

MEDIA RELEASE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Leading former umpires Bryan Sheehan and Hayden Kennedy have joined the AFL Umpiring Department to assist the development of the senior AFL umpiring list.

The AFL today announced that six-time Grand Final umpire Sheehan and five-time Grand Final umpire Kennedy had been appointed to the AFL Umpiring Department as senior assistant coach and field umpires assistant coach respectively.

Sheehan, 52, umpired 367 games between 1986-2003, including six grand finals while Kennedy, 45, retired earlier this year after a record-breaking 495 senior games and Grand Finals in 1995, 1997, 1998, 2000 and 2003.

The pair will work with AFL Umpires Manager Jeff Gieschen and Umpires Coach Rowan Sawers and Gieschen said he was delighted to have two of the leading umpires in the game's history to help lead the umpires' group.

"Bryan was chosen as one of the four umpires named in the "AFLUA Umpires Team of the Century" after his wonderful career and he was an umpire who always prepared himself to do the best job he could do for every match he took the field," Gieschen said.

Hayden, as the longest-serving umpire in the game's history, has been a wonderful example to our group around the dedication and preparation required to maintain top-level performances over a long period of time. The AFLUD now has three umpire coaches (Rowan included) who have umpired 1270 games between including 15 grand finals. The reasons why they umpired so many games and had so much success were their commitment, fitness, excellent decision making, feel for the game and relationship with players. Hopefully these traits will be passed onto the current list of young umpires.

"Aside from Hayden's retirement, a number of our senior officials such as Shaun Ryan and Michael Vozzo have also retired, and the input of Bryan and Hayden, coupled with their experience, will be invaluable in guiding the umpiring group," he said.

Separately, a number of other appointments have also been made with Steve Keating to be the NSW / ACT AFL Umpires manager, Cameron Nash to be the Queensland AFL Umpires Manager and Adam Davis (Player/Umpire Pathway Program), Paul Turk (National Fitness Consultant), Andrew Redman (Rehabilitation/Assistant Fitness coach) and Matthew Pell (National Strength and Conditioning Coach) to fill part-time support roles.

Ends

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