

Push to boot twilight football

- Font size: [Decrease](#) [Increase](#)
- Email article: [Email](#)
- Print article: [Print](#)
- Submit comment: [Submit comment](#)

Article from: Sunday Herald Sun

Stephen Drill

May 10, 2009 12:00am

FOOTY greets, parents and principals are calling for an end to twilight footy matches because they are too late for children on a school night.

Melbourne Football Club president Jim Stynes, Brownlow medallist Bob Skilton, Tigers' premiership player Francis Bourke and Bulldogs' champion Doug Hawkins have called on the AFL to review its twilight fixture.

The Western Bulldogs hierarchy has also called for an end to twilight football because they say it is not good for families.

-
- [Poll: Should the AFL scrap twilight footy?](#)
 - [Twilight uproar: Early starts? Never on a Sunday](#)
 - [Footy fans: TV deal 'ignores' families](#)
-

Stynes said the AFL should scrap the twilight fixture.

"I would like to see an end to this time slot so more of our supporters can see us live -- particularly our young supporters," he said.

Western Bulldogs chief executive Campbell Rose said twilight games were not family-friendly.

"Sunday evening fixtures may be good for broadcasters and TV ratings, however neither members, corporates or for that matter, the club likes them," he said.

"In light of the current economic climate, we do not need to bring about further downward pressures on our revenues by fixturing games on late Sunday afternoons. This does not make any sense."

Hawkins said the twilight fixture was suited to single men rather than families.

"If you live in the outer suburbs, it might be 9pm before you get home if you get stuck in traffic at the footy," he

said.

Since 2007, the AFL has scheduled a twilight match every week to allow Foxtel to have an exclusive game for their subscribers.

The timeslot has been a mixture of 5.10pm and 4.40pm starts in Melbourne.

Many of the games are played in Perth at 2.40pm, but the two-hour time difference allows the game to be beamed into Melbourne as a twilight fixture.

There have been 21 twilight games in Melbourne. And there are another seven scheduled for the remainder of the 2009 season.

The controversial timeslot will be part of negotiations when the AFL discusses a new TV rights deal with channels Seven, Nine, Ten and Foxtel.

The current \$780 million deal is set to expire at the end of the 2011 season and the AFL has confirmed it can begin discussions at any time.

The AFL has claimed the late game start is a ratings and attendance winner.

But parenting experts and principals say the AFL is behaving irresponsibly and warn it risks losing the next generation of fans if it continues with the current fixture.

Parents have made their call loud and clear - they are sick of taking children to the late games the night before school.

They say that if they take their children to the late game, they end up unable to concentrate in class the next day.

Parenting experts and principals say children under 10 should be in bed by 7.30pm on school nights, which is impossible if children catch a late afternoon footy fix.

Triple Brownlow medallist Bob Skilton said the late Sunday start was not in the interests of families.

And Francis Bourke, a member of Richmond's team of the century, said the game was set up for a TV audience rather than fans in the stands.

Victorian Principals Association president Gabrielle Leigh said the late game was not practical for families.

"Children need to be well prepared to start the school week fresh and ready to learn," she said.

Parenting Research Centre chief Warren Cann said the late game knocked out children's routines.

Collingwood cheer squad identity Jeff "Joffa" Corfe said the game was losing its heart if children missed out on going to a game.

And St Kilda cheer squad president Pam Rawson said some of her younger members were unable to go to the twilight match against Western Bulldogs last week.

But the AFL has backed its fixture experiment. The league argued that it has broken attendance records in the two years since it was introduced, which proved the timeslot worked.

AFL spokesman Patrick Keane said all fixturing options would be on the table when the next TV rights deal was discussed.

"You can't break AFL attendance records if a timeslot is failing for you," he said.

Mr Keane said the attendance record was set last year despite 10 games at smaller venues at Carrara, Darwin, Canberra and Launceston which have limited capacity.

"We're extremely happy with the crowds and particularly with the response for Foxtel," he said.

The AFL knew that families needed to be home earlier on Sunday, which was why it had chosen to play late-afternoon games instead of night matches, he said.

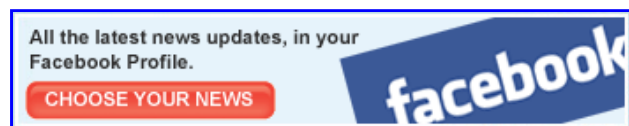
Former St Kilda coach Grant Thomas sided with AFL.

He said the twilight matches were good for families because many older children who played football or other sports were unable to get to matches that started at 2.10pm on either Saturday or Sunday.

"They should allow kids to go on to the ground before and after (the) game and they could have face painting outside the ground. It could be a good marketing exercise," Thomas said.

Share this article [What is this?](#)

- [Add to MySpace](#)
- [Digg it](#)
- [Post to del.icio.us](#)
- [Post to Newsvine](#)
- [Post to Facebook](#)
- [Add to kwoff](#)
- [Stumble Upon](#)





Footy fans at Yarraville Oval are unhappy about the AFL's twilight footy matches on Sundays because their children are too tired for school the next day.
Picture: Alex Coppel

- Font size: [Decrease](#) [Increase](#)
- Email article: [Email](#)
- Print article: [Print](#)

© Herald and Weekly Times. All times AEST (GMT +10)