



Field Umpires' Skill Drills



This manual has been produced using submissions from community umpire coaches who are participants in the AFL Umpire Coach Professional Development Program.

The skills included in this manual were provided to state staff at the 2012 Victorian State Coaching Conference held at Visy Park, Melbourne on Saturday 13th October 2012.

We wish to thank the coaches for their contribution and are pleased to be able to provide this manual to you as a resource from the many coaches involved.

The Role of the Coach in these drills

Whilst this Manual refers to the Coach in each skill drill, it may be appropriate to have an Assistant Coach, a senior field umpire or a Field Umpires' Mentor conduct the skill drill that may then allow the Coach to supervise and keep a close eye on the performances of all of the participants.

Often, by involving others in the delivery of the skill drill, levels of stimulation / motivation can increase.

The Umpires

It is assumed that all participants who are engaged in the following umpiring activities already possess a degree of understanding of the principles of umpiring along with basic fundamental ball-skills and hand-eye coordination.

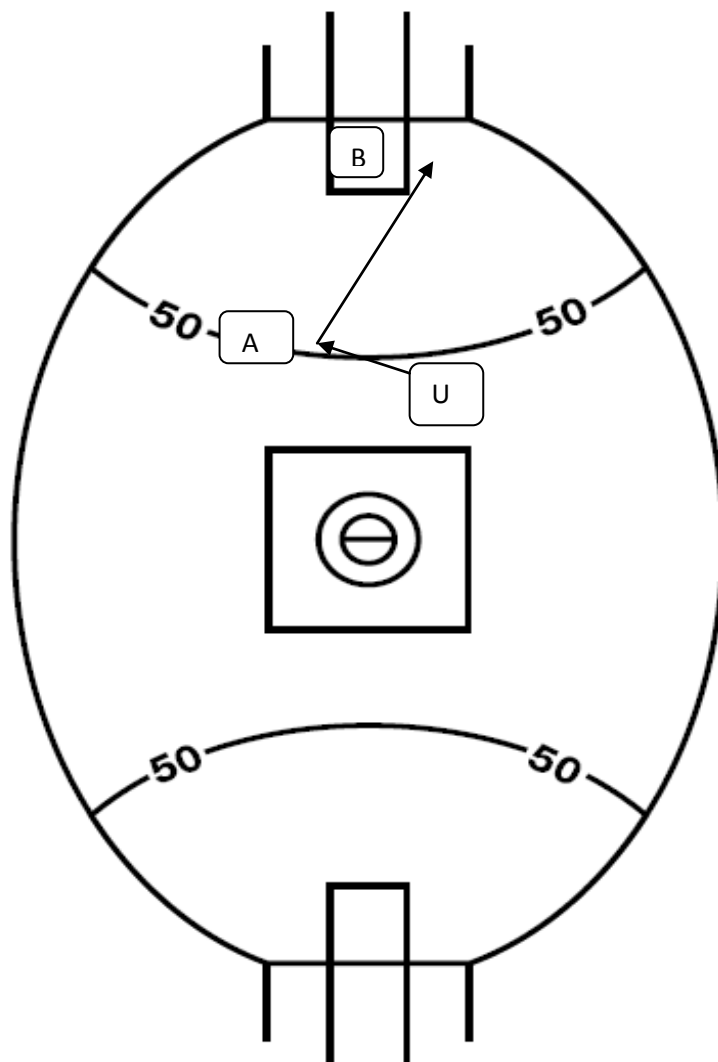
Umpire coaches are encouraged to keep in mind modifications to the skills drills to cater for participants' individual differences and individual learning styles.

Skill drill 1 Control of play in 50m arc

Focus – Control of set play – running angles, trigger points and quick change of direction

Method - Introduce the activity through discussion on where and when trigger running occurs.

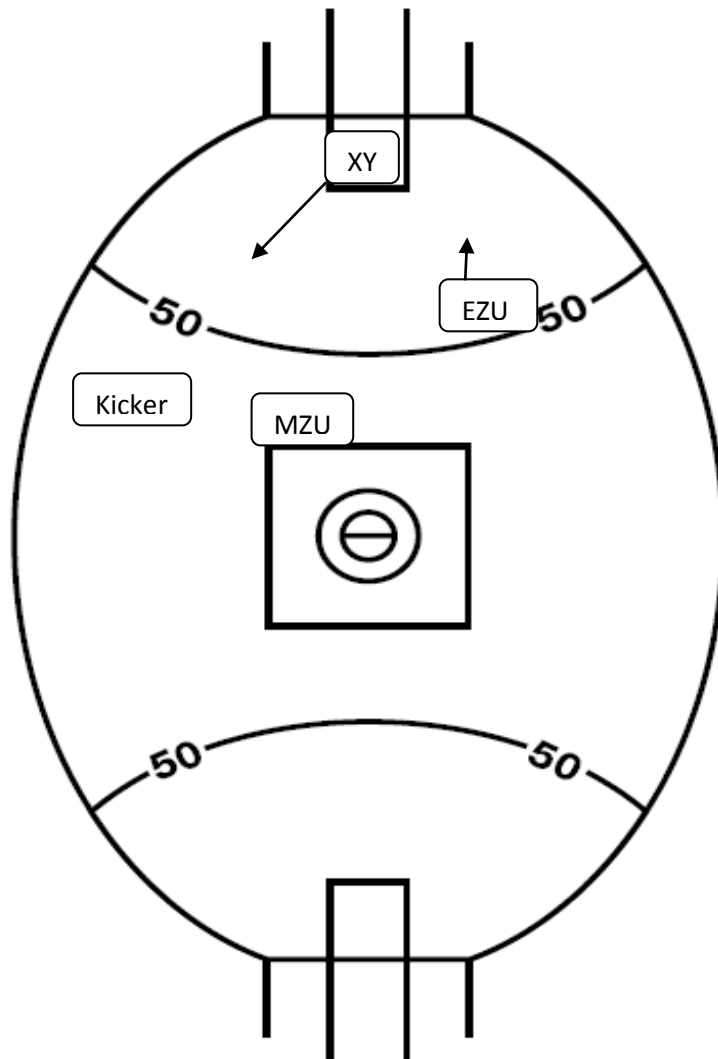
Scenario – Moving in to set mark or free kick (A) and a quick play-on occurs at the top of the 50m arc. Player passes ball to free teammate in goal square (B) resulting in a set kick at goal directly in front of the goals. Umpire must not run directly to the player marking the ball in the square but should move quickly to a position side on to the mark. Then trigger in to set the mark and the player on the mark. The umpire should anticipate that the mark will be taken but wait and blow the whistle when it is taken. This drill can be completed in pairs with a senior umpire running with a lesser experienced umpire.



Skill drill 2 3 Umpire system – entry into forward 50

Focus – End zone umpire making position to observe contest when the ball enters forward 50 from a set kick outside the 50m arc

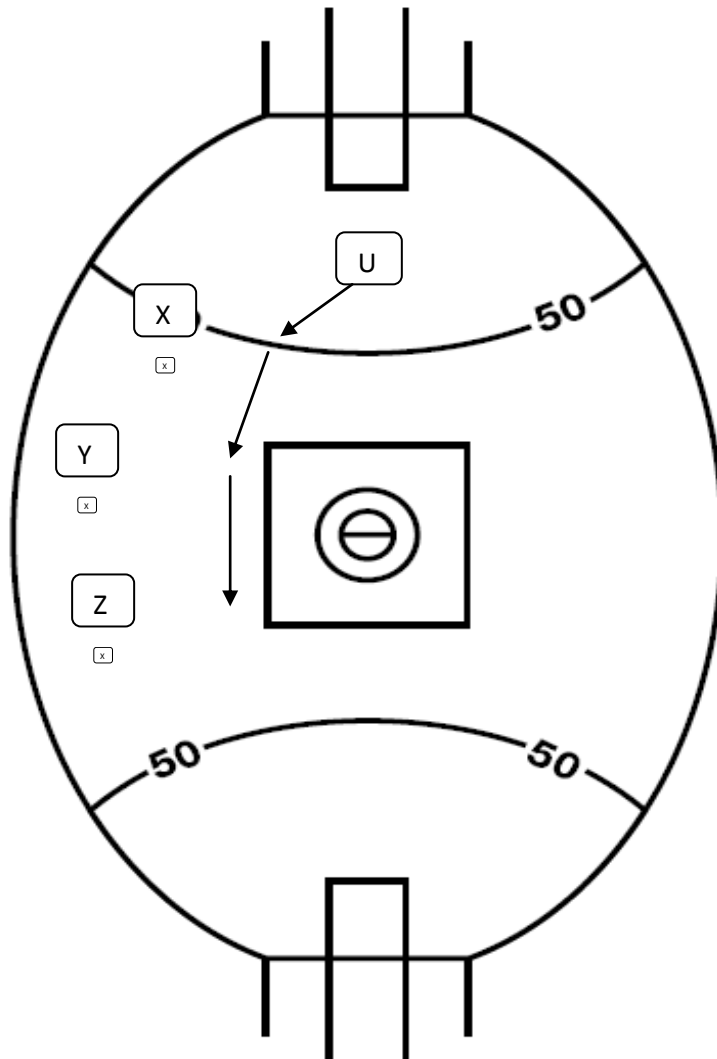
Method – Umpires to complete the drill in pairs, one MZ one EZ. Emphasise the role of the end zone umpire who should be watching the players forward of the play ensuring any infringements are identified and penalised.



Skill drill 3 Trigger running – Change of Control

Focus – Change of pace, 2 umpire system

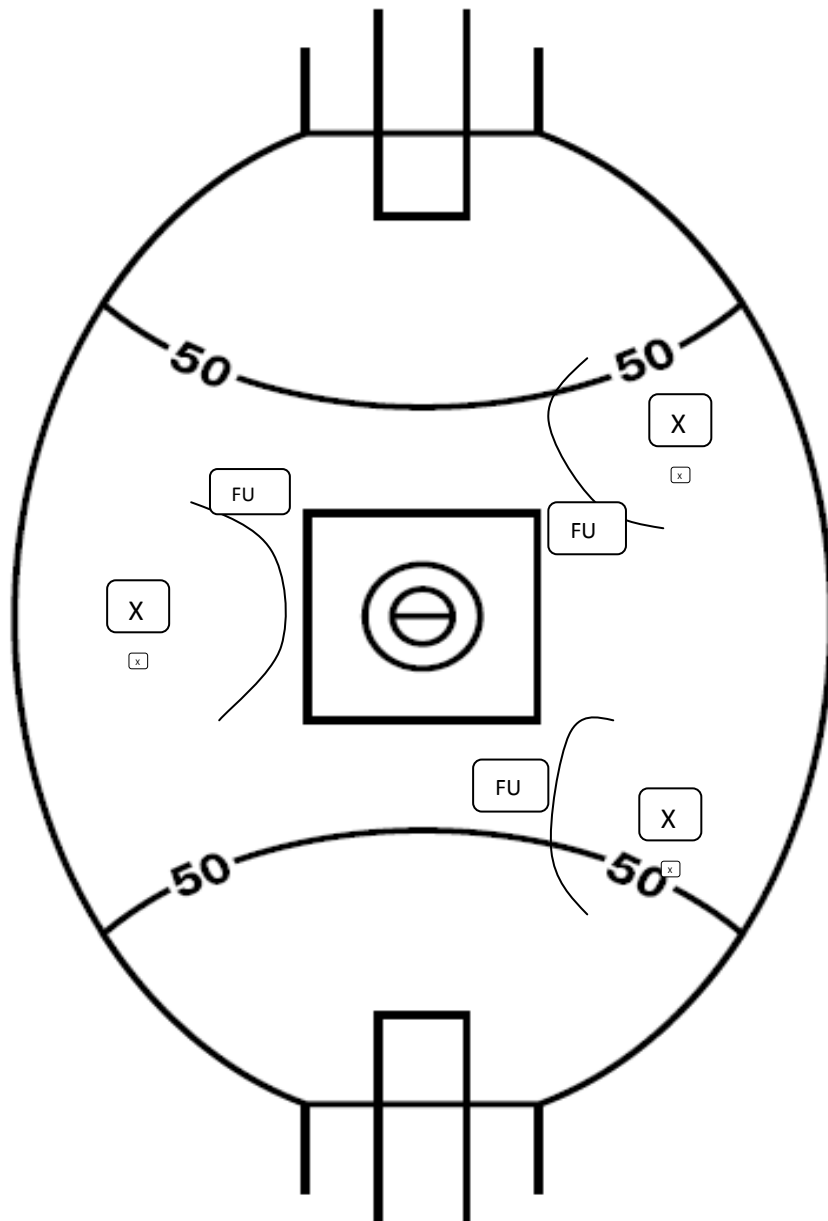
Method – Player kicks the ball into play after a behind has been scored and the ball is marked near the 50m arc, (X) Short kick to teammate, (Y) the umpire retains control and triggers to position to set the mark, player moves ball on quickly and umpire must be decisive with 'play on' call and triggers to next contest a further 40m up the ground, (Z)



Skill drill 4 Positioning when ball is in a pack of players (Skirting the pack)

Focus – maintaining good vision of the contest and ball when ball is in pack situation

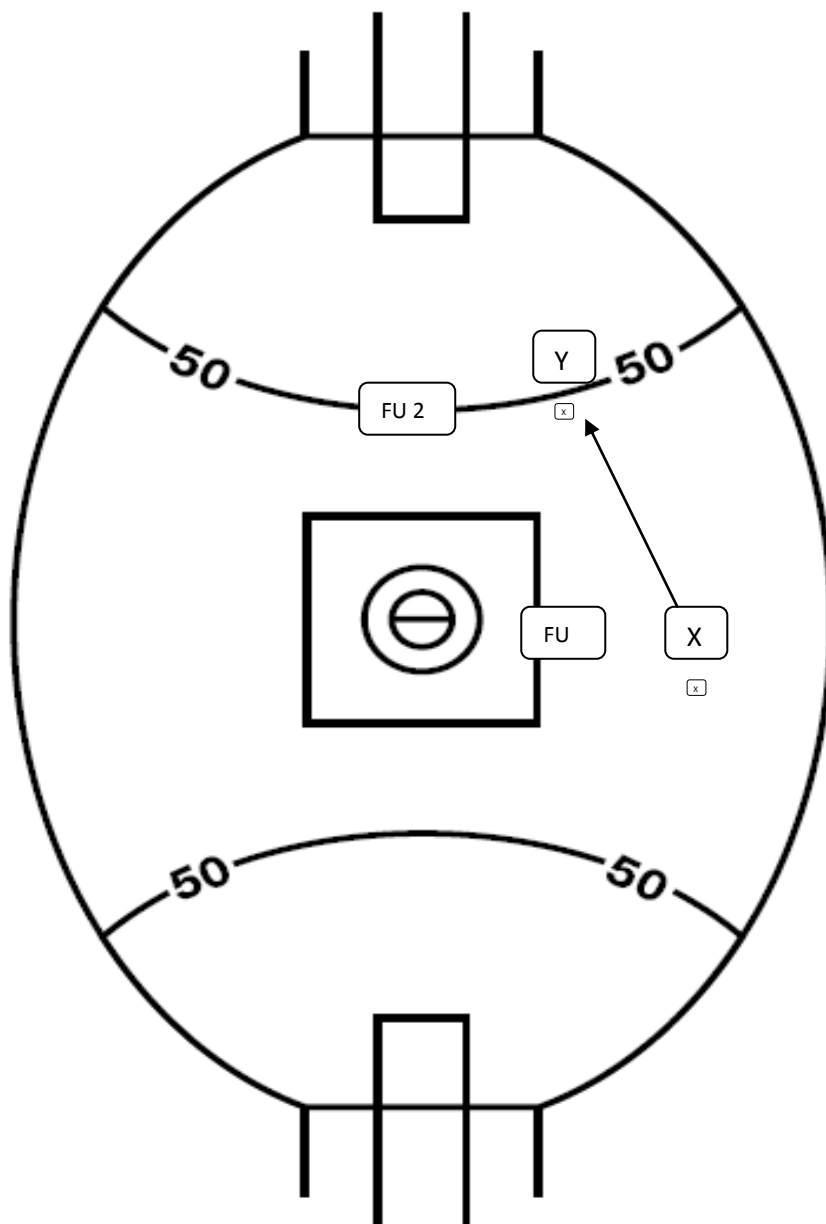
Method – Set up two or three players in various spots around ground (position X) who are ready to contest the football, keeping the ball in a pack formation. Place a set number of umpires, 4 to 6, who will adjudicate the contest. Activity can be completed as a single umpire or in pairs. The aim is for umpires to remain 20-25m from contest, altering position to ensure a changing view of the players, the ball and those attempting to gain possession of the football.



Skill drill 5 Observation of player who has disposed of the ball (hotspots) – 2 umpire system

Focus – managing late bumps / tackles and players who retaliate. Umpire must ‘hold his / her vision’ on player who has disposed of football and manage any incidents.

Method – cones to be arranged in manner shown in diagram, umpires to act as players at positions X and Y, ball is kicked into players at X from defensive end, ball is gathered and kicked toward players at Y. Umpire must ensure there are no infringements after player has disposed.

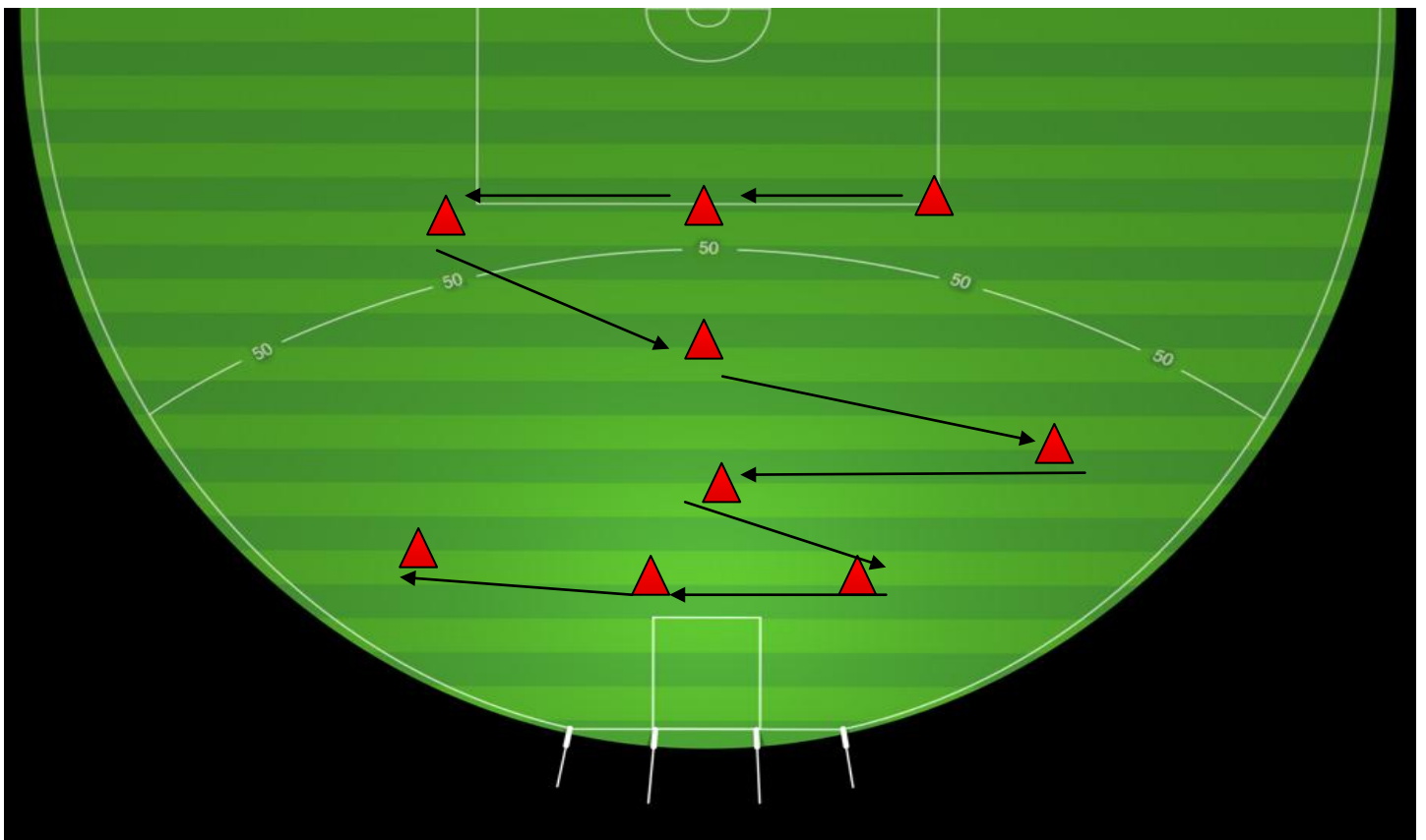


Skill drill 6 Developing a loud whistle, voice control, clear non-verbal indications and handing control to partner.

Method – Set up cones as per the diagram below, laminated sheets with instruction to be at each cone. Umpire runs to cone 1 and reads the instruction on sheet then runs to cone 2 and completes the task, the process is repeated until all cones are reached and the umpire returns to start.

Laminated Sheet Instructions

1. Trigger run to volatile situation
2. Run to next cone and award a mark
3. Run to next cone and award Push in the Back
4. Run to next cone and award High tackle
5. Run to next cone and award Incorrect Disposal
6. Trigger run to cone and Set the mark
7. Run past goal area and communicate all clear for a behind
8. Run past goal area and communicate all clear a goal
9. Run back to start and hand control of play over

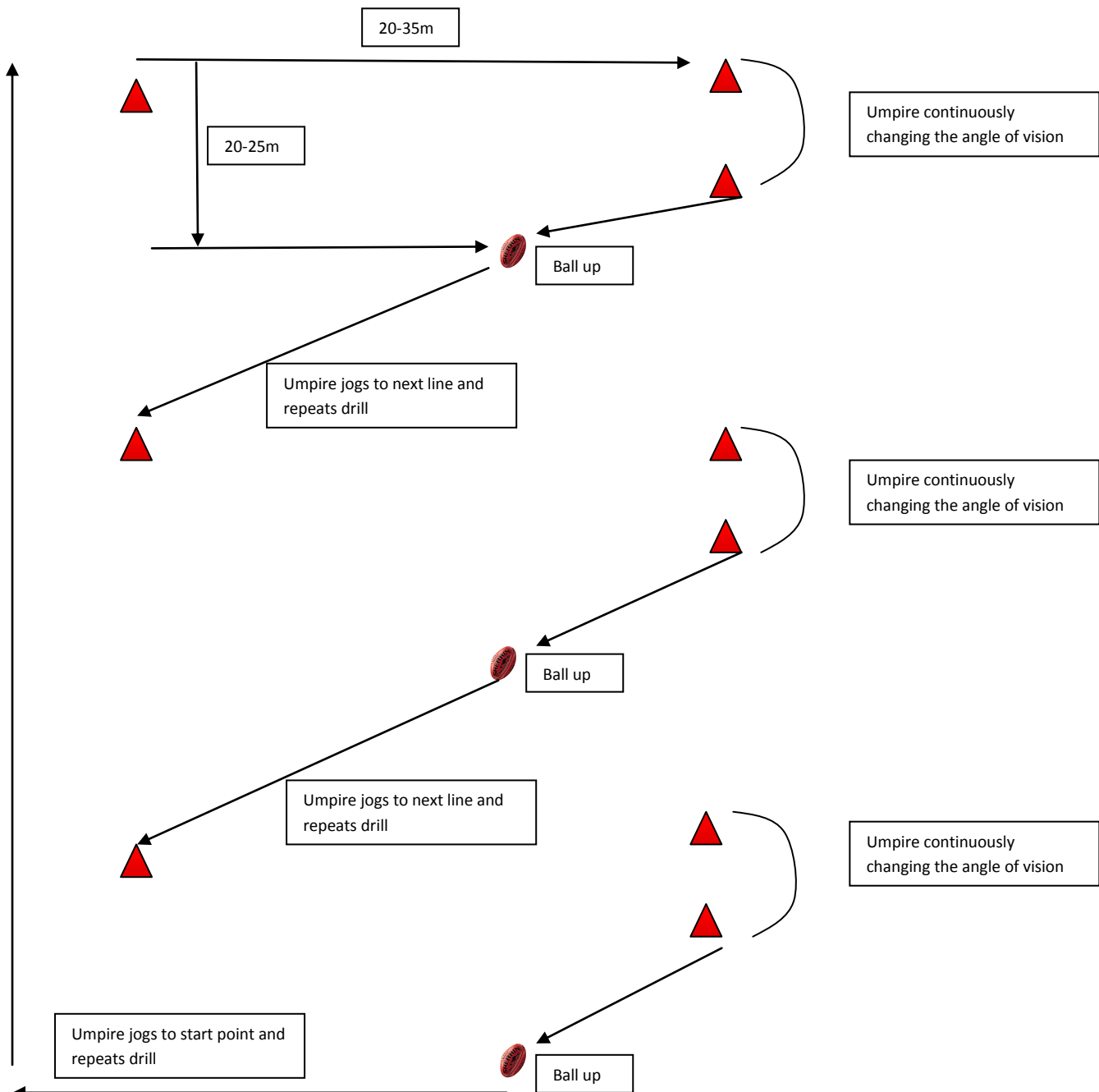


Skill drill 7 Improving your angle of vision.

Focus – This drill is designed to encourage umpires to continually change their vision angle on a contested ball situation, rather than simply maintaining their same viewpoint.

The umpire is tracking the football down the field, keeping 'umpiring distance' from the football, as the ball slows and becomes heavily contested the umpire 'hooks' to continually change their vision of the contest and they close the distance before making a decision at the third cone and triggering into the contest.

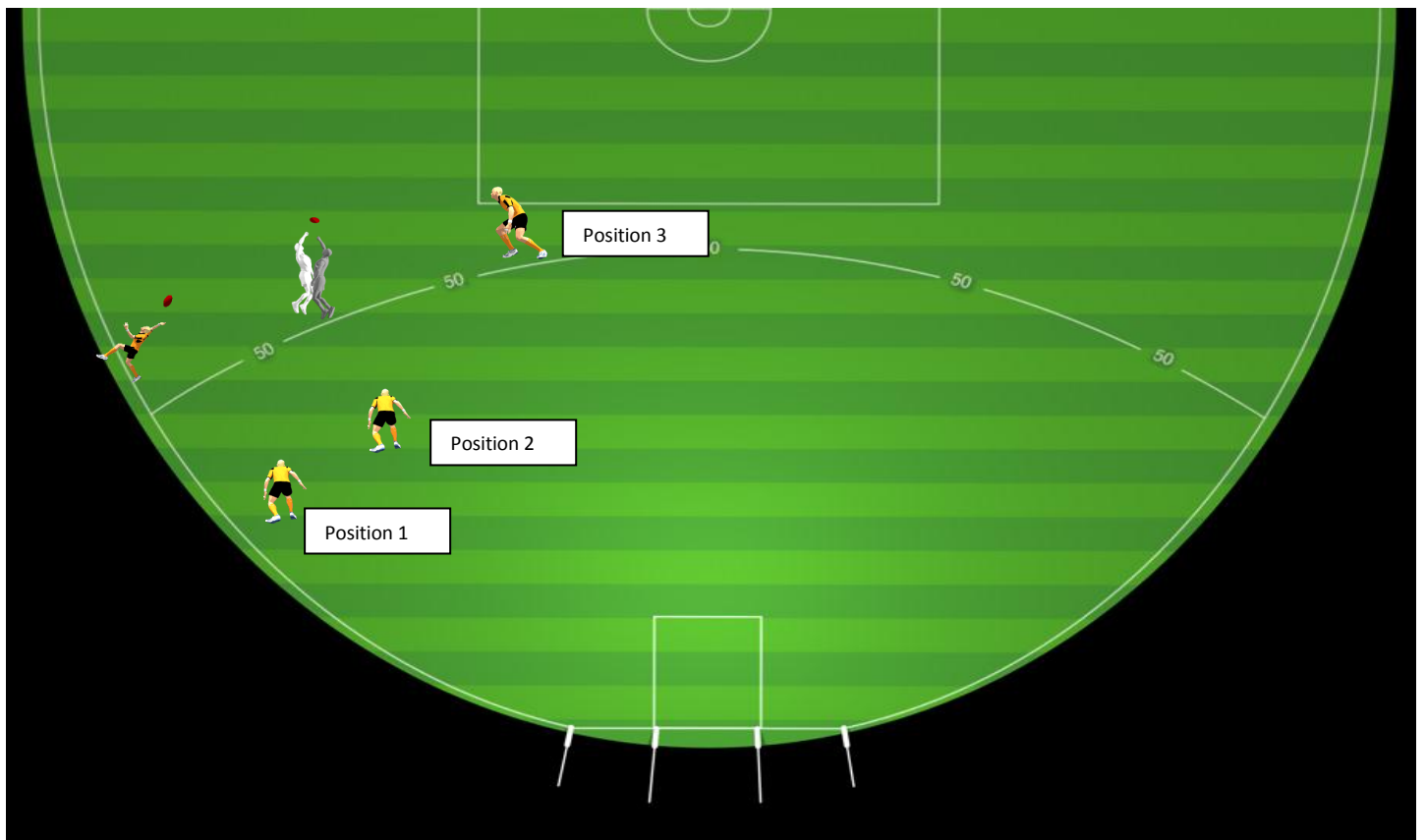
To allow the drill to remain continuous, the decision is a ball up, which the umpire performs and, after backing out, they recover to the next cone as indicated to perform the same drill a second and third time in relay. After the third time they recover to the start point to begin the drill again.



Skill drill 8 Boundary throw-ins

Focus – correct positioning throughout and recovery to be inside play after contest

Method – drill is set up as per the below diagram, ball is rolled OOB, BU whistles and indicates OOB, FU whistles and asks the BU to throw the ball back into play. FU takes up initial position (1), as ball is thrown into play, FU moves to position slightly forward of ruck contest (2), after contest (and no free kick is paid) the FU moves to a position inside play (3)



Skill drill 9 Distance between field umpires – 2 Field umpire system

Focus – ensuring both umpires maintain an appropriate distance from each other and play

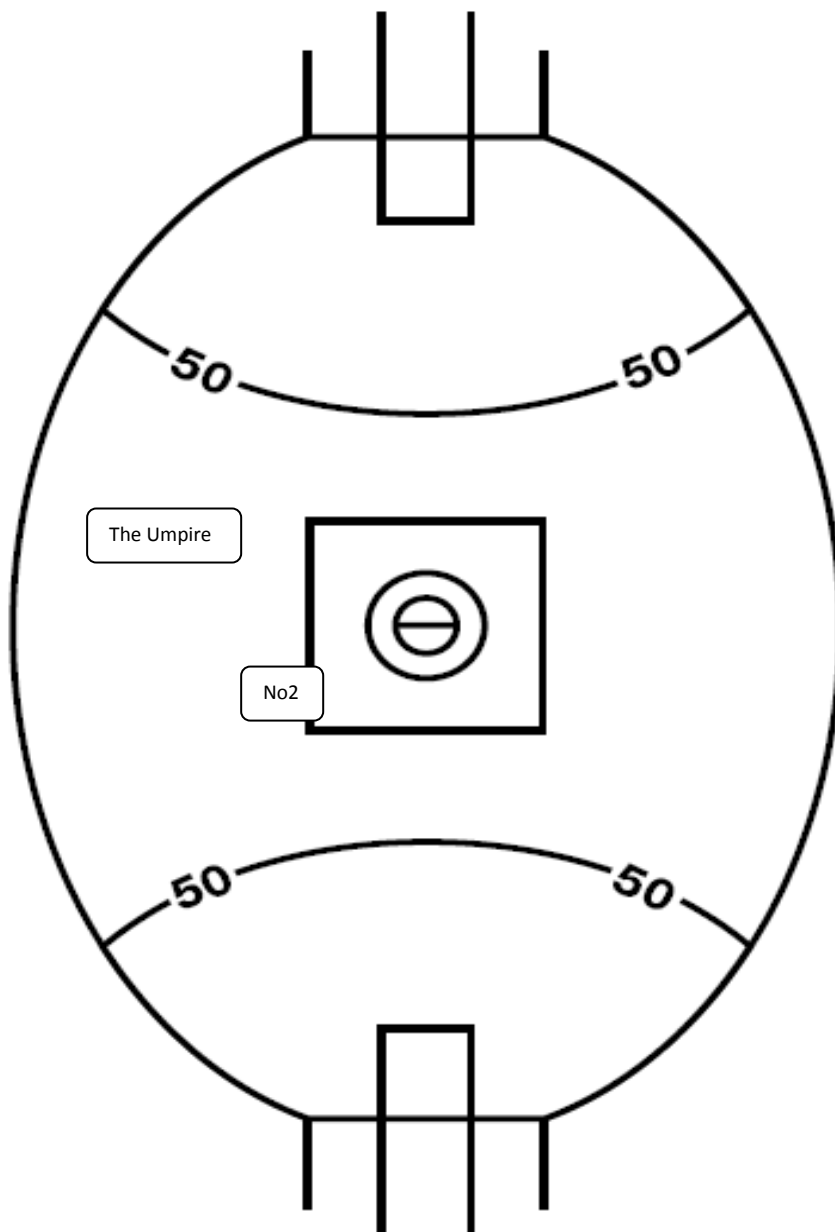
Method – FU's to work in pairs and rotate task of The Umpire and No2 umpire.

The umpire takes up a position on the field and No2 positions him/herself accordingly.

Umpires must have an awareness of other umpires on the ground.

The umpire runs into various positions across oval for a period of 5 minutes, No2 must adjust position according to where The umpire runs, incorporating trigger point running, boundary throw-ins, running backwards, giving all clears, field ball ups etc.

After 5 minutes, umpires come together for group debrief and drill is repeated with roles reversed.



Skill drill 10 Observation and presence after all clear for a goal

Focus – umpire to have an awareness of what players are doing after the ball has gone through the scoring area.

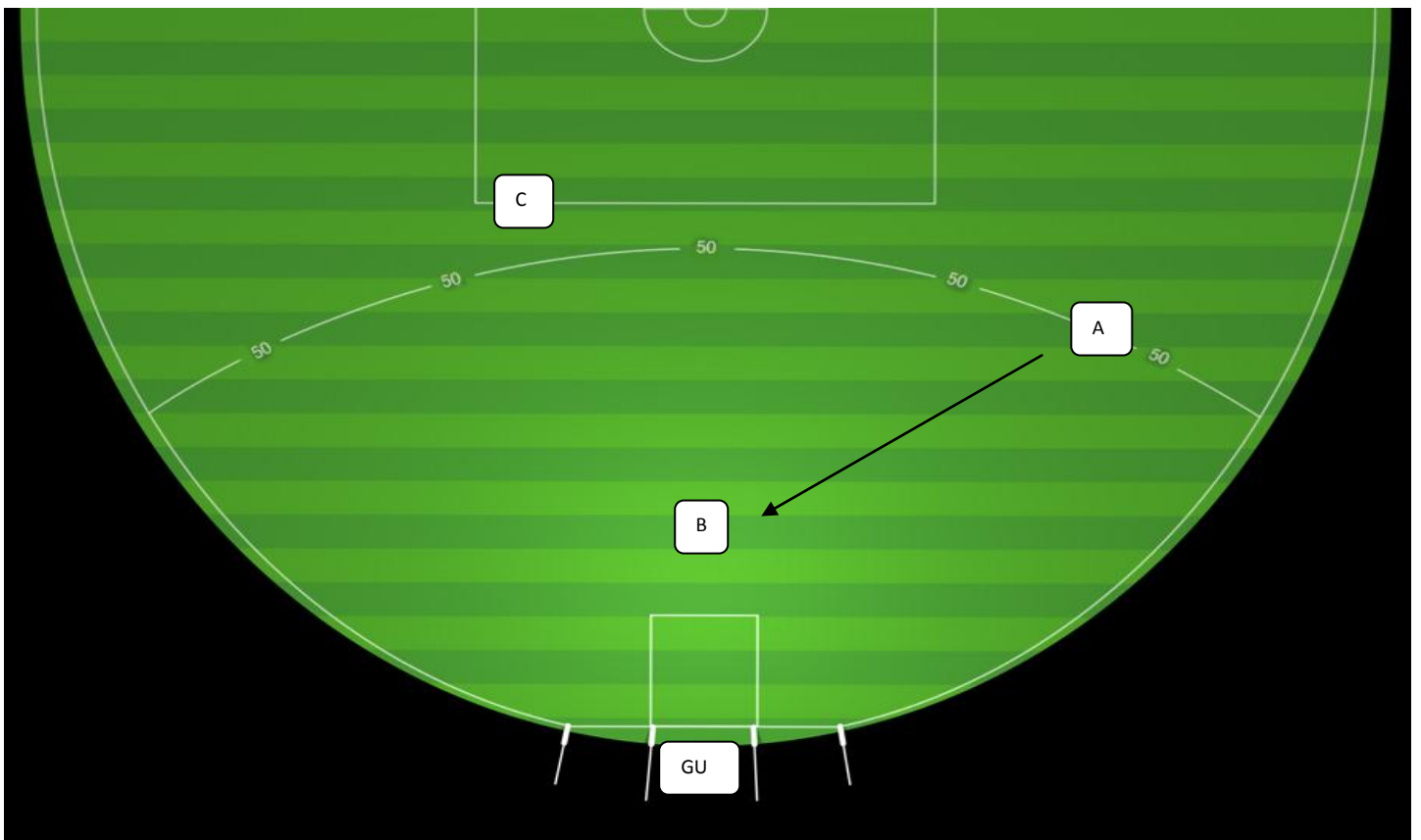
Method – Field umpires to gather in a line on the 50m arc, 20m in from boundary line

Goal umpire to assemble behind goal line and be ready to rotate through after each all clear is given. (GU)

Field umpire to trigger from starting position to (A) on the major axis 15 – 20m from goal (B) where a witch's hat is placed giving the all clear for a goal to the goal umpire

Emphasis on all clear signal and voice as well as keeping observation on goal square and running in an arc backwards to position as the non-controlling umpire (C)

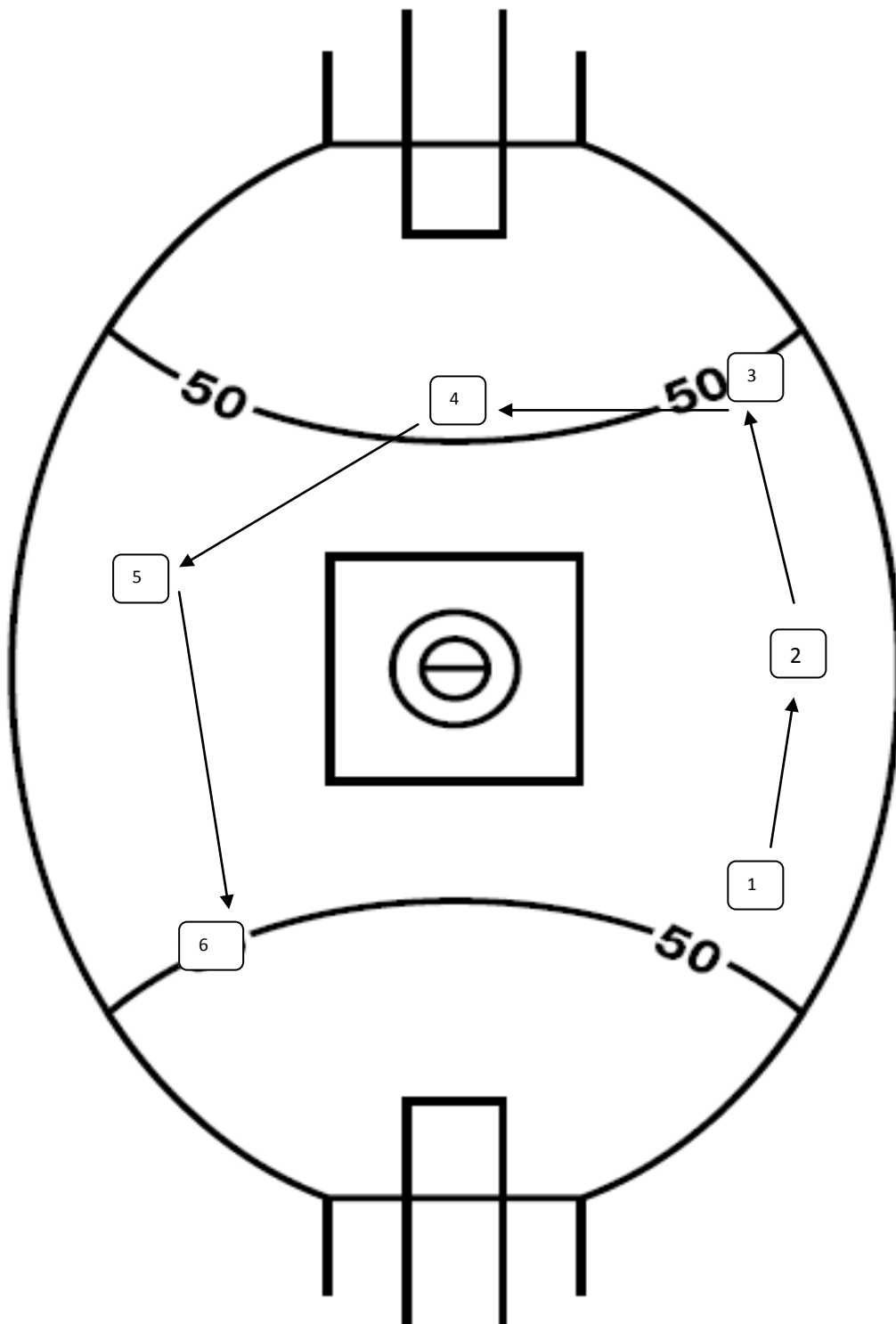
Note – umpires should never turn their back on goal square, the last act of play and must maintain observation after giving all clear, so they can react if an incident occurs. Umpires must not walk back to position (C)



Skill drill 11 Mid zone control and positioning

Focus – early movement to ensure umpire is at next contest

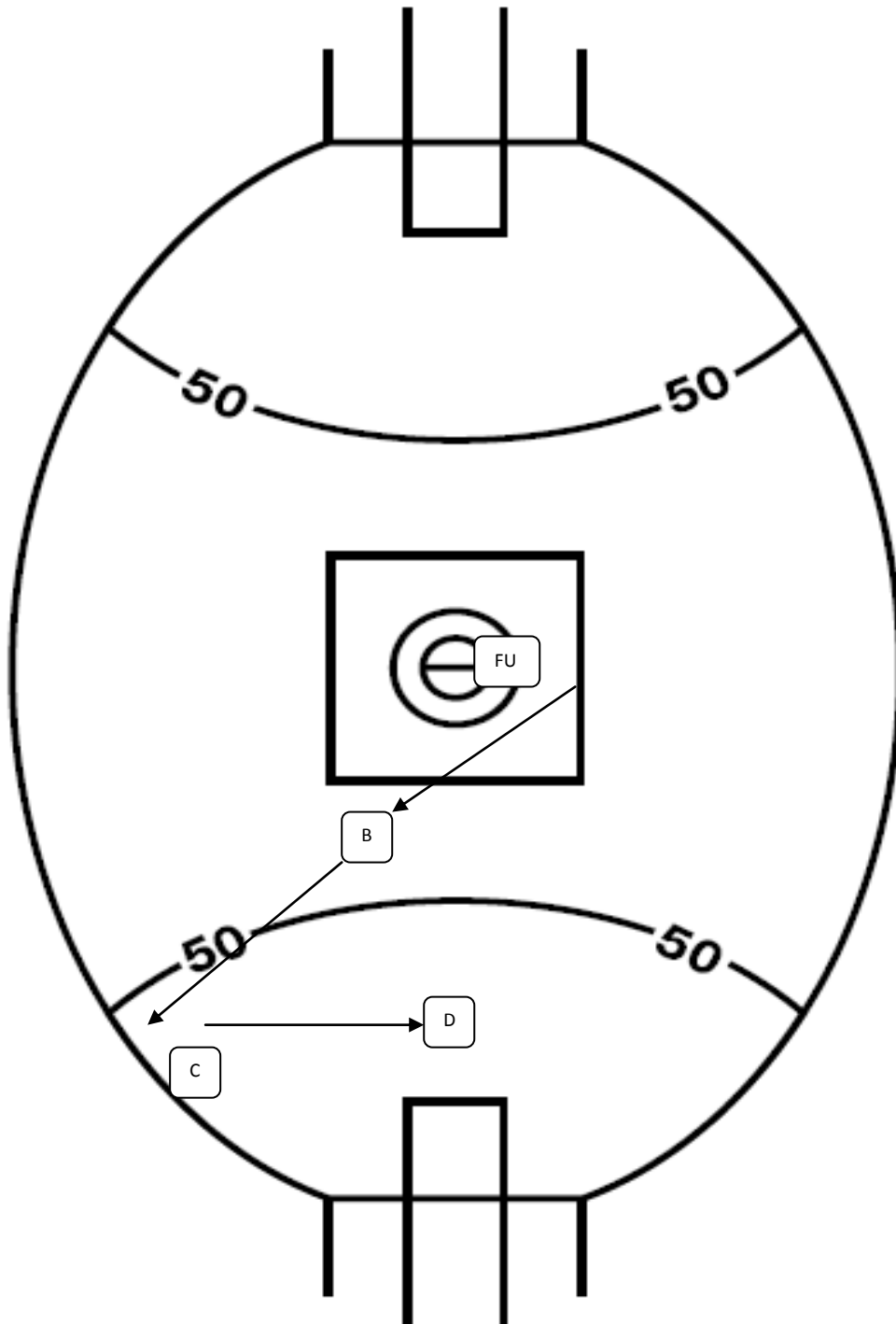
Method – Start at cone (1), with ball up, ball is kicked to cone (2); umpire to call what happens or whistles a free kick. Play moves to each cone where coach can call decision and umpire must 'blow, show, and go'. Final cone is a set kick



Skill drill 12 Match simulation – Positioning

Focus – Umpires to maintain correct position at centre ball up, BTI and All Clear

Method – Field umpire performs a centre ball up in centre of ground, ball moves toward 50m arc and free kick is awarded (B). After free kick there is a boundary throw-in inside 50m arc (C). After BTI ball heads towards goal and behind is scored (D)

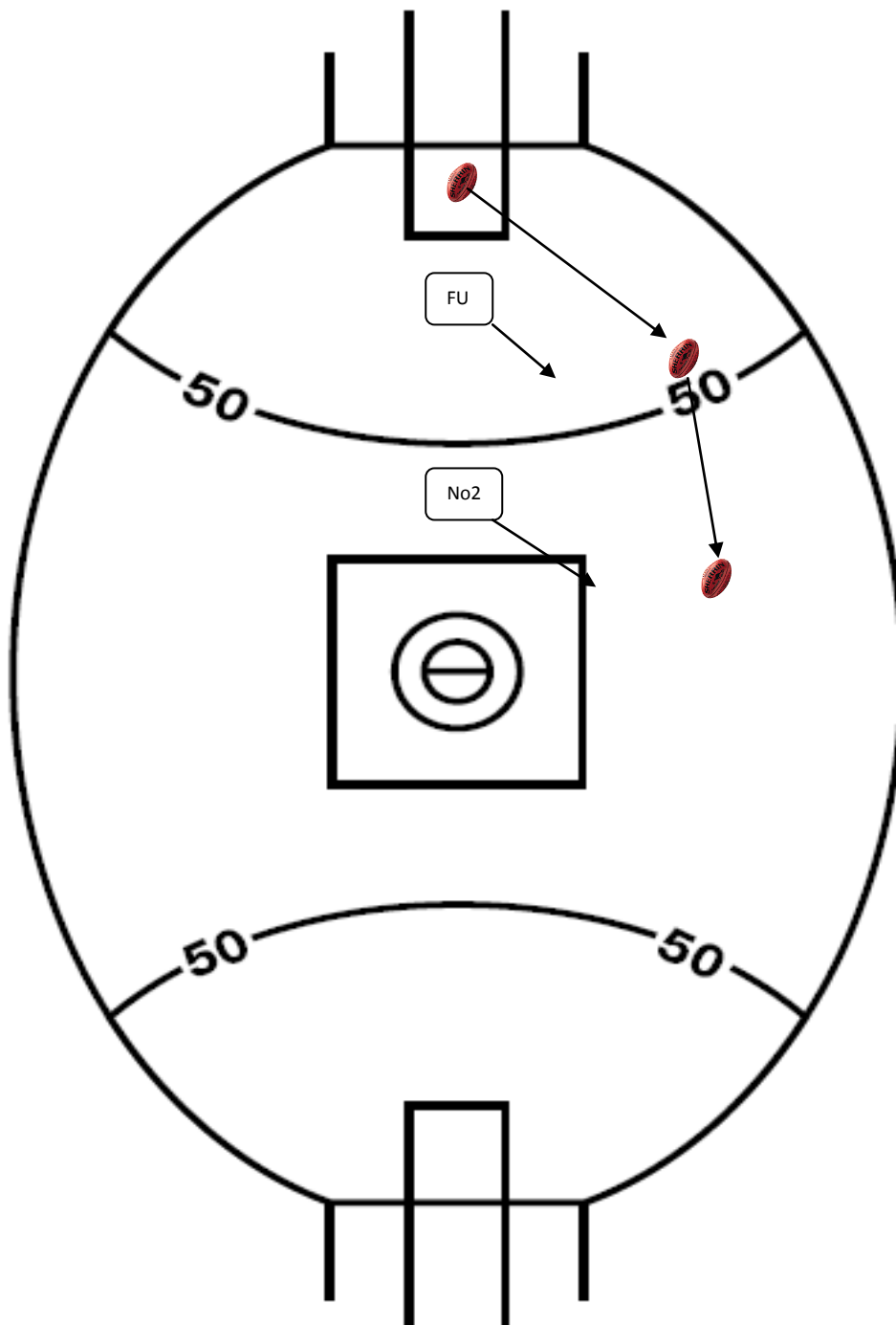


Skill drill 13 Change of control, Kick in from a behind, 2 umpire system

Focus - Positioning, verbal and non-verbal communication

Method – 2 cones set up 50m apart as per diagram. The umpire positions him/herself 15m from kick off line; No2 umpire positions him/herself between back of centre square and 50m arc. Ball is kicked toward flank, mark or free kick is awarded the umpire maintains control and No2 backs away to a position short of the anticipated next contest. Ball is kicked into mid zone where the umpire hands control over to No2, Mark or free kick is paid by umpire.

Repeat drill with umpires rotating through roles.



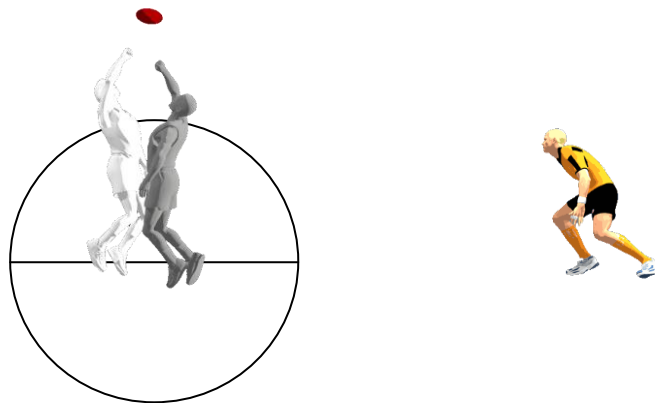
Skill drill 14 Ruck contests – where to look, what to look for

Focus – umpires to understand the various infringements that may occur during ruck contests. Umpires must be able to determine what must be penalised in ruck contests.

Method – use umpires as players in centre and or field ball ups. FU to throw ball into air as he/she would in a match and adjudicate on ‘what he/she observes’. Coach to be wary of where the umpire is looking, e.g. watching players not the ball.

FU to back out quickly, keeping players under observation

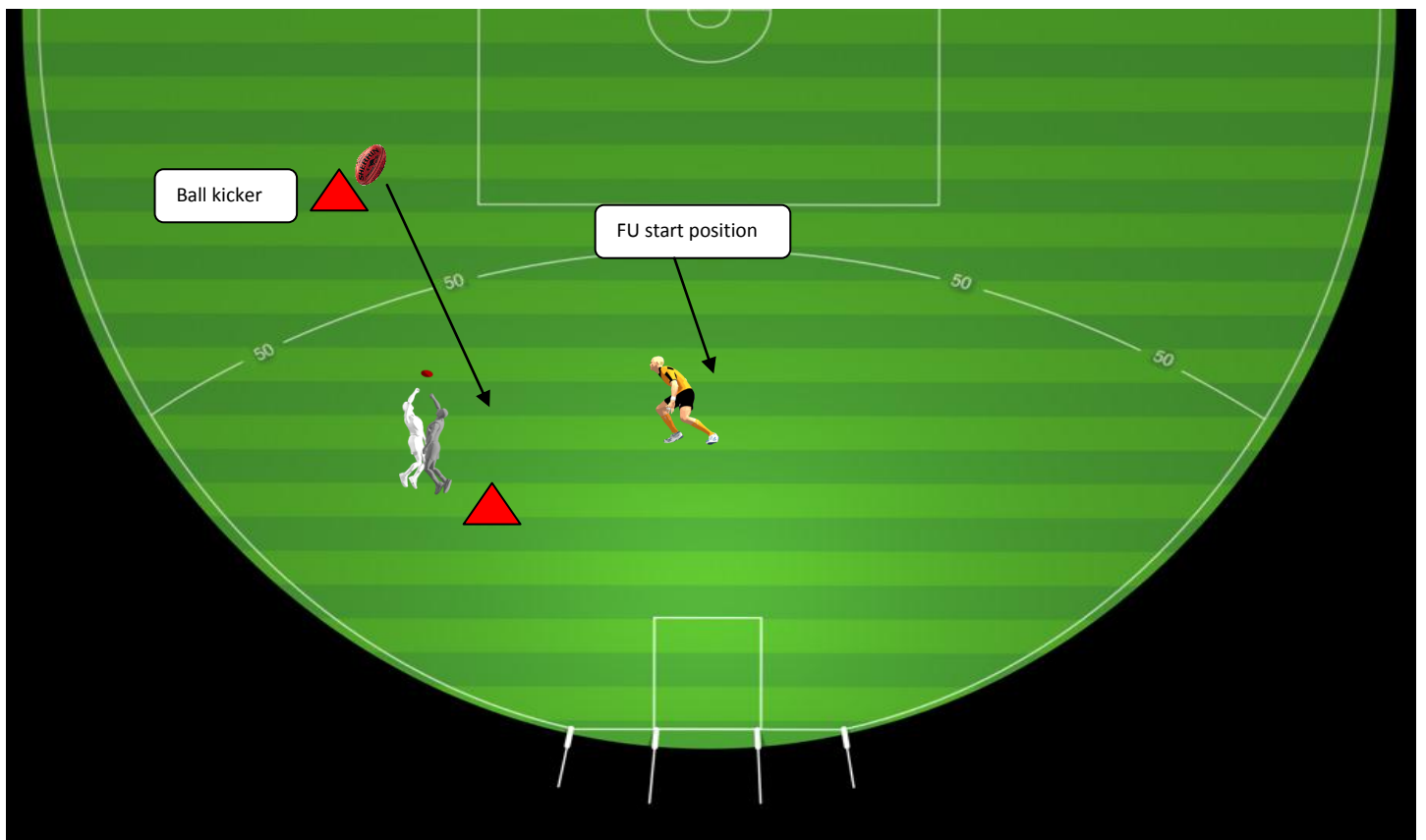
There could be many of these drills set up on oval depending on the number of umpires and coaches available.



Skill drill 15 Marking contests

Focus – umpires to understand the various infringements that occur during marking contests

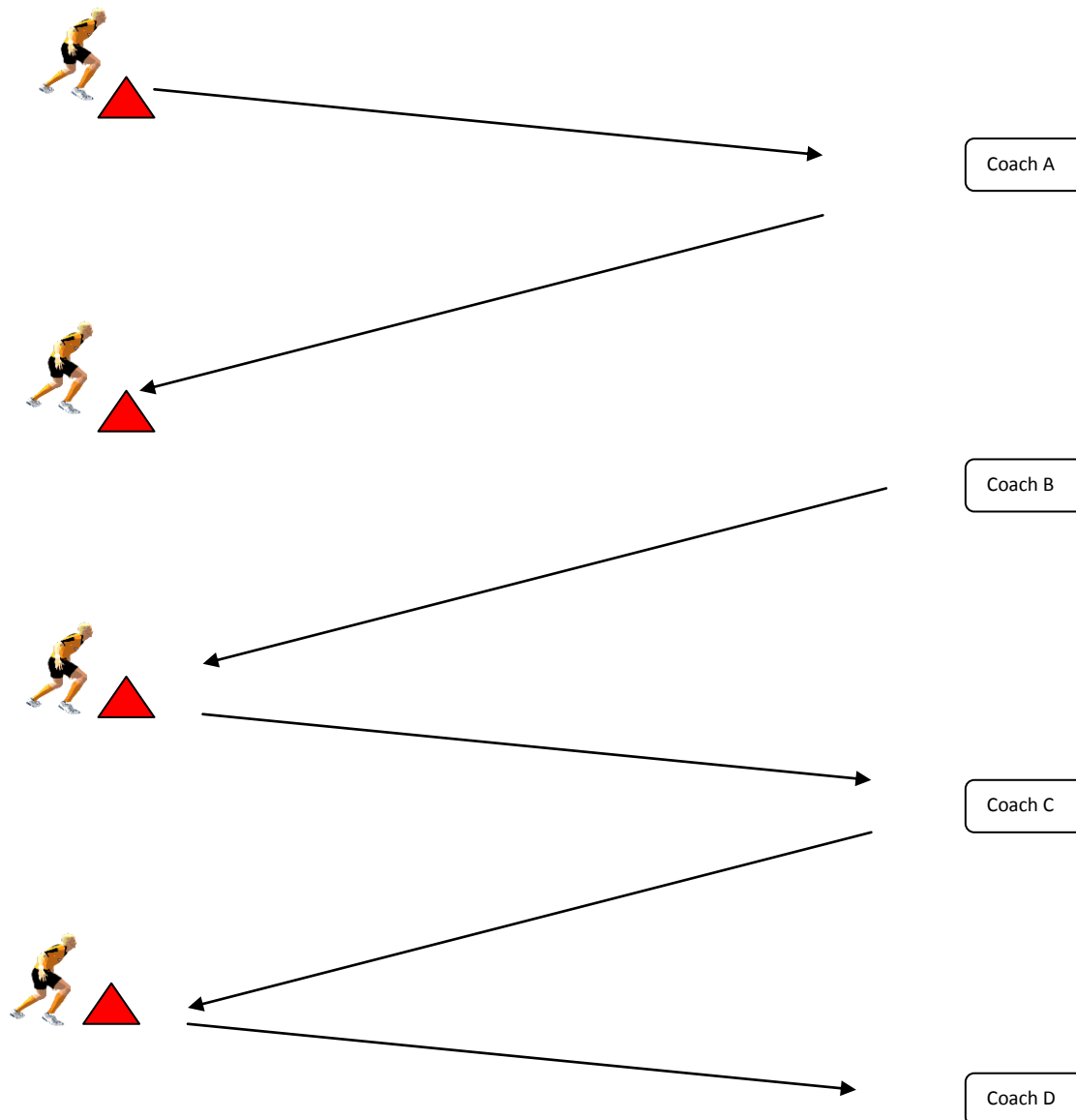
Method – 2 - 6 Umpires acting as players contesting for marks. Cone positioned to indicate side-on to the contest positioning, when ball is kicked umpires will run to a position side on to the contest and penalise any infringements.



Skill drill 16 Indicating free kicks correctly

Focus – ensuring field umpires use the correct indication and terminology for each free kick awarded

Method – 4 cones set up as per diagram below, coaches (or senior umpires) holding free kick cards as per the diagram below. Umpires start at cone 1, running forward the umpire heads toward coach at point A, coach holds up card with a decision, umpires blows whistle, verbally says what the free kick is for and indicates correctly. Umpire backs away and repeats process through 3 more stations.



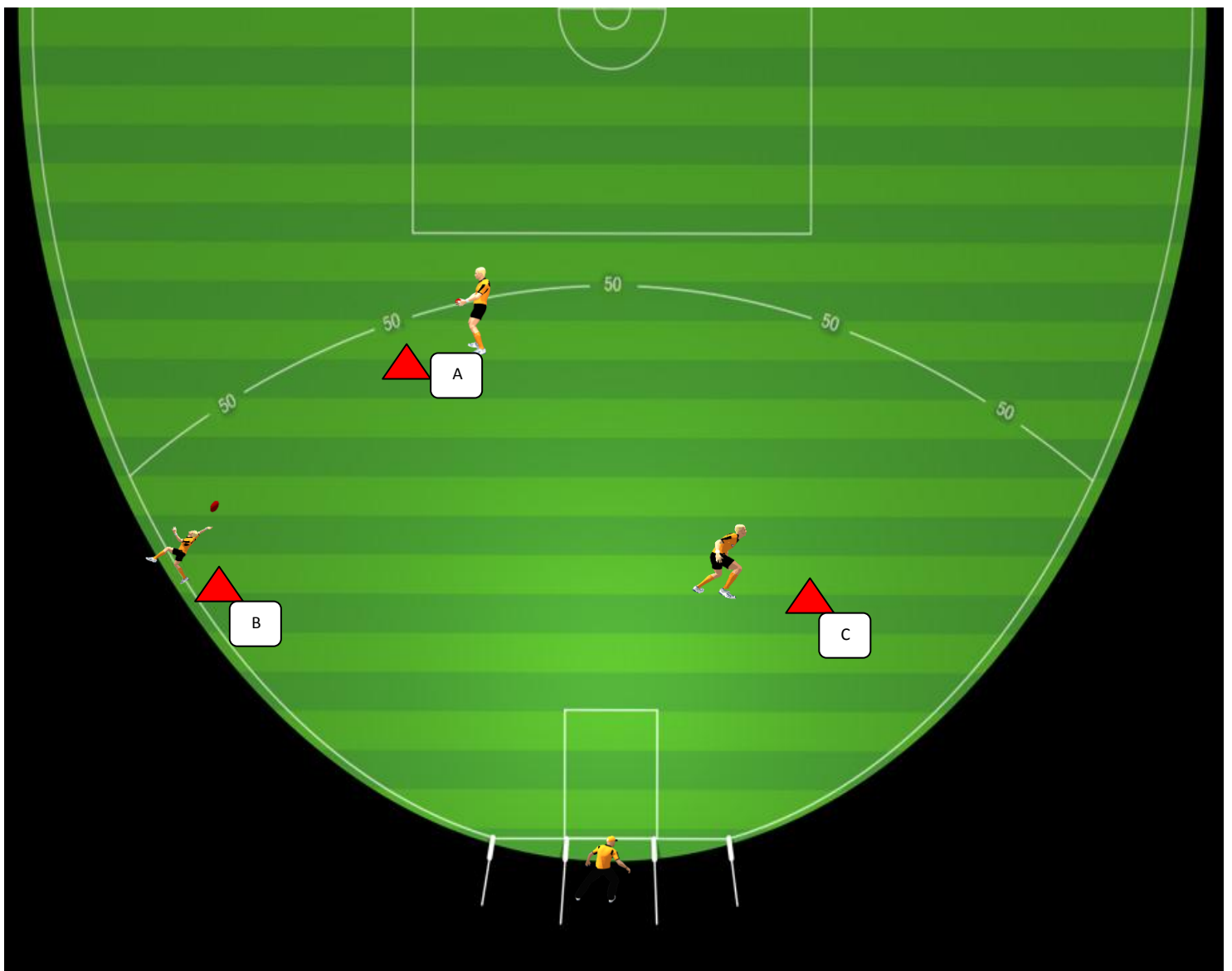
Skill drill 17 Co-operation between field, boundary and goal umpires.

Focus – Running to position, observation of contest for ball and control of set kick

Field Umpire – ruck contest at cone (A), ball moves to cone (B), where ball crosses boundary line, position for BTI is completed and ball moves to cone (C) where mark is paid. Umpire set mark for shot on goal, ball kicked at scoring area, behind scored

Boundary umpire – strong whistle for OOB, throw-in and back away towards behind post, trigger to behind post and communicate with goal umpire.

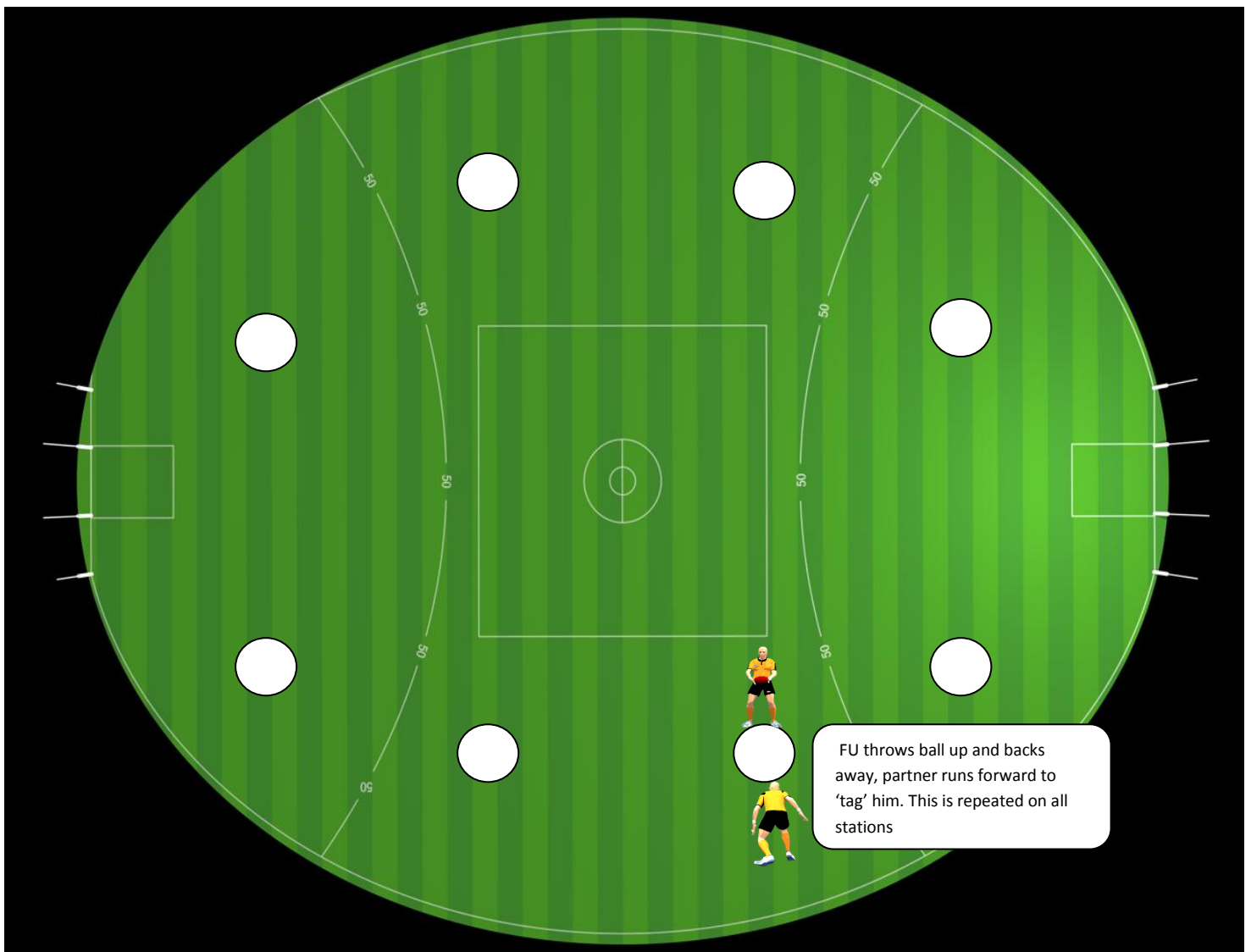
Goal umpire – position for set shot on goal, communicate with boundary umpire, position under flight of ball, indicate behind, retrieve and wave flag.



Skill drill 18 Running Backwards – change of direction

Focus – Back foot running away from stoppage

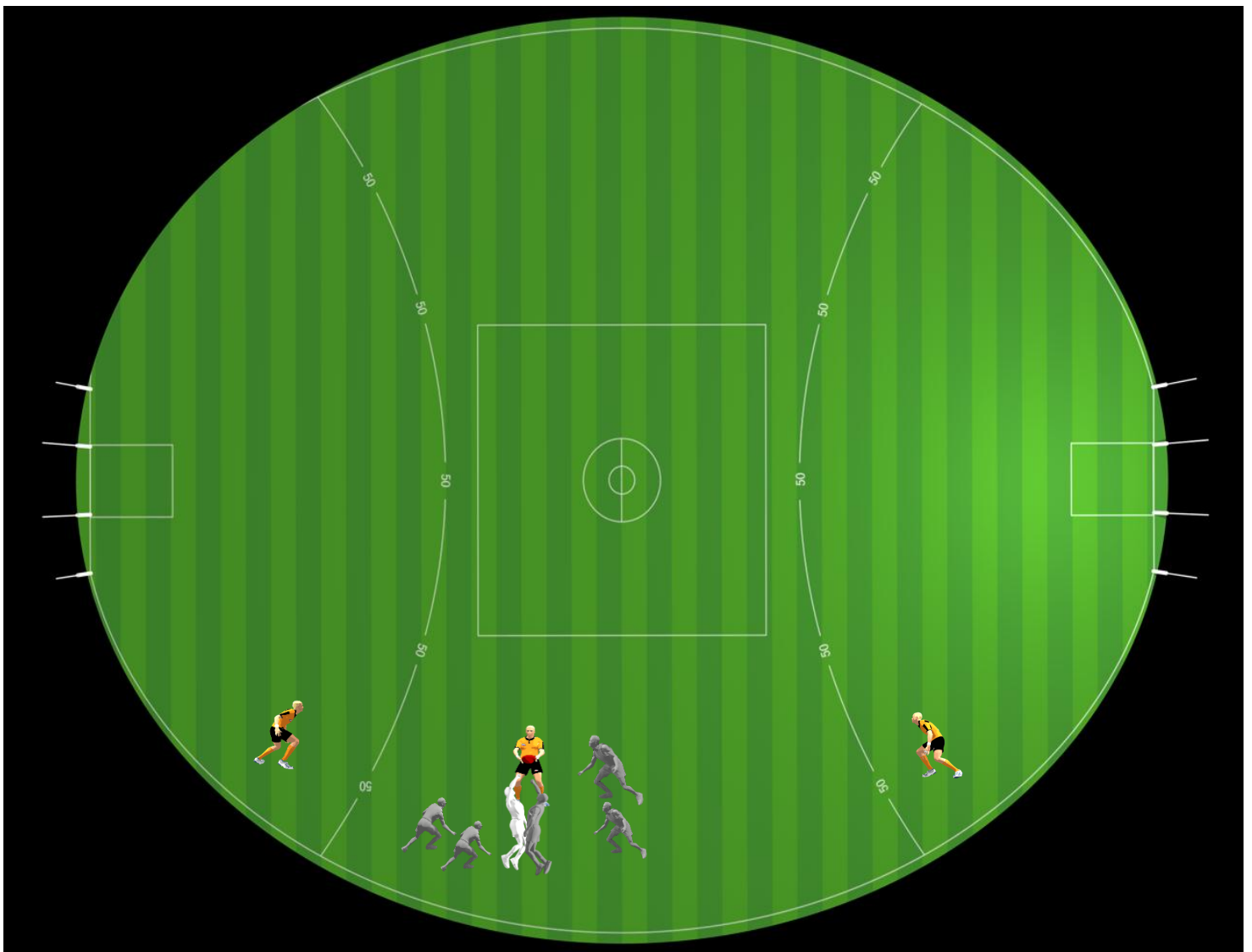
Method – set up multiple stations in the form of a centre circle on the entire oval and place a football in the middle of each circle. Umpires to pair up. Evenly spread the umpires in pairs to a different centre circle formation. One umpire runs, elects to throw ball up and trigger backwards for 10-20m. The umpire's partner starts on the opposite side of the circle and after the ball-up runs forward at speed to attempt to touch the umpire running backwards, (caution is recommended). After 20m of triggering backwards umpires should change direction and sprint to the next centre circle arrangement where the two umpires swap roles and the drill is repeated until all stations have been completed. Repeat as many times as needed.



Skill drill 19 Stoppages, 3 umpire system, observation and teamwork

Focus – more than one set of eyes on the contest and surrounding players

Method – Set up stoppage as per diagram (variation is OOB) in mid-zone, using umpires as players (2 ruckmen, 4-6 on ball players). Correctly set up 3 umpire system using 3 field umpires from the group. Instruct players to role play an infringement (e.g. holding off the ball, blocking or ruck infringement). Mid-zone umpire to start play by throwing ball up, umpires must correctly award the free kick, emphasise – vision of the controlling umpire and supporting end-zone umpires and correct SKC if free kick is awarded from an out of zone umpire. Umpires rotate and repeat.



Skill drill 20 Advantage plays

Focus – Umpires must decide on the players' intention when taking advantage

Method – FU to determine players' actions and / or intentions before calling advantage. Once a player has shown intention to take the advantage, the umpire will call advantage by waving the player on using the advantage indication. From that moment the ball can no longer be recalled, this includes skill errors by player who takes the advantage, e.g. missed shot on goal.

Umpires must widen their view, watching outside run players who gather the ball when it is spilled. Normal prior opportunity law applies to a player who has taken the advantage.

Advantage cannot be applied if play is not continuous, from a centre square infringement or when the siren sounds before the player disposes of the ball.

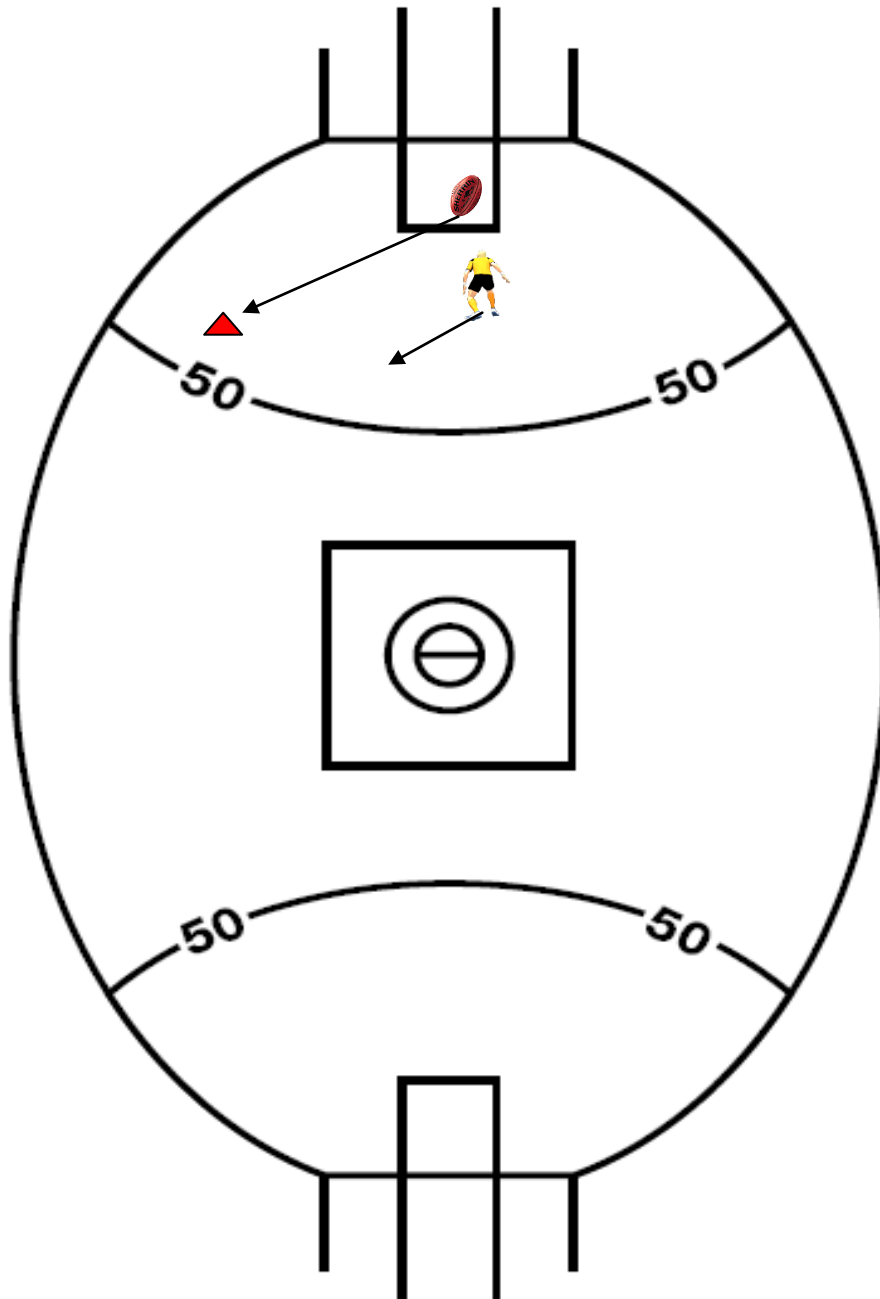
The below diagram shows a ruck contest on the outer half back area, umpire watches and observes an infringement, ball spills to outside player (A) who decides to take advantage, play should be allowed to move on.



Skill drill 21 Positioning – kick-in from a behind

Focus – FU to understand the correct positioning for kick-ins after a behind has been scored.

Method – Set up drill as per below diagram, using umpires as players to kick ball into play and contest ball at cone (A). The umpire to position him/herself 15m from kick off line, ball is kicked toward cone (A) where players contest football, FU runs to be side-on to the contest.



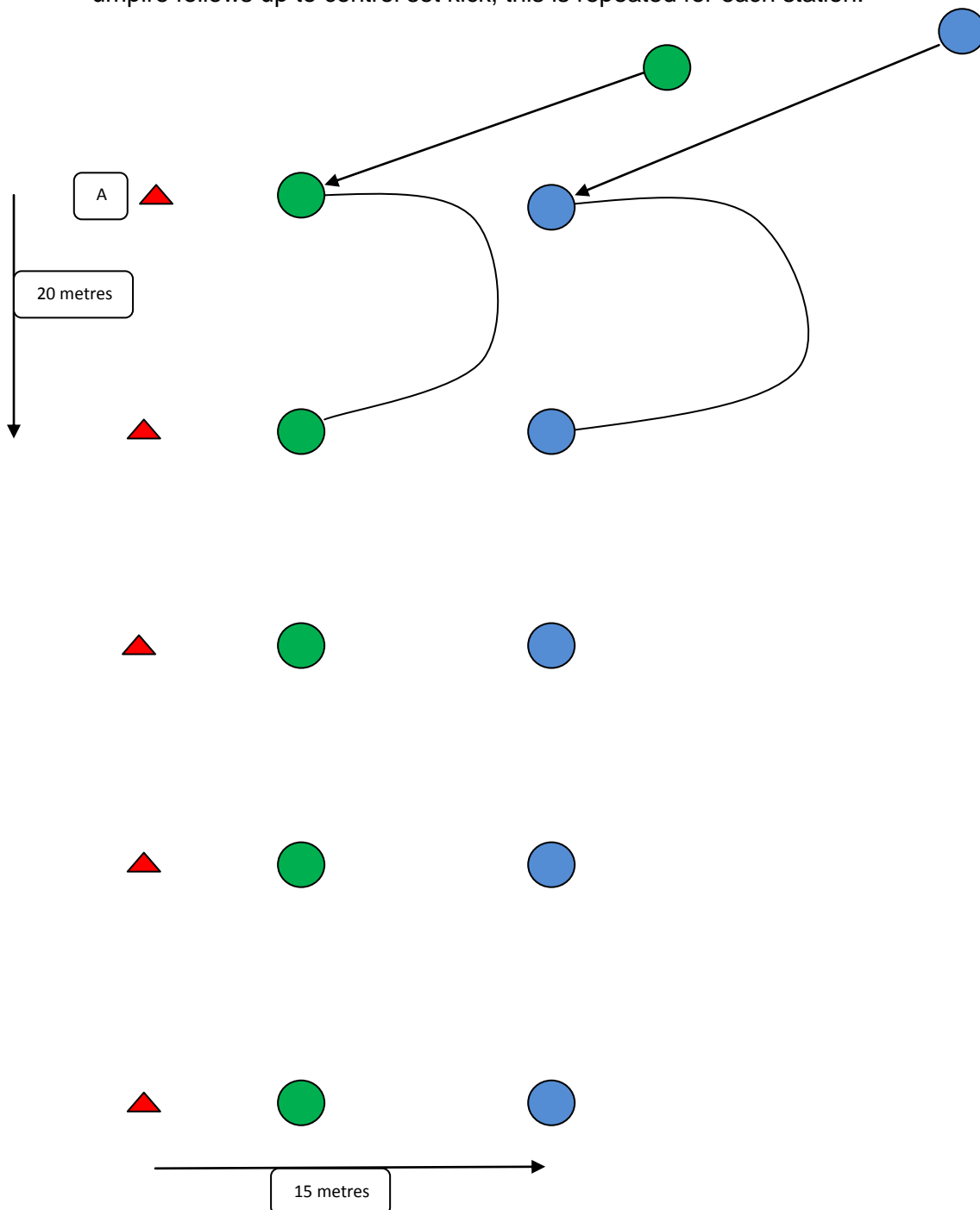
Skill drill 22 3 Field umpire positioning and tap through

Focus – umpire positioning and changeover to partner, tapping through, control of mark, SKC (Set Kick Control)

Method – 2 groups of field umpires, (shown as green and blue in diagram below) positioned a short kick from each other, e.g. 30m

The ball moves along wing with (green) umpire in control, (blue) umpire follows to control set kick.

Green umpire awards a mark or free kick at cone (A) sets mark and backs away, blue umpire follows up to control set kick, this is repeated for each station.

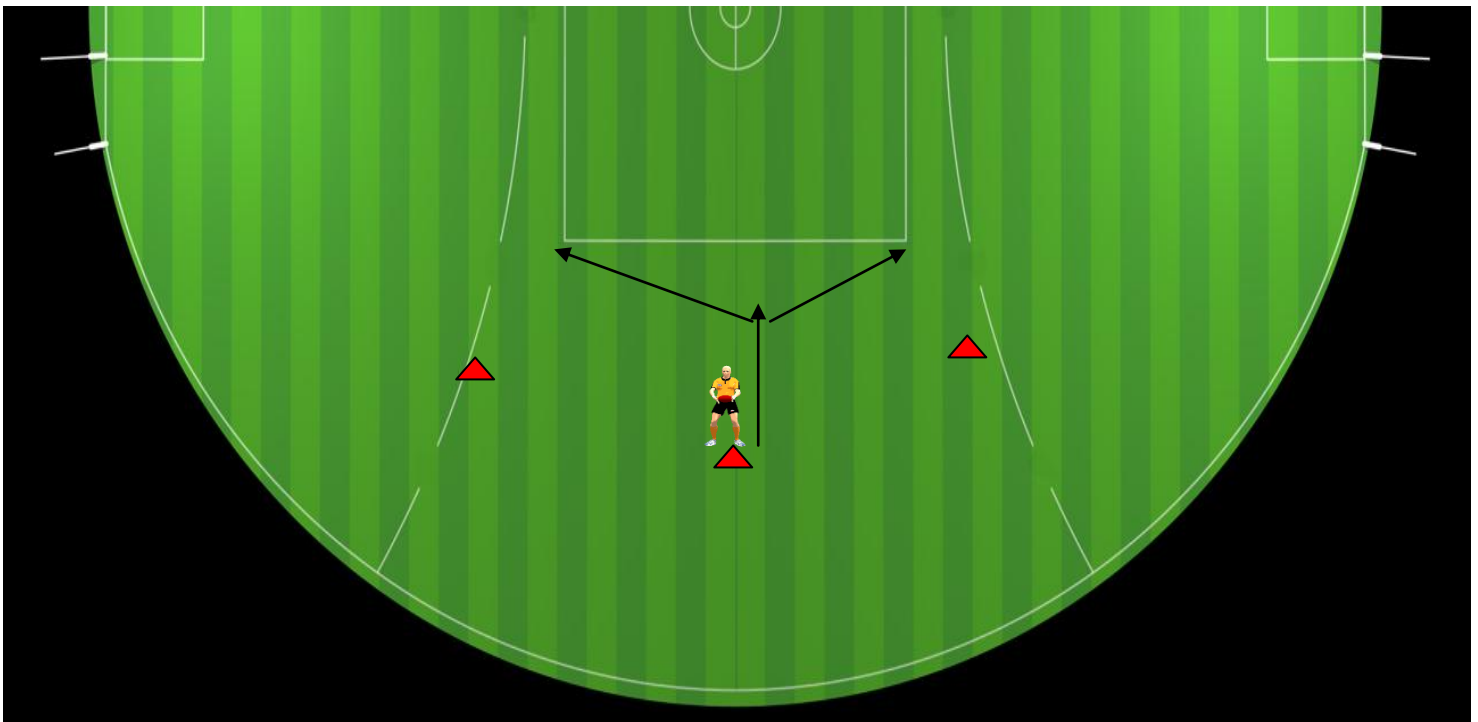


Skill drill 23 Maintaining the correct distance from play

Focus – Field ball-up and backing out then triggering to next act of play

Method – Set up cones as per diagram below, the umpire throws the ball-up as per a field ball up then backs away, trying to get 20 – 25 metres from contest. After contest umpire the triggers, left or right, depending on which way ball moves maintaining 20-25m from next contest.

Variation – could be coach call out which direction ball has moved

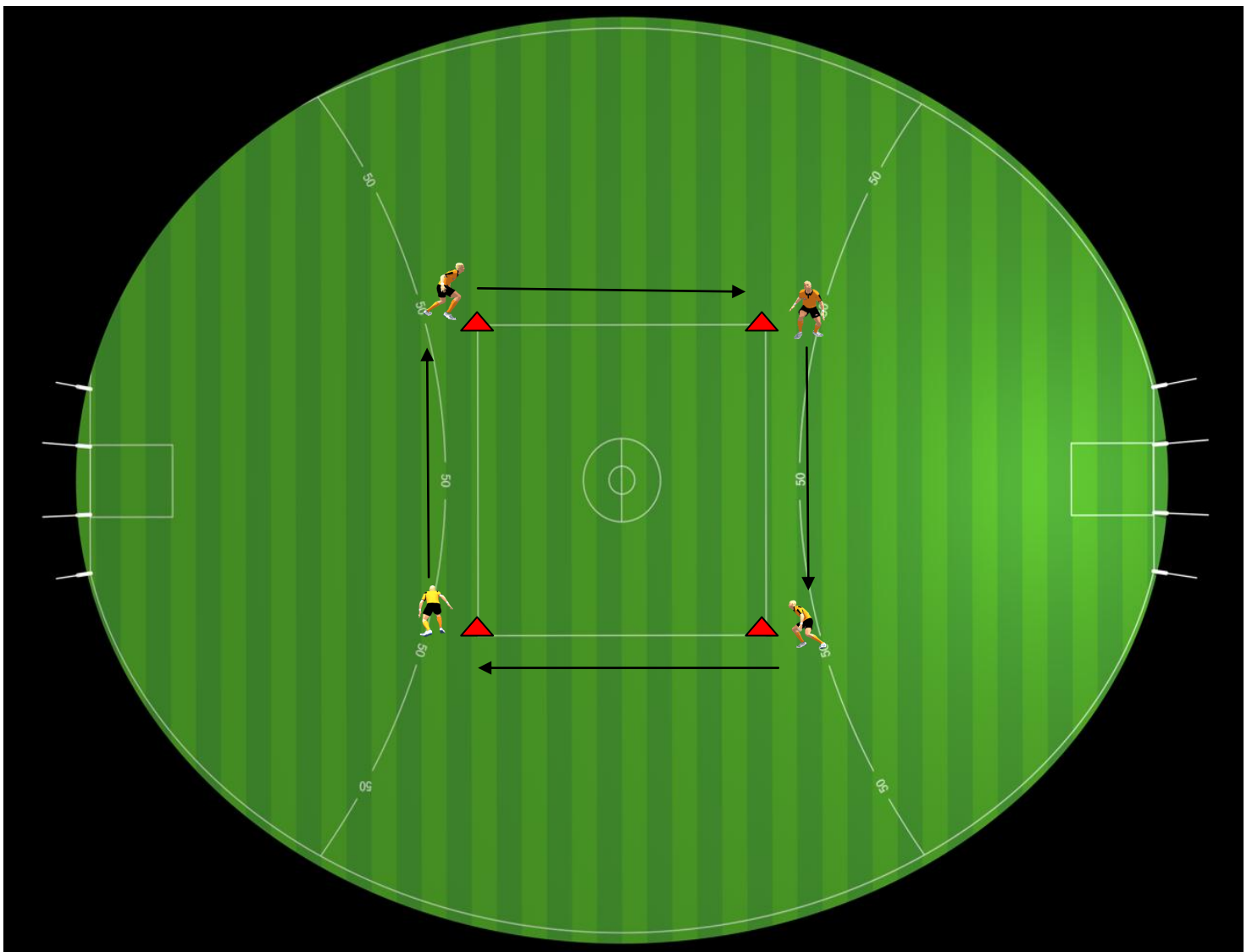


Skill drill 24 Indications

Focus – umpires to display the correct indications for free kicks

Method – position 4 cones, one at each corner of centre square, at each cone a coach or volunteer, calls out a decision for the umpire to signal, e.g. high tackle, push in the back etc

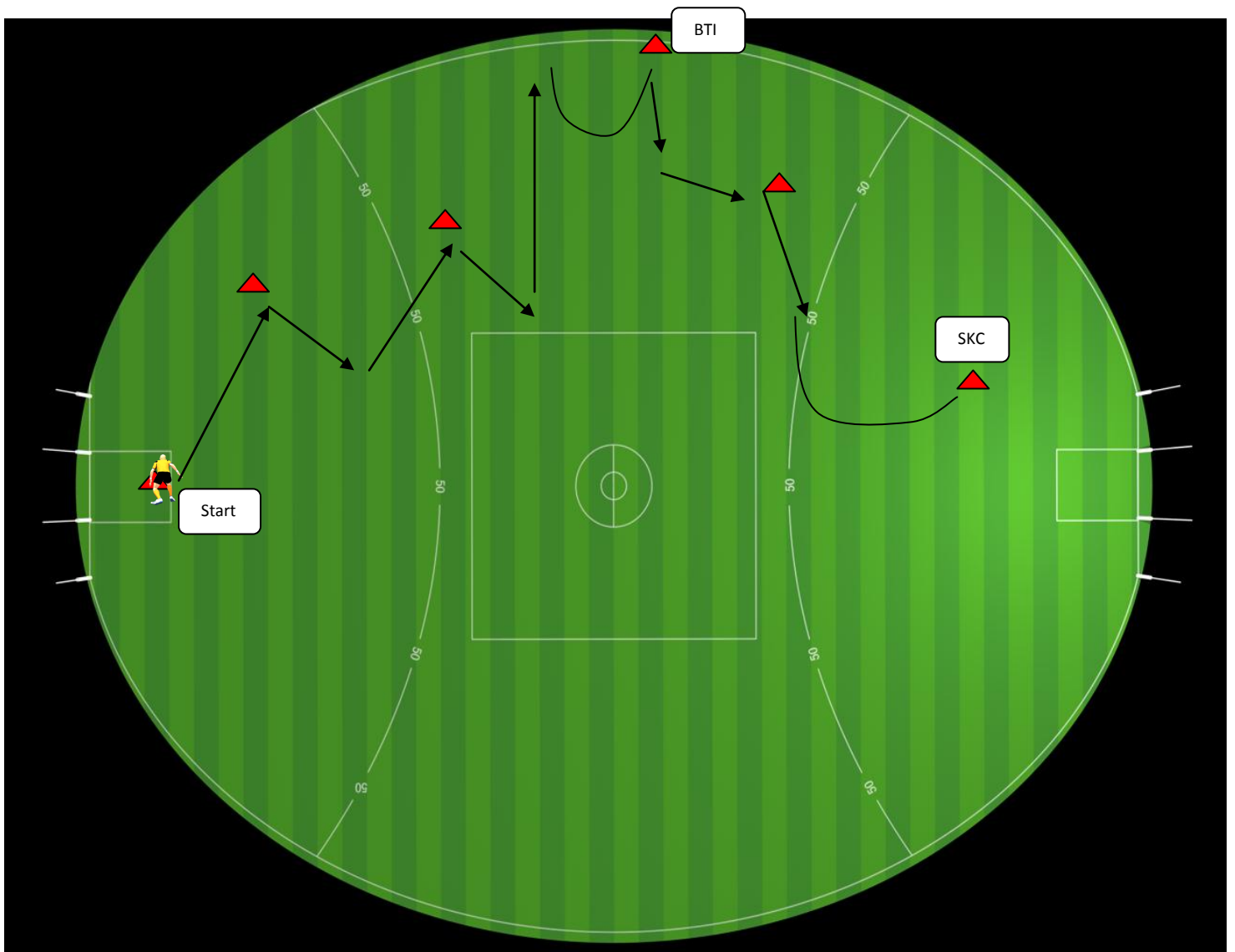
Each umpire will run from one cone to another and as they approach the coach will call out the decision; the umpire will blow the whistle and indicate and communicates the decision verbally. Umpire then runs to the next cone and the process is repeated.



Skill drill 25 Positioning general play

Focus – positioning and backing out from contests

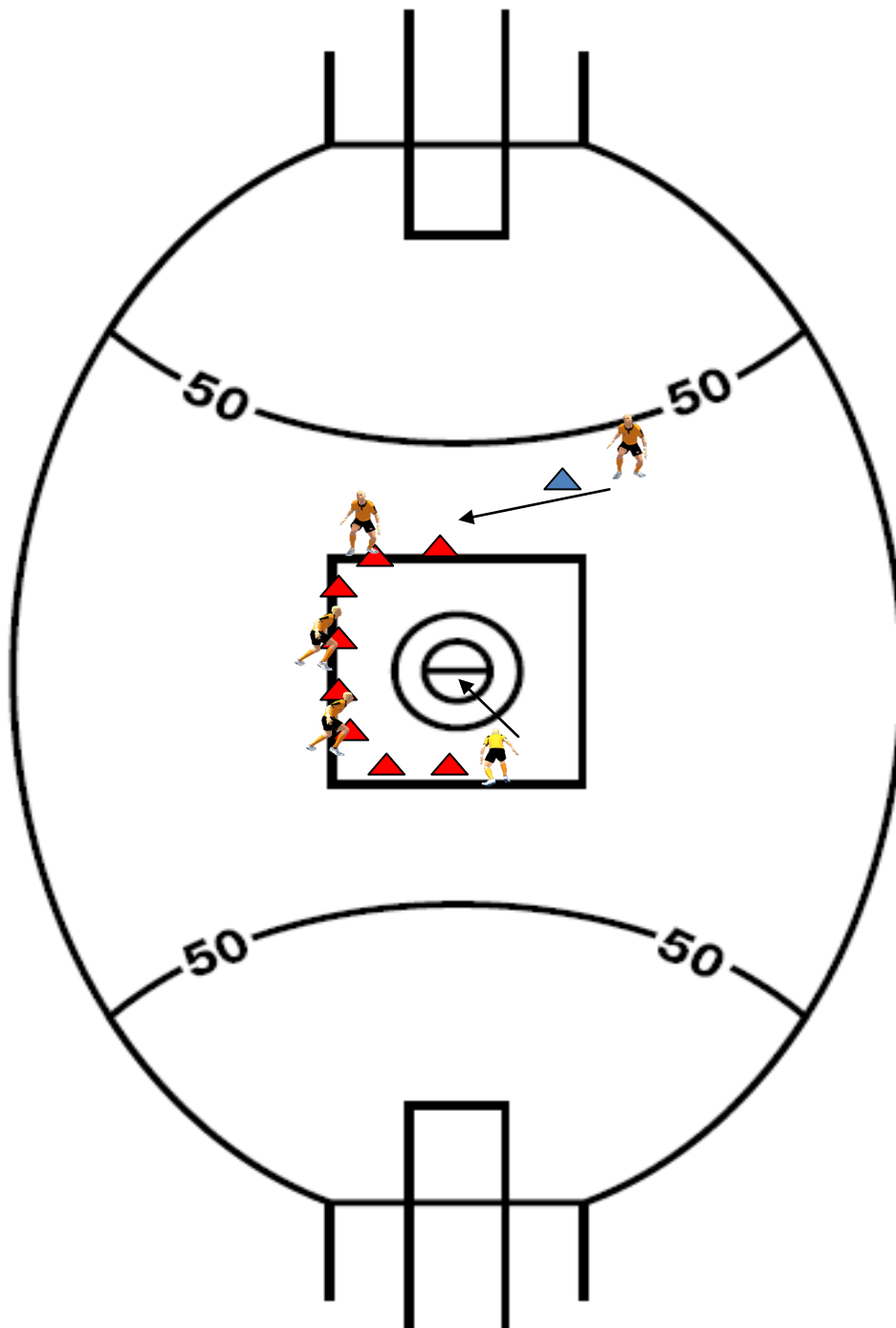
Method – starting at full back, 25m sprint in to first cone and award 'push in the back', back away at 45 deg. Sprint to second cone and award 'high tackle', back away at 45 deg angle. Run to boundary line for boundary throw-in and position on long side of ground, move around contest and award a free kick from ruck contest, back away at 45 deg towards 50m arc. Sprint to be side on to contest at FF and award mark or free kick, line player up for shot on goal, SKC, after kick, umpire to call all clear to goal umpire and jog into centre of ground.



Skill drill 26 Positioning – General Play

Focus – keeping 20 – 25 metres from play

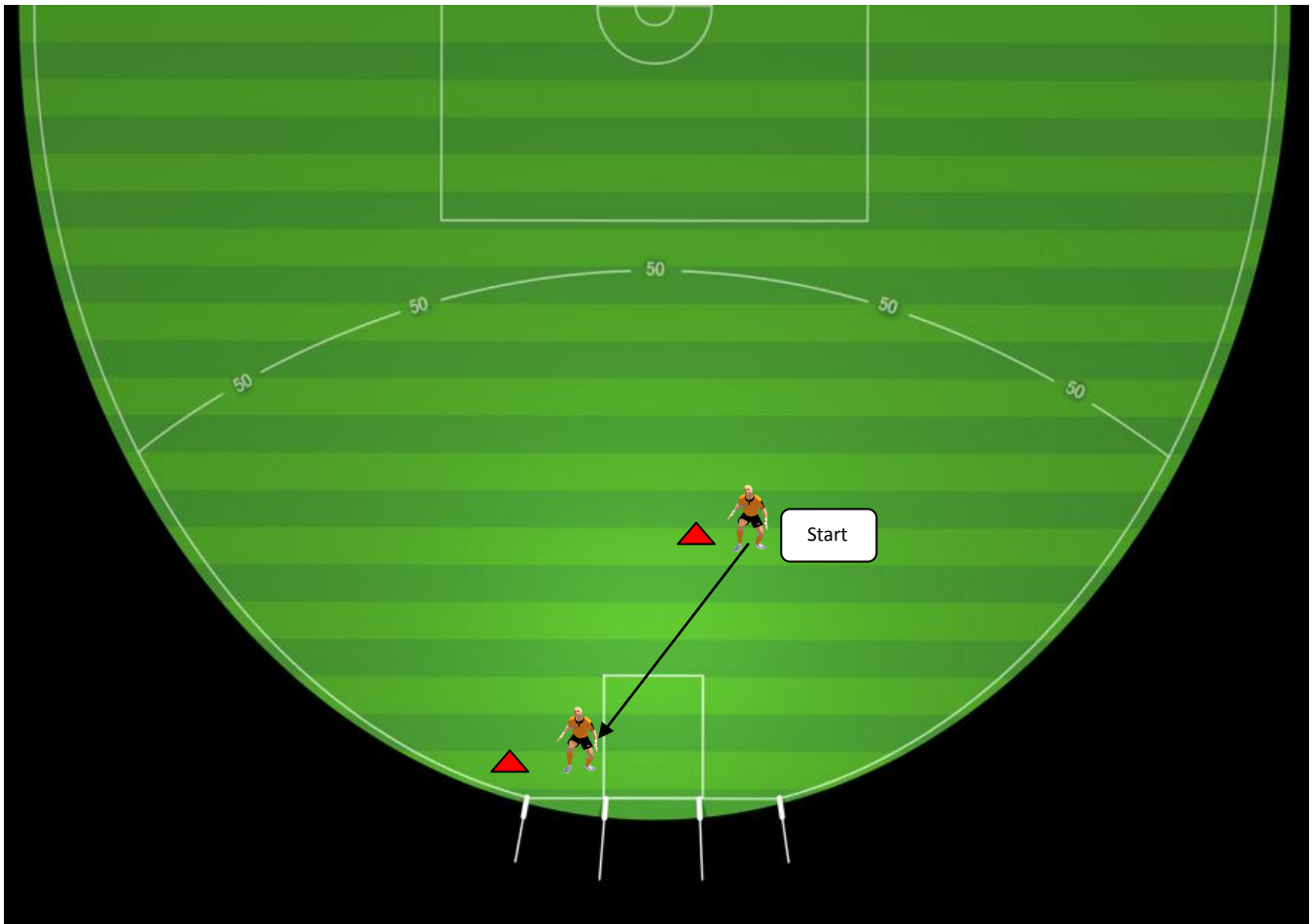
Method – set up cones as per diagram below, starting from blue cone, umpires to run to red cone and runs around other red cones watching centre of ground area for infringements. When umpire arrives at last red cone he/she blows whistle and calls for a ball up.



Skill drill 27 Set Kick Control – Deep in defence

Focus – Umpire to control a defensive mark or free kick taken close to the behind post

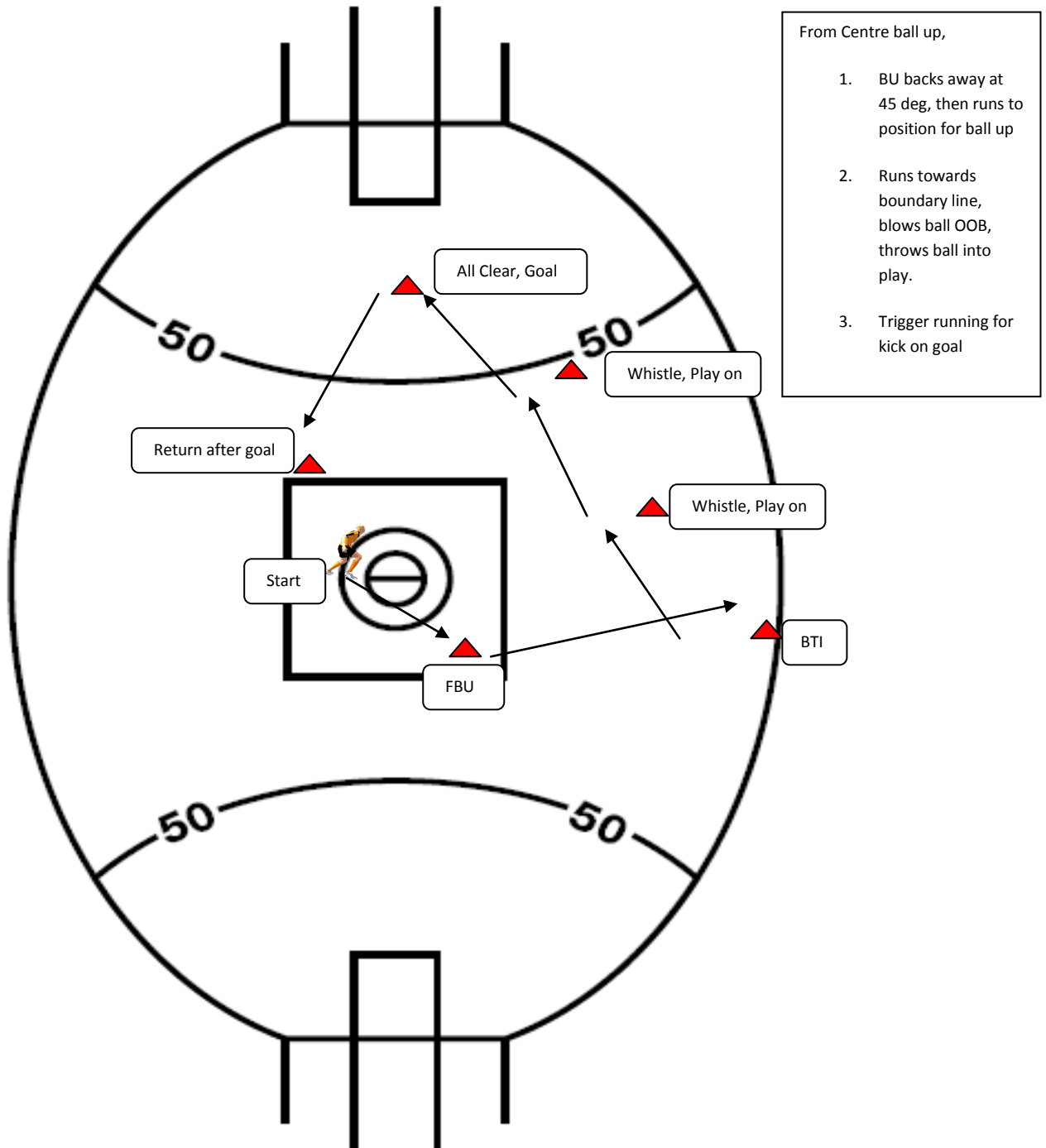
Method – set up drill as per the diagram below, umpires must trigger in to set the mark, verbally communicate to player with ball and player on mark also clear the protected area.



Skill drill 28 Match Simulation – Field Umpires, positioning, trigger running, whistle and communication (verbal and non-verbal)

Focus – Field umpires - from ball up to set kick at goal

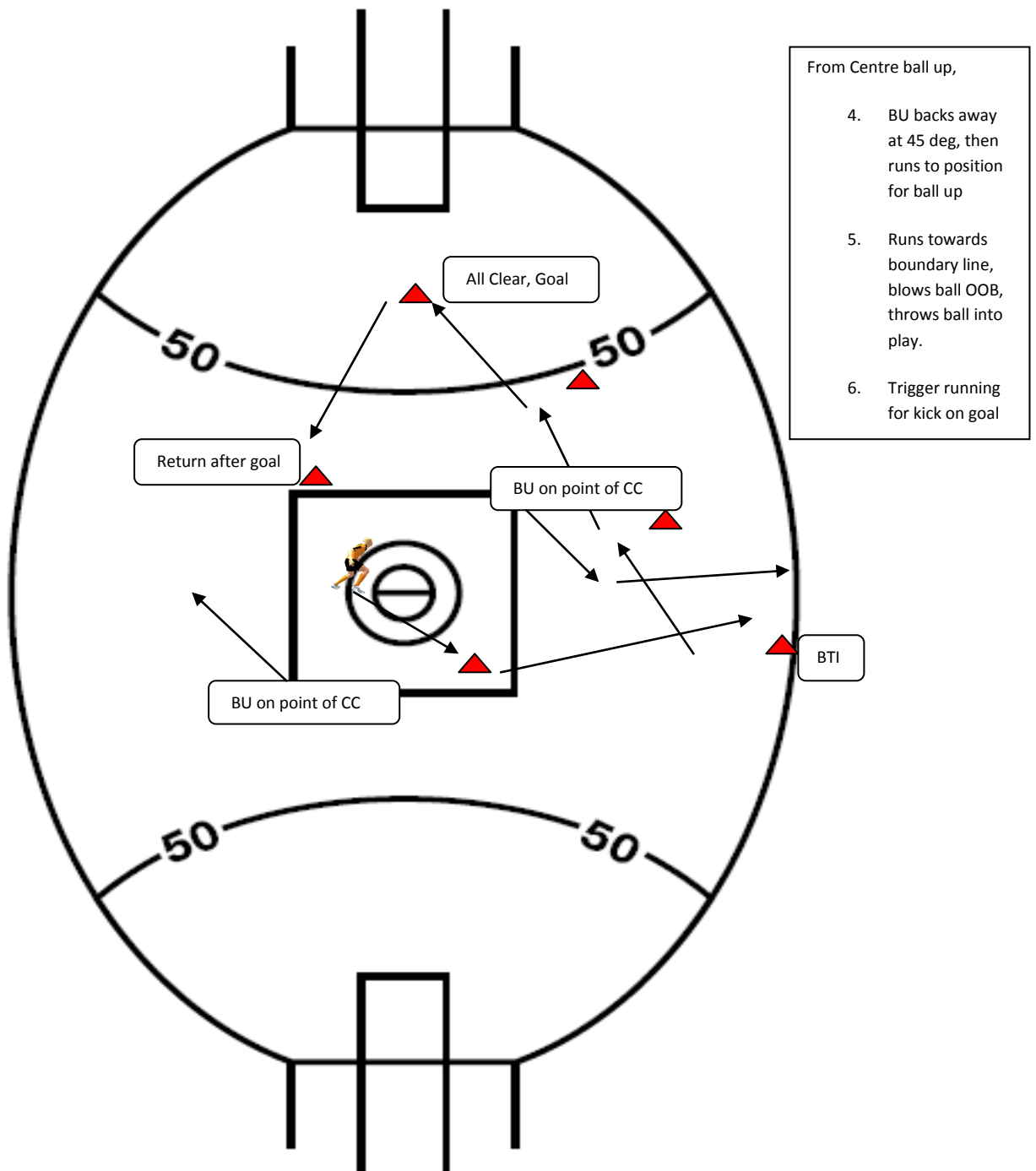
Method – drill to be set as per diagram below, FU rotate through drill, could be completed in pairs with experienced and lesser experienced umpires running together.



Skill drill 29 Match Simulation – Boundary Umpires, positioning, trigger running, whistle and communication (verbal and non-verbal)

Focus – Boundary umpires - from ball up to set kick at goal and returning ball to centre

Method – drill to be set as per diagram below, this drill can be run in conjunction with Field Drill 28.

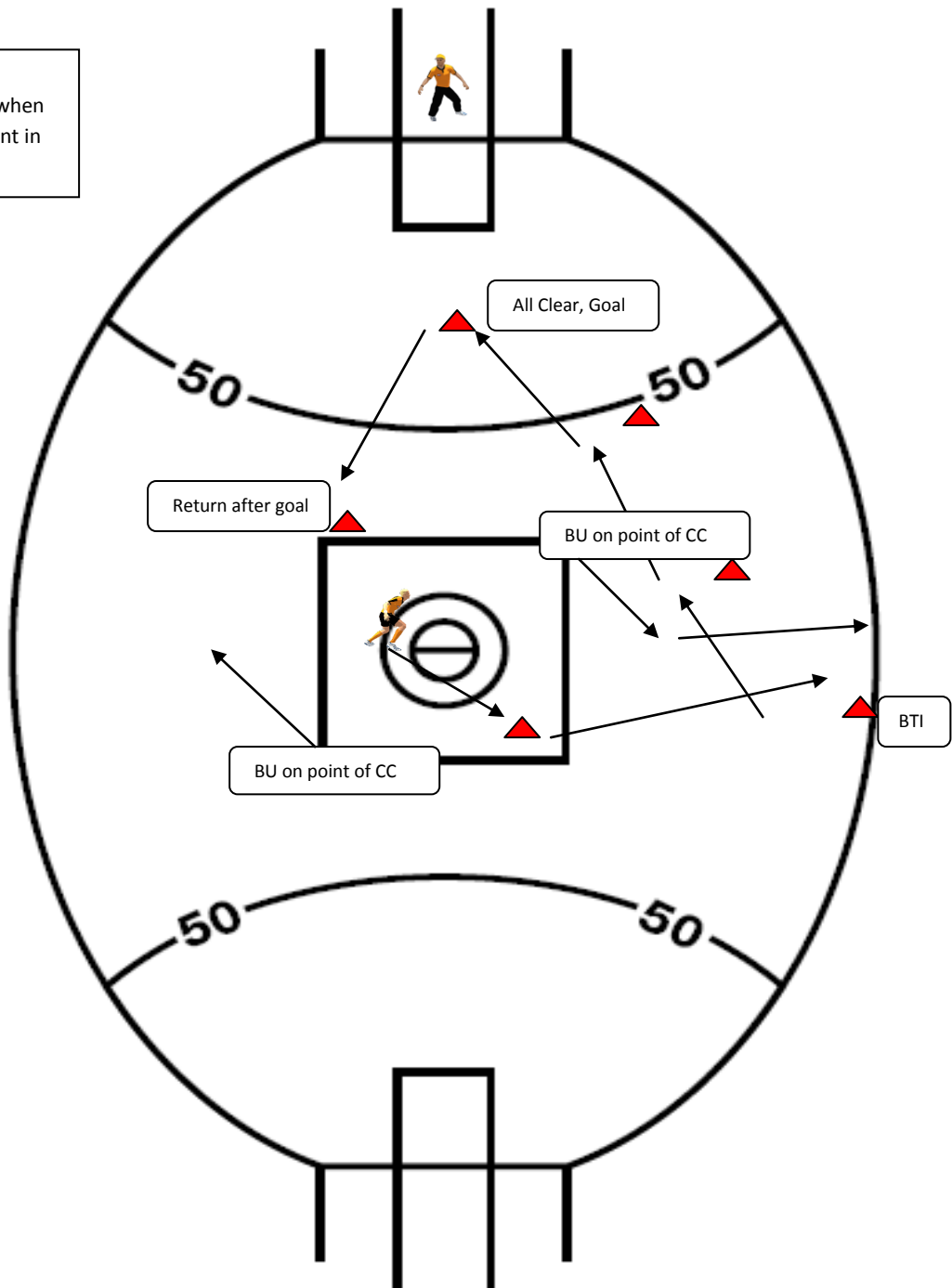


Skill drill 30 Match Simulation – Goal Umpires, positioning, communication (verbal and non-verbal), indications and flag waving.

Focus – Goal umpires – General positioning and alertness when ball moves through drill, be ready for all clear, indicate and wave flags for goal.

Method – drill to be set as per diagram below, this drill can be run in conjunction with Field Drill 26.

Goal Umpires to be positioned for play when ball begins movement in centre of ground.

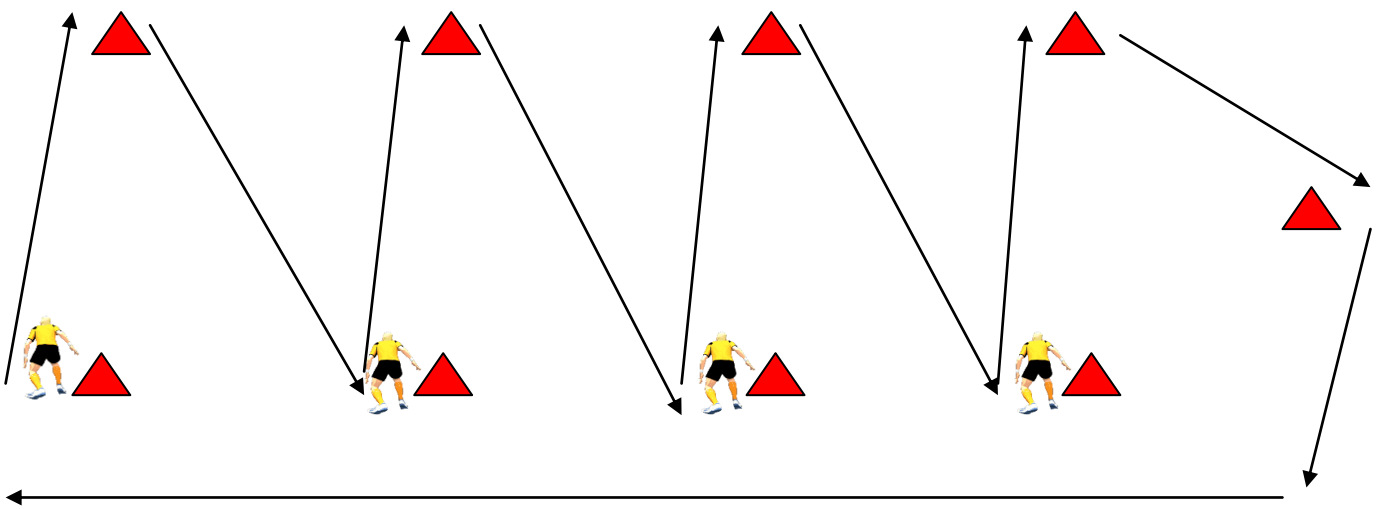


Skill drill 31 Ball up and Throw-ins – Field and Boundary umpires

Method - Witches hats are placed in 2 parallel lines 20m apart and at intervals that suit the training venue, umpires assemble down one side of the cones.

Boundary umpires run with ball and when they arrive at cone they throw ball back toward where they come from, they then back off and progress diagonally to next group.

Field umpires catch the ball thrown by BU and run to cone and perform a field ball up, they then back off and progress to the next group diagonally. Umpires work through the stations and repeat as many times as required by coach.

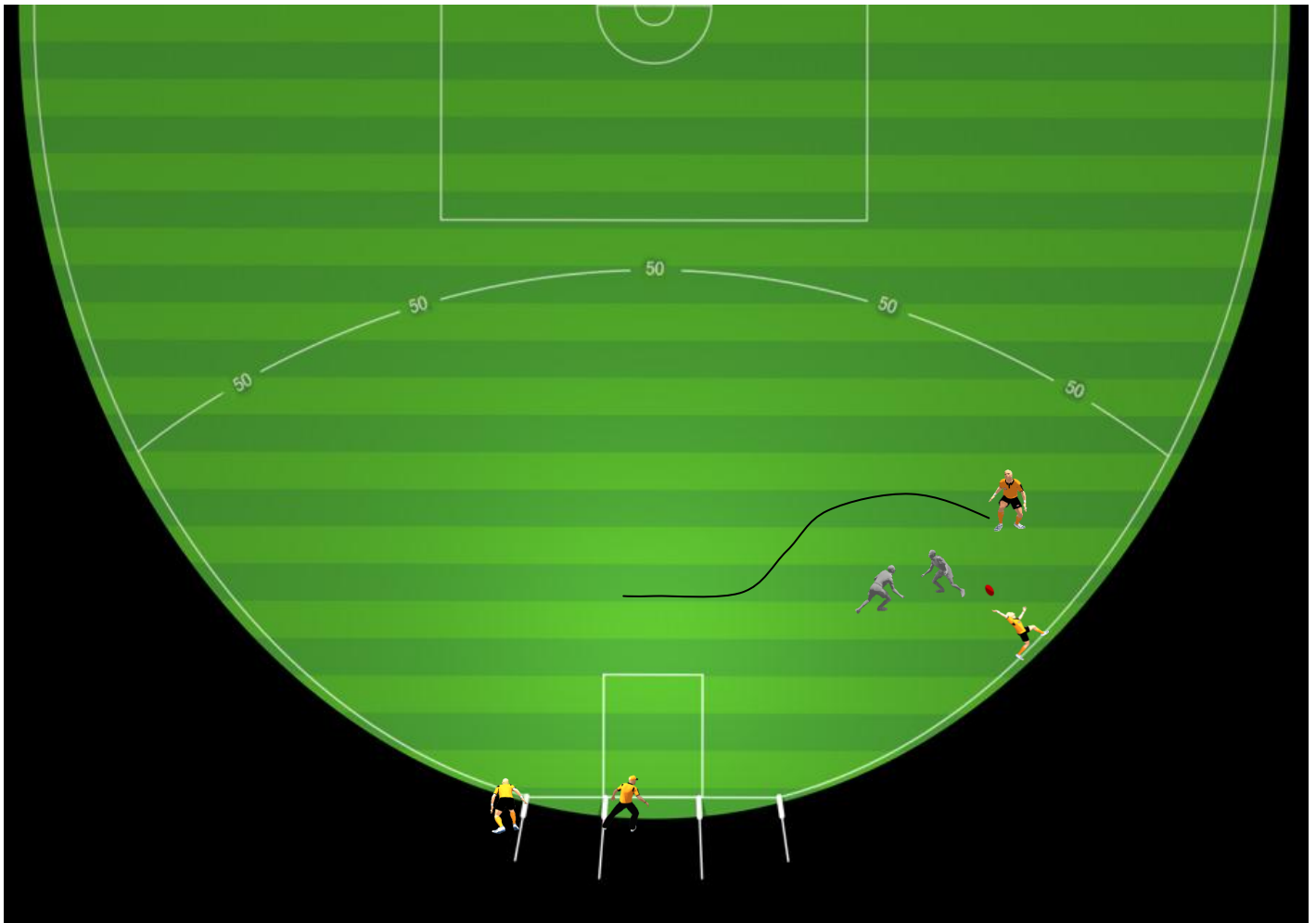


Skill drill 32 Boundary Throw-in within scoring distance

Focus – all 3 disciplines scoring distance / positioning (next act of play)

Method – Position 30 metres from goal, the ball is heading towards boundary line and goes OOB. The boundary umpire signals OOB, turns toward FU for indication to throw the ball back into play, the FU acknowledges the signal, indicates accordingly and sets position with a focus on the players. When the ball is thrown back into play the BU takes the correct position and the goal umpire assumes the correct position. As the ball is thrown into play we have other umpires assume the role of players who tap the ball to a running player who accelerates toward goal and has a shot on goal. The remaining skill is about positioning, response to score and communication, verbal and non-verbal.

Debrief at conclusion to discuss what worked well and what could be done better.



Skill drill 33 Ball crossing line close to behind post

Focus – all 3 disciplines working together to achieve the correct decision

Method- a ball is to be kicked or rolled towards behind post so that all 3 disciplines have the opportunity to communicate around the correct decision.

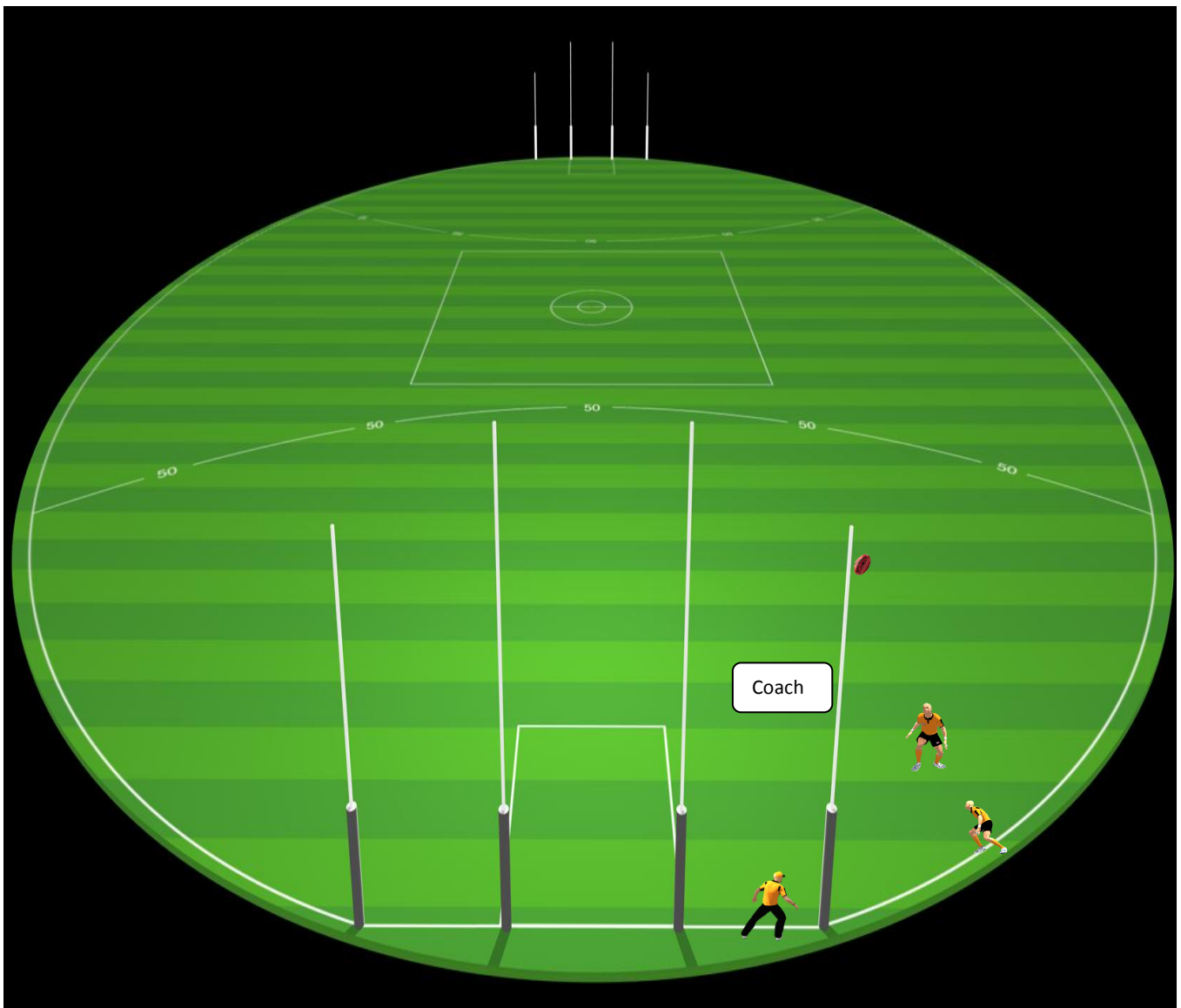
If the ball heads toward post, all 3 umpires must communicate

BU must move quickly to the post to assist goal umpire

GU must make best position based on if it is a set shot or general play whilst remembering their primary role is always to monitor the scoring lines.

Once the ball crosses any line the GU and BU must communicate, ensuring the correct decision is made, if required the FU and other BU can assist with decision making.

Note: Umpires must be 100% sure of what they see, not say “I think this happened” or “I think I saw this”

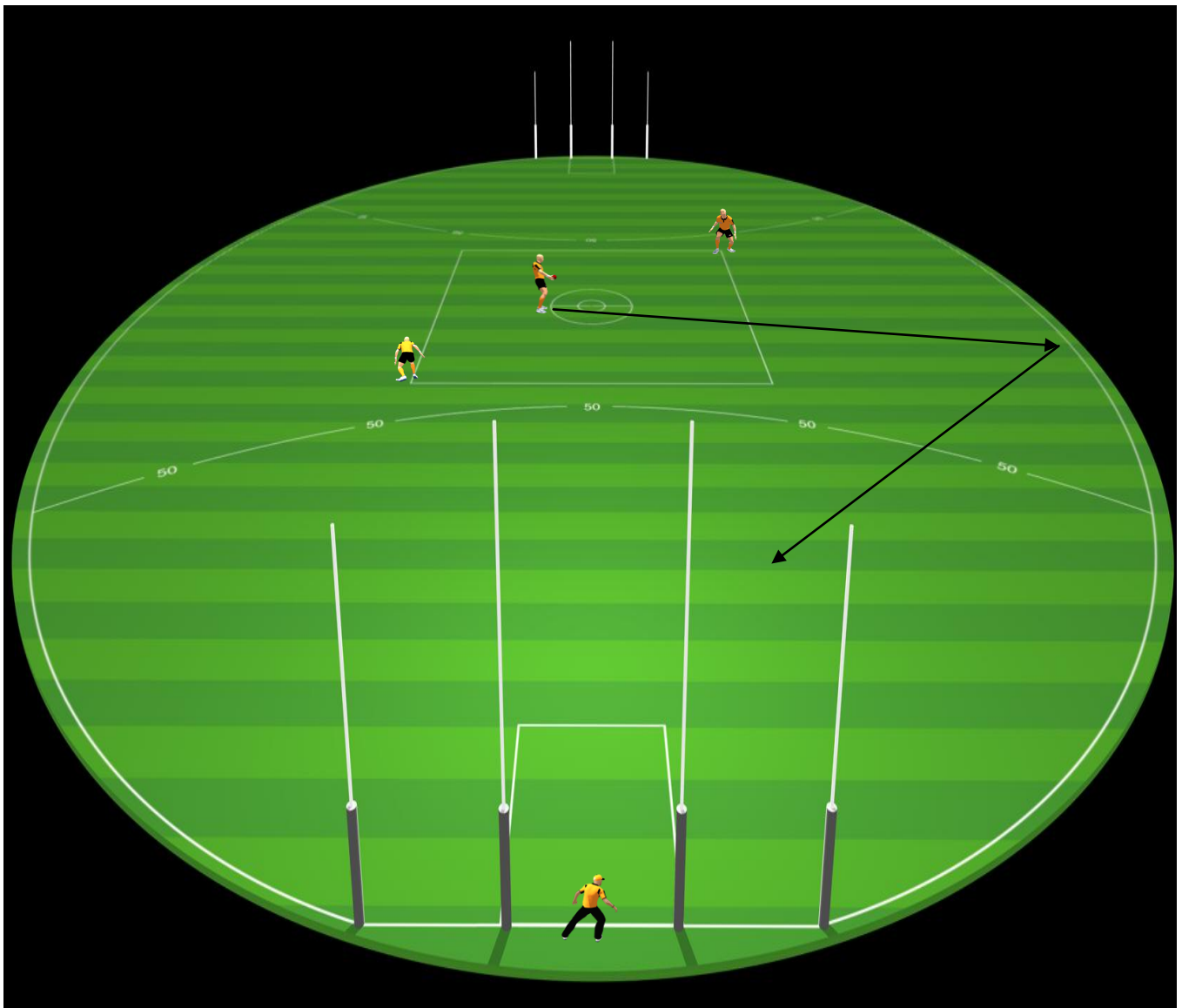


Skill drill 34

Game Simulation – Multi discipline

Focus – this drill covers throwing the ball into play, positioning, vision, control effectiveness

Method – Centre square set up applies, FU starts play by throwing the ball up, ball is kicked by player towards and over the boundary line, BU throw ball back into play, players contest ball, FU watches ruck contest, then ball is kicked to approx 30m from goal. This is a change of control for FU. BU runs to behind post. FU sets the mark (SKC), GU adjudicates kick at goal, FU gives all clear, BU's return ball to centre.



Skill Drill 35 Three umpire positioning and tap through

Focus – Umpire positioning and handover to #2 umpire deep in end zone, tapping through.

Method - Set up in two groups, as ball moves down from wing with mid-zone umpire in control, control handed over to end zone umpire when ball is kicked, end zone umpire awards mark and sets up shot on goal. End zone umpire taps mid zone umpire through whilst setting the mark, he then becomes the end zone umpire.

Kick across ground and where ball spills to ground, no free kick awarded, end zone umpire stays in control.

Original end zone umpire (then becomes mid zone) umpire is tapped back on long side of ground, ball travels toward mid-zone where mid zone umpire is handed control.

Drill is complete. Umpires can be rotated through both positions to ensure they are engaged in both aspects of drill.

