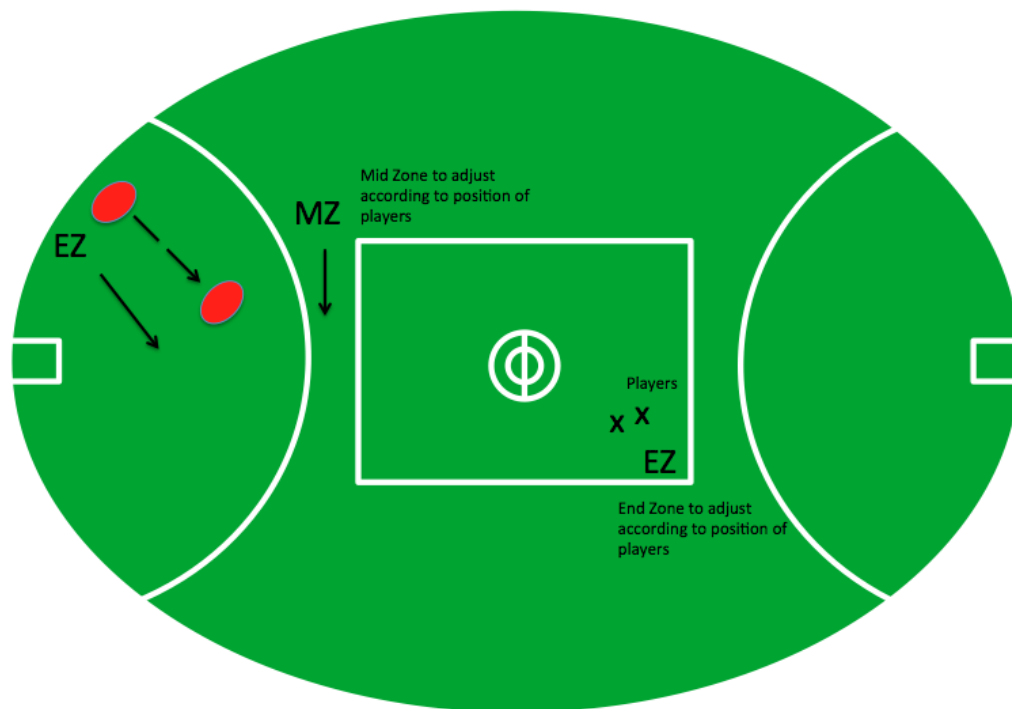
Following the ruck contest his position is determined by the ensuing direction of play. There will be occasions when the MZ umpire remains outside play. If the ball is in dispute in the area of the ruck contest he can use this opportunity to work his way inside play.

End Zone Umpires

The Near End Zone Umpire should take up a position approximately 20-30 m from the throw in on or outside “the tramline” on the same side as the boundary throw in and remain on that side of the ground until a set play situation allows an adjustment of position.

The Far End Zone Umpire can take up a position on or outside “the tramline” on the opposite side to the boundary throw in and remain on that side of the ground until the next act of play or a set play situation allows an adjustment of position. The system allows flexibility for the EZ umpire to remain or push over to the same side of the as the boundary throw in, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play.

Boundary Throw In 30-45 metres from Goal



End Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

The End Zone Umpire should take up an initial position to the front of the contest, 10-12 m, to the side of the boundary umpire on the short side of the ground, anticipating movement to a position 15-20 m side on to the contest. EZ Umpires position following the ruck contest will be determined by the ensuing direction of play. When the throw in is to be taken more than 45 m from goal the MZ Umpire should take the throw in with the EZ umpire holding their position near the boundary line.

Mid Zone Umpire

The Mid Zone Umpire must be within 25 m of the stoppage, and adjust his position with the movement of play. They should be attempting to view the contest from a **different angle**.

Far End Zone Umpire

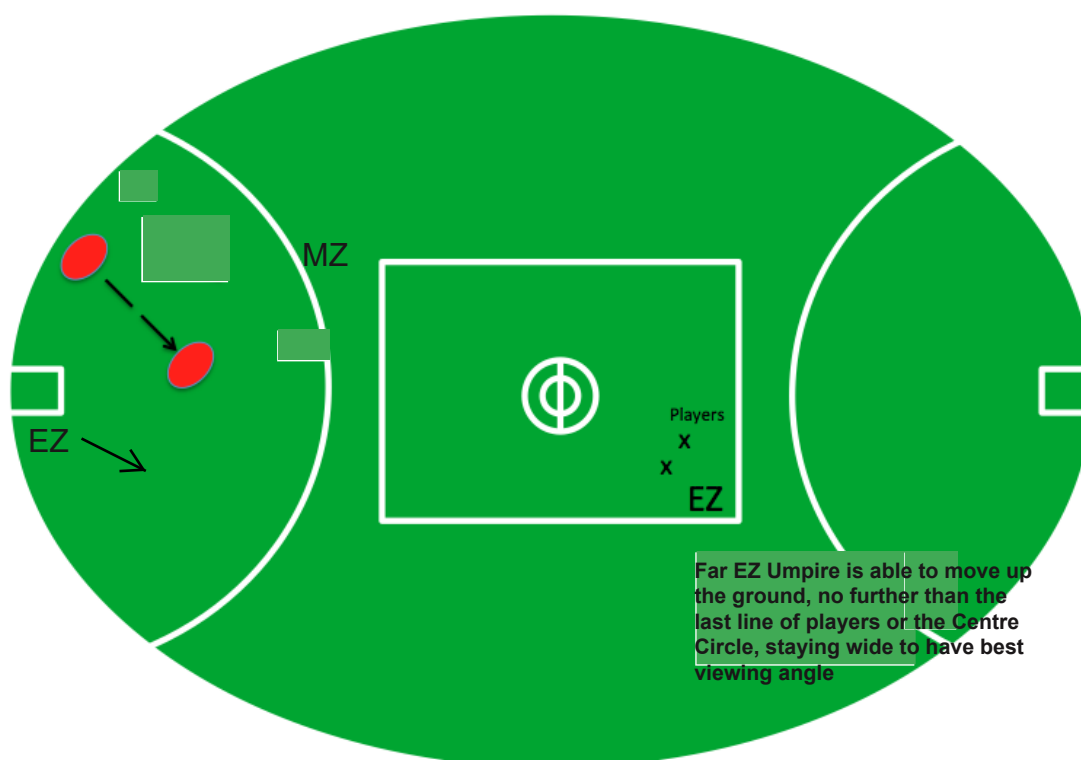
The Far End Zone Umpire should take up a position on or outside “the tramline” on the opposite side to the boundary throw in and remain on that side of the ground until the next act of play or a set play situation allows them to adjust position.

The system allows flexibility for the umpire to remain or push over to the same side of the as the boundary throw in, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play.

Do not go past the last line of players and no further than the centre circle.

Note: The system is flexible to ensure you can have the most impact on the players around the contest to stop tagging, blocking and holding.

Boundary Throw In less than 30 metres from Goal



End Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

The End Zone Umpire should take up an initial position to the front of the contest, 10-12 m, to the side of the boundary umpire on the **SHORT** side of the ground, anticipating movement to a position 15-20 m side on to the contest. Their position following the ruck contest will be determined by the ensuing direction of play.

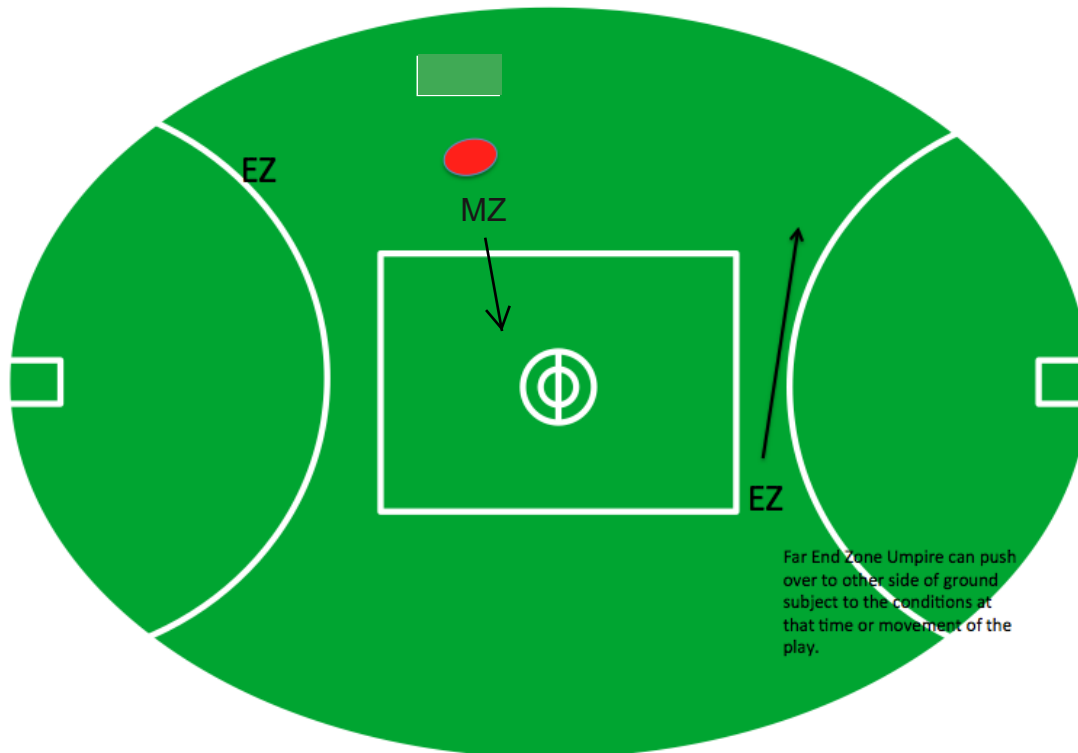
Mid Zone Umpire must be within 25 m of the stoppage, and adjust their position with the movement of play.

Far End Zone Umpire

The Far End Zone Umpire can take up a position at the back end of the centre square or up to the centre circle (subject to the players in the vicinity) outside "the tramline" on the opposite side to the boundary throw in to assist the MZ umpire in the rare event of a quick ball movement into the Mid Zone and remain on that side of the ground until the next act of play or a set play situation allows him to adjust position.

Ball Up

Ball Up in the Mid Zone



The Umpire will throw the ball with his back to the centre of the ground.

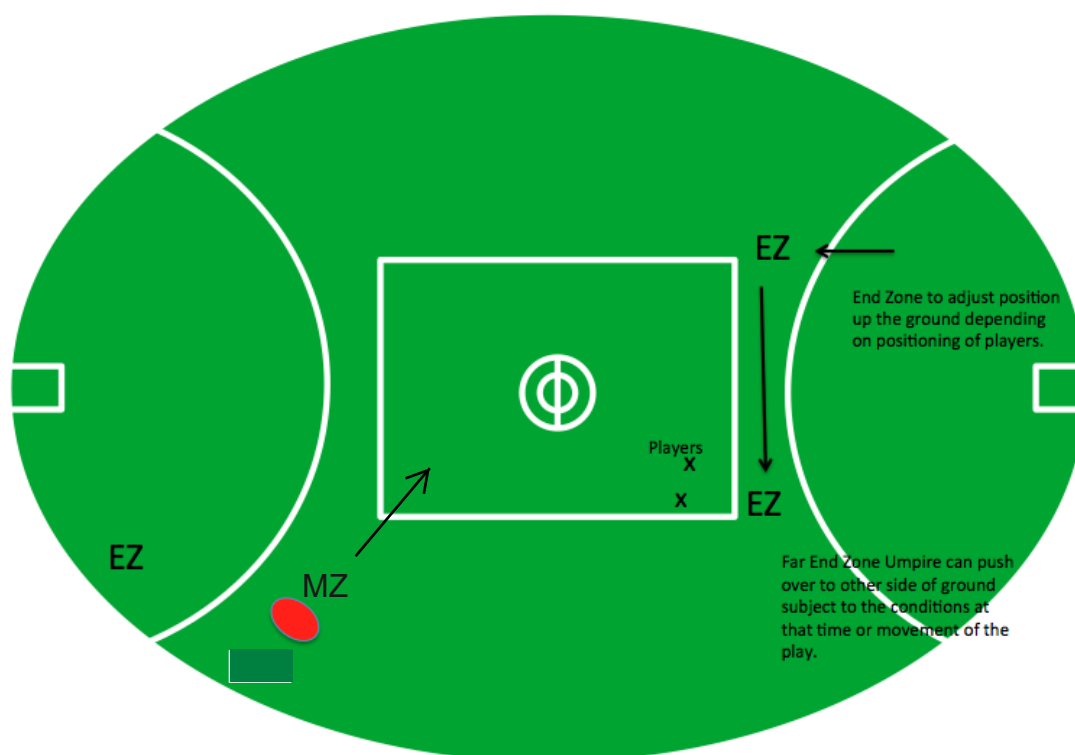
End Zone Umpires

The nearest EZ Umpire must take up a position 30 - 40 m from the stoppage outside the tram-lines on the same side of the ground to the ball up and remain on that side of the ground until the next act of play or a set play situation allows them to adjust position.

Where it is not clearly obvious who the nearest EZ umpire is, one EZ umpire should initiate a move across to take up a position outside the tram-lines on the same side of the ground to the ball up.

The system allows flexibility for the Far End Zone umpire to remain or push over to the same side of the ground as the field bounce, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play.

Field Bounce in the Mid Zone Close to the 50m Arc



Mid Zone Umpire

The Umpire will throw the ball up with his back to the centre of the ground.

Near End Zone Umpire

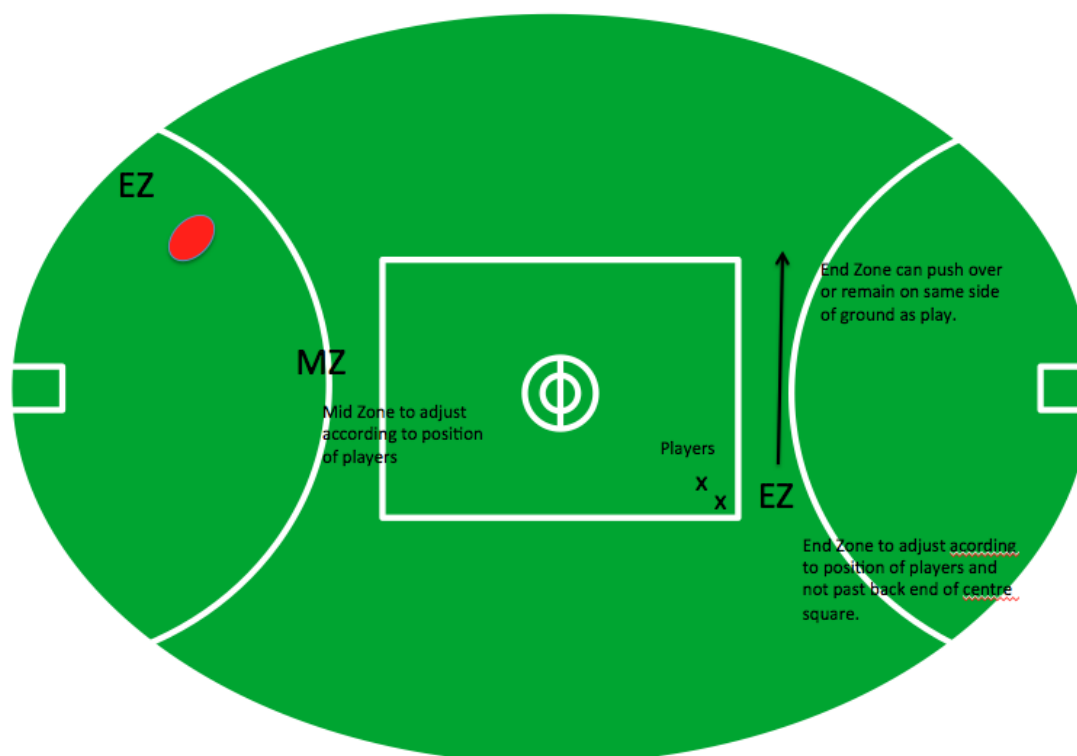
The Near End Zone Umpire must take up a position approximately 30 - 40 m from the ball up outside the tram-lines on the same side of the ground as the ball up and remain on that side of the ground to assist with decision making until a set play situation allows him to adjust position.

Far End Zone Umpire

The Far End Zone Umpire must take up a position on or outside the tram-lines on the opposite side of the ground as the ball up and remain on that side of the ground until the next act of play or a set play situation allows them to adjust position.

The system allows flexibility for the Far End Zone umpire to remain or push over to the same side of the as the ball up, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play. They should not move past the last line of players and stay wide enough to increase their viewing angle.

Ball Up in the End Zone



End Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

The End Zone Umpire will always bounce the ball with his back to the boundary and no more than 40 m from goal.

Mid Zone Umpire

The Mid Zone Umpire shall be 25 m from the stoppage, within the tram-lines and adjust their position with the movement of play.

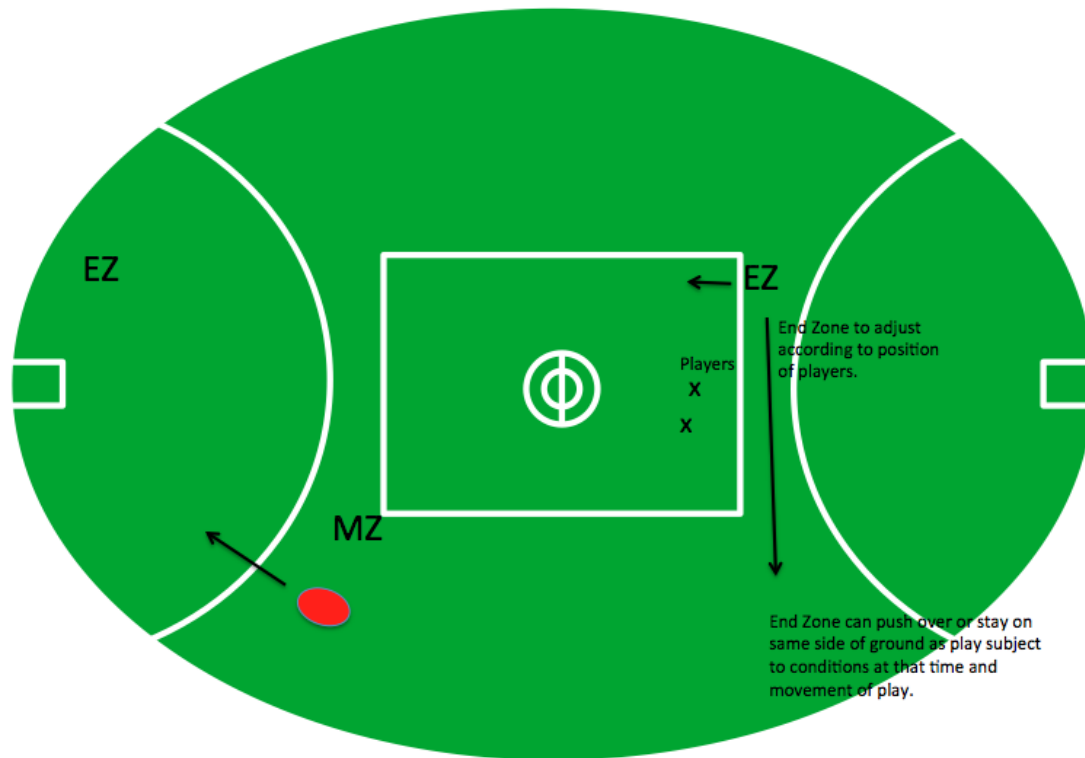
Far End Zone Umpire

The Far End Zone Umpire must take up a position on or outside the tram-lines on the opposite side of the ground as the ball up and remain on that side of the ground until the next act of play or a set play situation allows them to adjust position.

The system allows flexibility for the Far End Zone umpire to remain or push over to the same side of the as the ball up, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play. They should not move past the last line of players and stay wide enough to increase their viewing angle.

Initial Positioning — Set Play

Set Play in Mid Zone with resulting contest in End Zone



Mid Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

The Mid Zone Umpire should supervise the set kick from a position 15–20 m side-on to the mark.

Near End Zone Umpire

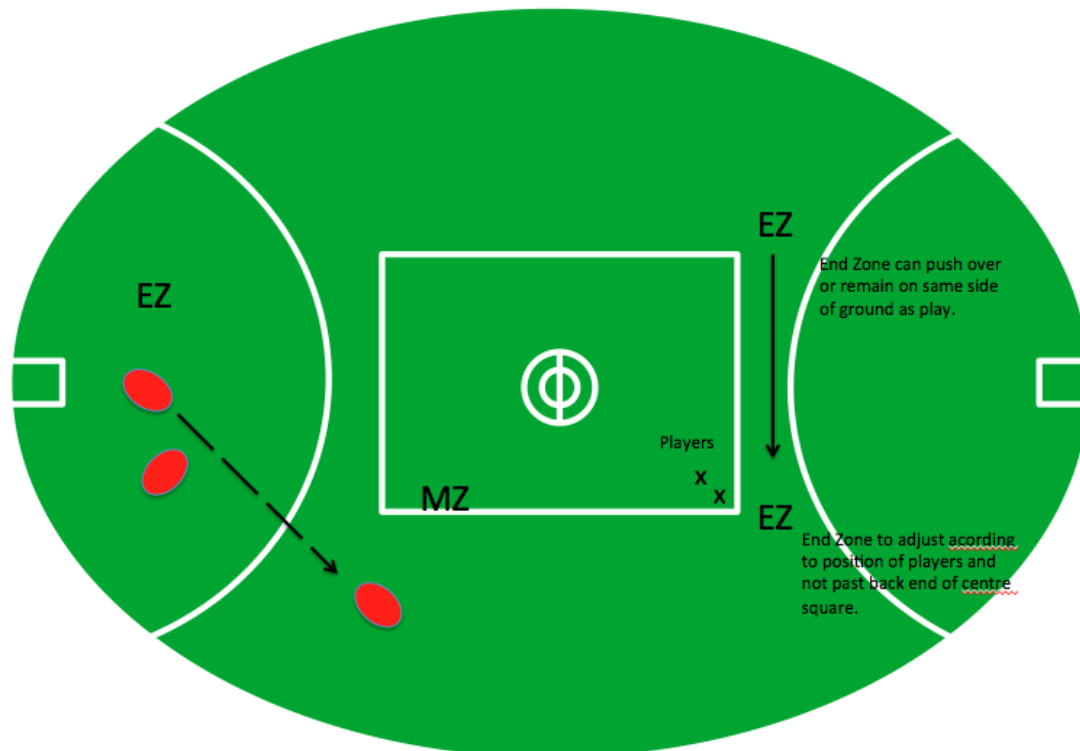
The Near End Zone Umpire should take up a position on or outside the tram-lines, inside the 50 m arc and on the opposite side of the Set Play, and remain on that side of the ground for the next contest or the same side depending on where the ball has just come from.

Far End Zone Umpire

The Far End Zone Umpire can take up a position on or outside the tram-lines, on or near the 50m arc, on the opposite side of the ground to the Set Play, and remain on that side of the ground until a subsequent act of play or set play situation allows him to adjust position.

The system allows flexibility for the Far End Zone umpire to remain or push over to the same side as play, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play. They should not move past the last line of players and stay wide enough to increase their viewing angle.

Set Play in End Zone with resulting contest in Mid Zone



End Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

The End Zone Umpire should supervise the set kick from a position 15–20 m side-on to the mark.

Mid Zone Umpire

The Mid Zone Umpire should position himself less than a kick away within the tram-lines and adjust his position with the movement of play until they become the Controlling Umpire.

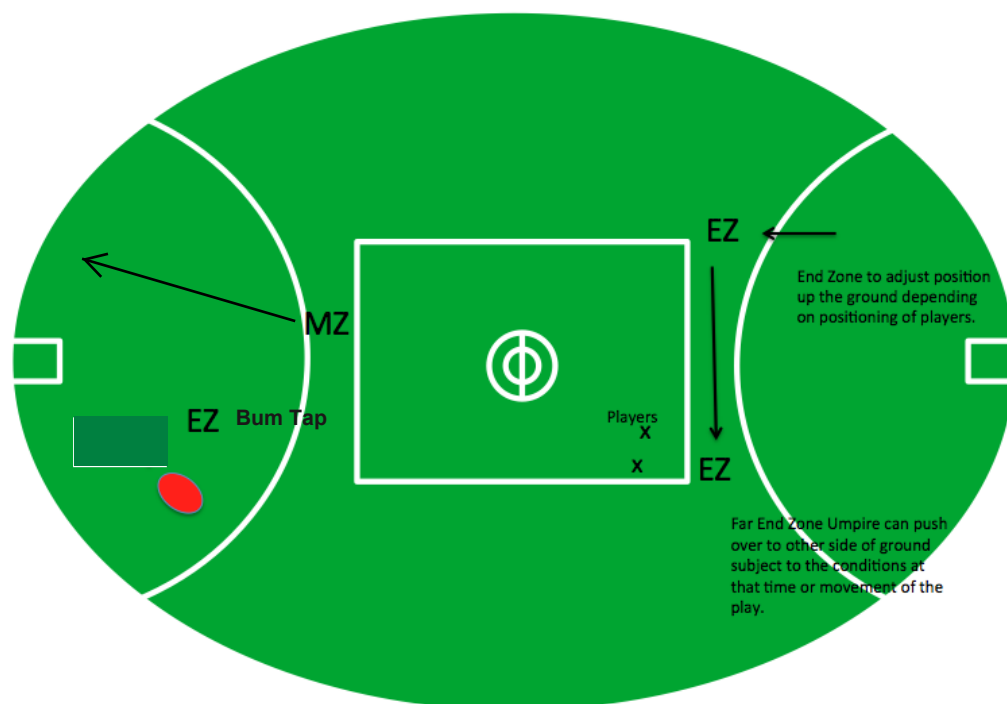
Far End Zone Umpire

The Far End Zone Umpire can take up a position on or outside the tram-lines, on or near the 50 m arc, on the opposite side of the ground to the Set Kick and remain on that side of the ground until a subsequent act of play or set play situation allows him to adjust position.

The system allows flexibility for the Far End Zone umpire to remain or push over to the same side as play, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play. They should not move past the last line of players and stay wide enough to increase their viewing angle.

(Note: Any kick that goes from inside the 50 m area to outside is a change of control.)

Set Play less than 40 M from Goal likely to Score



End Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

In this situation, the End Zone Umpire should move in to line up the player with the ball and 'TAP' the MZ umpire into the EZ.

After lining the player up, the End Zone Umpire should position himself close enough to have verbal control of both the player taking the set play and SQUARE off on the mark.

Mid Zone Umpire

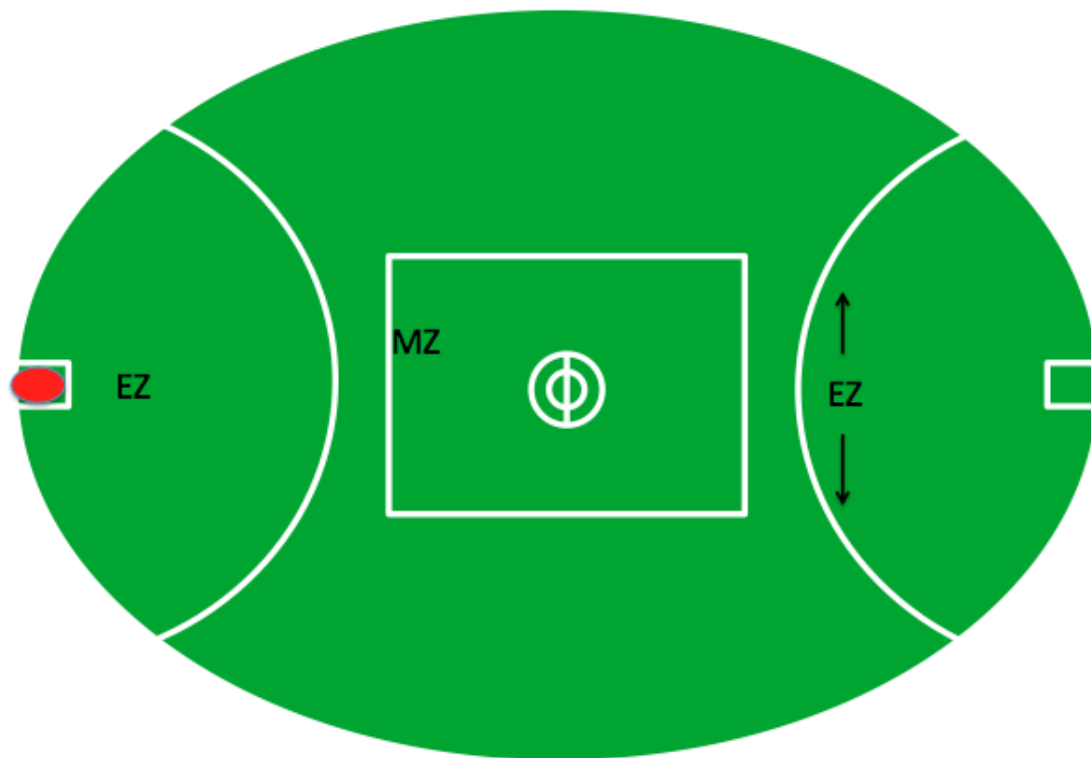
The Mid Zone Umpire should move quickly past the EZ umpire when a 'bum tap' is seen, moving to the opposite side of the ground, 20-25 m side on to the anticipated contest

Far End Zone Umpire

The Far End Zone Umpire can take up a position on or outside the tram-lines on or near the 50 m arc, on the opposite side of the ground to the Set Play and remain on that side of the ground until a subsequent act of play or set play situation allows him to adjust position.

The system allows flexibility for the Far End Zone umpire to remain or push over to the same side as play, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play. They should not move past the last line of players and stay wide enough to increase their viewing angle.

Kick-In From a Behind and Set Play from Deep in Defence



End Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

For a kick in following a behind the End Zone Umpire should position himself on the major axis 7-10 m from the kick off line, just behind the player standing the mark.

In the instance of the ball being played on, kicked short or kicked wide to the flanks, the End Zone Umpire retains control provided the play is within within the 50 m area.

In the instance of the ball traveling clearly into the change of control area as a result of a long kick, using the 50 m line markings as a guide, the End Zone Umpire will relinquish control.

After allowing 10 seconds for the defensive player to bring the ball into play, the End Zone Umpire supervising the kick out shall indicate by blowing his whistle twice, and then call play on immediately.

For a Set Play deep in defence, out of bounds close to the behind post, the End Zone Umpires initial position will be determined by the location of the Set Play.

Mid Zone Umpire

The Mid Zone Umpire should be positioned near the major axis and adjust to the resultant kick or act of play. They should be alert to the possibility of a change of control directly from the kick out and if they are required to adjudicate at the contest they should do so from a position 20–25 m side on to the contest

Far End Zone Umpire

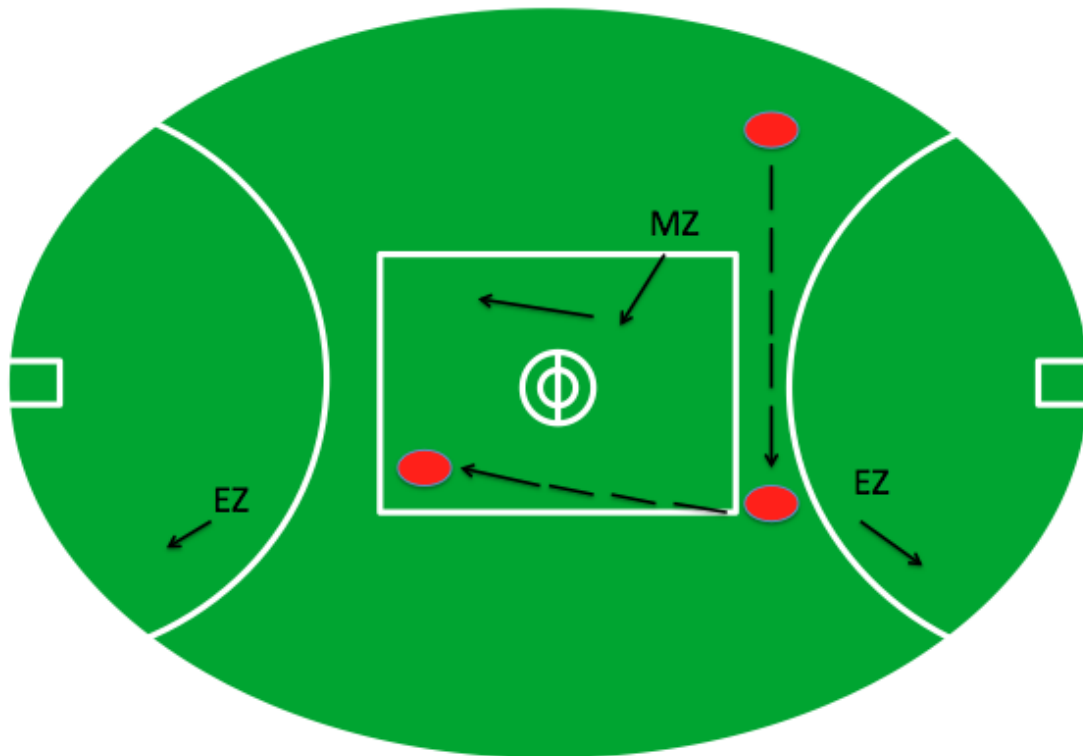
The Far End Zone Umpire should take up a position on major axis on or near the 50 m arc / back of the square depending on the position of the players.

Following the kick-in they shall adjust their position to outside tram-lines on the opposite side of the ground to which the ball was brought back into play and remain on that side of the ground until a subsequent act of play or set play situation allows him to adjust position.

If the ball is brought back into play down the centre of the ground the Far End Zone Umpire must quickly commit to one side of the Major Axis and take up a position outside the tram-lines.

Positioning — General Play

Ball in Contest in Mid Zone



Mid Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

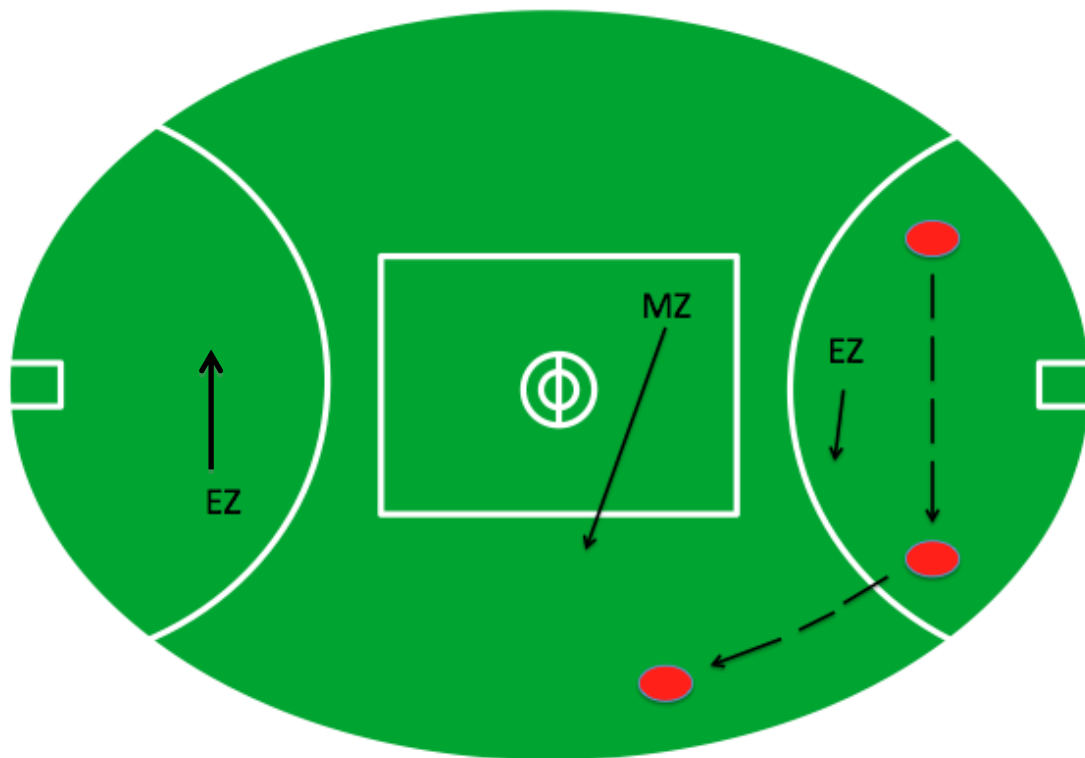
As the Controlling Umpire, the Mid Zone Umpire should always aim to be inside play, 20-25 m away and side on to the contest.

End Zone Umpires

End Zone Umpires can take up a position on or outside the tram-lines and remain on that side of the ground until the next act of play or a set play situation allows them to adjust position.

The system allows flexibility for the Far End Zone umpire to remain or push over to the same side as play, subject to the conditions at that time or movement of play. They should not move past the last line of players and stay wide enough to increase their viewing angle.

Ball in Contest in End Zone



End Zone Umpire (Controlling Umpire)

The End Zone Umpire should always aim to be 20-25 m away, inside play and side on to the contest.

Mid Zone Umpire

The Mid Zone Umpire should be less than a kick away, within the tram-lines and adjust his position with the movement of play.

Far End Zone Umpire

The Far End Zone Umpire can take up a position outside the tram-lines on the opposite side of the ground to play and remain on that side of the ground until a set play situation allows him to adjust his position accordingly, this may result in swapping sides.

Change Of Control

The fundamental principles governing Change of Control between umpires are:

- The Controlling Umpire at all times relinquishes control.
- The Mid Zone Umpire shall keep the play if he can achieve a position as good as or better than the End Zone Umpire provided he will not place himself under undue pressure in doing so.
- Long Kicks from the end zone clearly into the change of control area, must instigate a Change of Control. (Use 50 m line as a guide)
- Short passages of play controlled by the Mid Zone Umpire **INTO THE** Change of Control area should not instigate a change of control however short passages of play (handballs, kicks, knock-ons or runs) **OUT OF** the End Zones controlled by the End Zone Umpire into the Change of Control area should instigate Changes of Control where possible.

UMPIRES SHOULD ATTEMPT TO ROTATE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE

Umpires are not restricted to their zone. Umpires should maintain control until a clear opportunity to relinquish control arises. Short passages of play are not always clear opportunities for Change of Control.

The Controlling Umpire should maintain control of the running player until that player clearly disposes of the ball into another zone or if the player clearly runs into another zone and is unlikely to be tackled or lose possession of the ball.

Changing Zones — 50 M Penalty

Generally the Umpire who awards the 50 m penalty should maintain control of play and should set up the amended set play. If the resulting penalty extends into another zone, the Non-Controlling Umpire should move around play into the zone from which the Controlling Umpire has come. As a result, there is no Change of Control.

Ball Ups / Boundary Throw Ins

The umpire who calls for a Ball Up/ Boundary Throw-In should maintain control of play on most occasions., However, this could be an opportunity to '**ROTATE**' out of, or into another zone.

Changing Zones — Set Play Unlikely to Score

When play moves from the Mid Zone into the End Zone and the End Zone Umpire awards a set play which is unlikely to score and there is no delay in play, the Mid Zone Umpire runs in quickly to control the set play, allowing the End Zone Umpire to turn and run forward when appropriate. Any delay in play and the EZ Umpire should 'bum tap', retain control of the set play and allow the MZ Umpire to run through and become the EZ umpire.

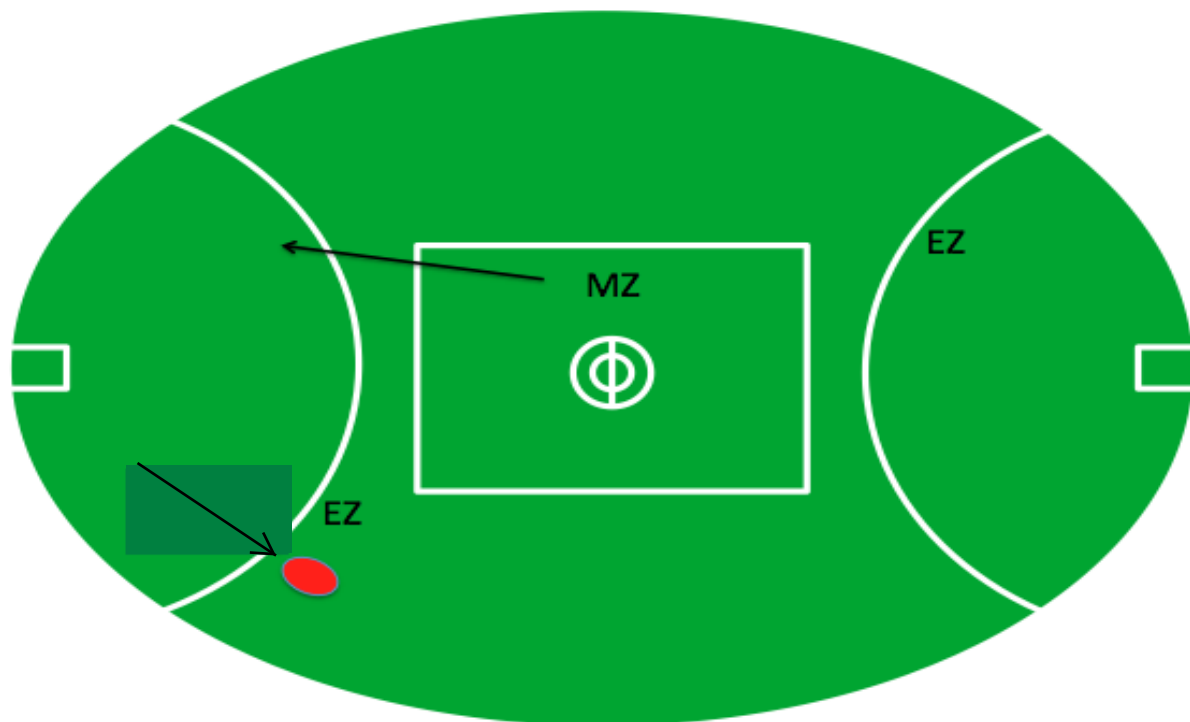
The **Far End Zone Umpire** can move up on the opposite side of the ground as the set play, no further than the last line of players, wide enough to maintain observation of these players.

This situation applies when the Mid Zone Umpire awards a set play from a kick out of defence into the change of control area and which is marked by a team mate of the defender.

The End Zone Umpire should run to position to control the set play. This will allow the Mid Zone Umpire to run to the appropriate position, just short of the resultant contest, keeping under observation all the area and players forward of his position.

Where the mark of the set play is wide on the ground — near the boundary line for instance — and the End Zone Umpire has to run out to line up the kick at goal, he must be alert to the possibility that the player with the ball may kick or play on quickly. He should ensure that he is not caught out of position. The important thing is that the Umpire must be alert and anticipate the next act of play.

Changing Zones – Set play in EZ



Where an End Zone Umpire is required to attend the set play in their zone (required to show a presence at a mark or free kick and there is an anticipated delay), the Mid Zone Umpire must be alert to a possible change of control. This can be initiated by the End Zone or Mid Zone Umpire.

The Mid Zone Umpire will quickly run to the far side of the End Zone to a position just short of the anticipated destination of the kick, and become The Controlling Umpire once the set play has been taken. Prior to the set play being taken The End Zone Umpire will assume a position backward of the mark for the resultant play and subsequently become the Mid Zone Umpire once the set play has been taken.

Special Provision Covering the Awarding of Free Kicks

Infringements in Play/Just Off Play

A Non Controlling Umpire should award a free kick when they see a **CLEAR** and **OBVIOUS** infringement of the laws which is not penalised by the Controlling Umpire.

Implementation of Free Kicks Awarded by the Non-Controlling Umpire

Free kicks awarded by Non-Controlling Umpires should be implemented under the following guidelines:-

- (a) Blow the whistle for the infringement
- (b) The Non-Controlling Umpire indicates the free kick and communicates which Player from what team is to receive it..
- (c) Clear indication of the infringement, both verbally and with the appropriate signal, also indicating the direction of the resulting free kick.
- (d) Where a team has a set kick and a team member is infringed forward of play, a 50 m penalty can apply from the set kick if it would be a greater penalty than awarding the free kick at the place of the infringement.
- (e) The position of the resultant set kick is either where the infringement occurs or 50 m from the original set kick, whichever is of the greatest advantage to the team offended against.

This guideline also applies to infringements awarded after a goal has been scored and those occurring at centre ball ups.

Infringements behind Play

- (a) Non Controlling Umpires should penalise infringements of the laws when the free kick is **OBVIOUS**. (preventing a player attempting to contest the ball, holding, blocking, high contact, reportable incidents etc.)
- (b) Non-Controlling Umpires should attend behind play incidents providing it does not compromise their ability to be involved in the next act of play should they be required.
- (c) Where a team has a set kick and a team member is infringed behind play, a 50 m penalty is to apply from the set kick.
- (d) Where a team with a set kick infringes, a free kick is to be awarded against that team at the place of the infringement or at the set kick whichever is of greater advantage to the team offended against.

Umpires should use their judgment in deciding whether to attend to behind play incidents. A guideline for umpires in such situations would be: attend the incident if it appears that play is unlikely to return to their zone quickly, otherwise, communicate what is happening with your fellow umpires and have one of the attend.

End of Quarter — End of Match

(i) End of Quarter / Game (Refer Law 10.4.2)

Play in each quarter shall come to an end when any one of the Field Umpires hear the siren. Any umpire may signal the end of the quarter however it is usual for the Controlling Umpire to do so. If there is any doubt, any Non-Controlling Umpire hearing the siren should inform the Controlling Umpire immediately.

(ii) Set Kick at Goal After Siren

The umpire awarding the free kick shall retain control of the mark and is the Controlling Umpire (this may be the End Zone or Mid Zone Umpire). After the mark has been set the Controlling Umpire controls the mark from an adjacent position 15-20 m away.

The Near End Zone Umpire controls the likely contest area and gives any required “all clear” signal resulting from the kick.

The Far End Zone Umpire shall move down and control the area directly behind the mark and assist the Controlling Umpire who is controlling the mark. His main role is to ensure the player with the ball doesn't change direction, but rather kicks over the mark.

