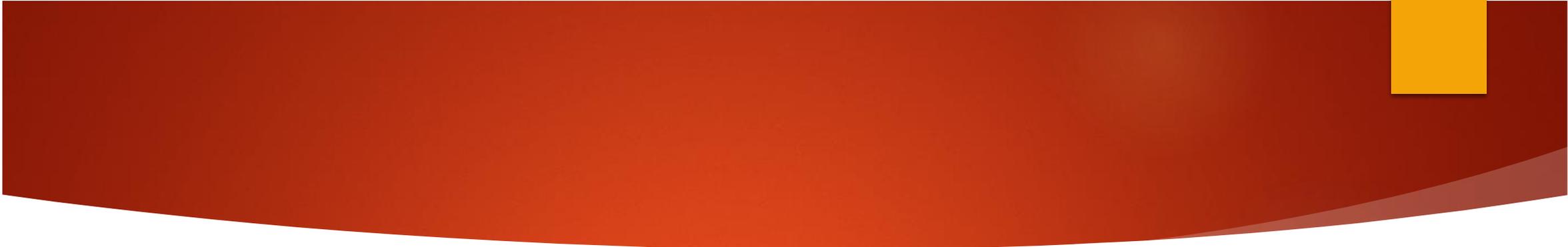
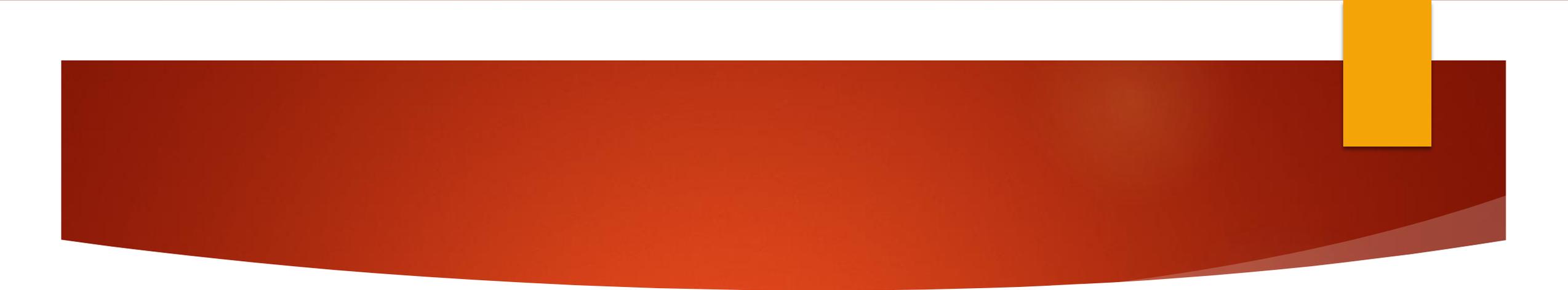
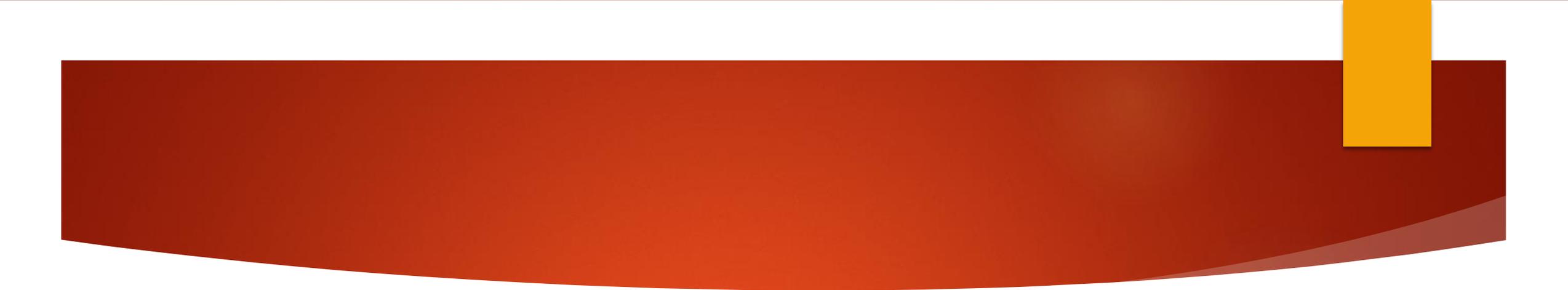


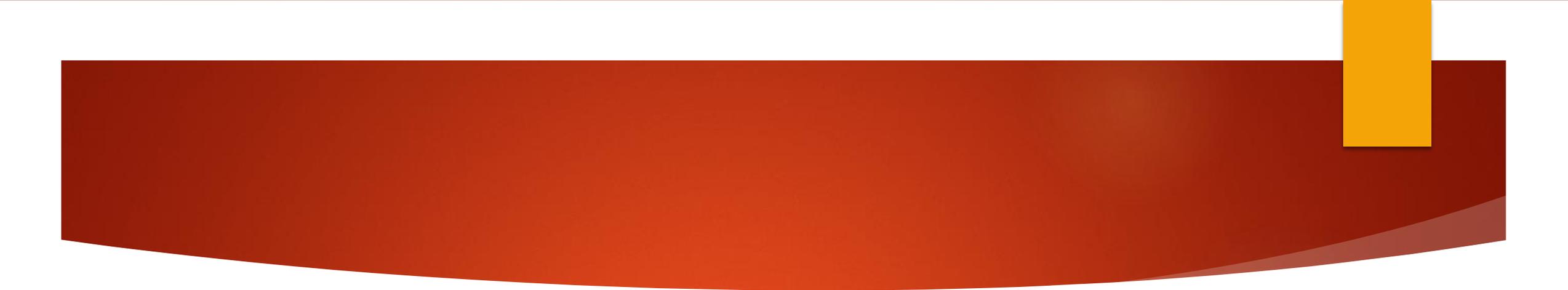
Prohibited Contact and Payment of a Free Kick

COACHING SESSION 6: 03/06/2020

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- ▶ The field umpire shall pay a free kick against a player where they are satisfied that the player has made prohibited contact with an opposition player.
 - ▶ A player makes prohibited contact with an opposition player if the player:
 - (a) makes contact or attempts to make contact with any part of their body with an opposition player in a manner likely to cause injury;
 - (i) above the shoulders including the top of the shoulders or bump to the head.

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- ▶ The contact can be intentional or careless, (some umpires refer to this as accidental contact). In other words any contact at all on the shoulders or above is a free kick.
 - ▶ An area we need to tighten up on is the attempt or near miss. Even though contact is not made the umpire must be prepared to pay a free kick against the player who intentionally or carelessly attempts to bump or tackle misses the area on or above the shoulders.
 - ▶ Having the ability to identify the attempt or near miss will assist you the umpire in controlling the game.

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- ▶ The near miss let go will then give players the thinking that it is OK to enter a contest in a careless manner with swinging arms and aggressive bumps at the player.
 - ▶ The aggression from a player needs to be at the ball never at the player.
 - ▶ This is something we cannot allow as umpires and need to be vigilant in our decision making in this area to send a clear message to players.
 - ▶ It is the job of the coaches and their coaching staff of football clubs to better train their players in the correct art of applying a tackle or applying a bump.

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- ▶ Remember our job is to make sure the players play within the rules of the game. Players will take every advantage they can and sometimes that advantage takes them outside the rules and we the umpire must pay the free kick.
 - ▶ In applying the decision we must also consider the spirit of the laws (what the intention of the rule/law makers intended.) it is important that we protect all the players particularly the ball player or the carrier.

Is it deemed reportable?

In assessing the level of a Reportable Offence, the umpire will take into account the relevant factors:

- Conduct:
- Impact: and
- Contact.

Conduct

- ▶ Categorising the level of offences provides for the classification of conduct as either intentional or careless conduct. Intentional acts are regarded as more serious than careless acts which are regarded as more serious than negligent acts. Mere accidental conduct will not constitute a Reportable Offence.

Negligence

A player negligently commits a Reportable Offence if the relevant conduct constitutes a breach of the duty of care owed by the player to all other players. Each player owes a duty of care to all the other players to not engage in conduct which will constitute a Reportable Offence being committed against that other player. In order to constitute such a breach of that duty of care, the conduct must be such that a reasonable player would not regard it as prudent in all the circumstances. Negligence is constituted by a person's breach of duty to take reasonable care to avoid acts which can be reasonably foreseen to result in a Reportable Offence. While Australian Football is a contact sport, players owe a duty of care to others not to cause and to avoid prohibited contact. An extra onus applies to protect players from serious neck injuries when they have their head down over the ball and to protect players from bumps to the head. An example of negligent contact may be where a player collides with another player who has taken a mark and where contact occurs just after the mark has been taken. The offending player has a duty of care to avoid any contact which would constitute a Reportable Offence by slowing his momentum as much as he reasonably can and failure to do so constitutes negligence.

Careless

- ▶ A player carelessly commits a Reportable Offence if he engages in conduct that he realises or that a reasonable player would realise may result in Reportable Offence being committed but nevertheless proceeds with that conduct not caring whether or not that conduct will result in the commission of the Reportable Offence. The careless commission of a Reportable Offence does not require any wish that the Reportable Offence committed. This does not require proof that the player turned his mind to the risk. A player who without looking swings his arm backwards in a pack and strikes an opposing player in the face may be said not to have intended to strike his opponent but his conduct was careless because it can be inferred from his action that he realised that his arm might make contact or alternatively a reasonable player in his position would have realised that such contact might be made.

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- ▶ The guideline relating to inferring a state of mind with respect to intentional offences has application to determining if the player acted carelessly. However, even if it is not established that the player realised the risk, he will have acted carelessly if a reasonable player in his position would have realised the risk. In the example given under negligent above, if a player collides with another player who has marked the ball, in circumstances where there is some further time after the mark has been taken, and where he blindly continued on, to contact the taking the mark, then the act would best be described as careless.