

# TACKLING

# DIFFERENT

# LEVELS



**They must learn to play together so they might one day play apart**

## 'This is where it all starts; gaining relationships.'

– Yonatan Belik,  
player in the Peace Team

### Synopsis

This is the inspirational story of Israeli and Palestinian youths who unite over the game of Australian football. *Tackling Peace* goes behind the scenes as young men from different sides of a bloody political war set aside a lifetime of prejudice and hostility to compete as a team in the Australian Football League's International Cup. Few of the aspirant players had ever heard of the game and none imagined befriending teammates from across the political divide.

The brainchild of Sydney-based footy mum Tanya Oziel, the Peace Team is an initiative of the not-for-profit Peres Centre for Peace, which works towards peace in the Middle East.

The team includes eighteen-year-old Israeli Yonatan Belik who had never met a Palestinian before he started training with the side. His prejudices challenged and his endurance tested, he will forge friendships with his Arab teammates before returning to Israel for compulsory military service. His close mate on the team is sixteen-year-old Leith Jaber who comes from a highly politicised Palestinian family. Then there's Naser Gous, a former Palestinian resistance fighter who spent three years in an Israeli jail after an attack on Israeli soldiers. While he believes peace is possible, Naser knows any collaboration with Israel can be seen as a betrayal and Palestinian players may be risking their lives.

Getting to the International Cup is a logistical nightmare. It can take hours for Palestinian players to cross checkpoints into Israel, the training ground does not have AFL goal posts, players have never seen the game played, they speak different languages – Hebrew, Arabic and English – and have complicated Kosher or Halal food requirements.



Narrated by Hugo Weaving and featuring legendary footballers Kevin Sheehan, Ron Barassi and Robert 'Dipper' DiPierdomenico, *Tackling Peace* follows this group of Israelis and Palestinians in their quest to make it to Australia and play together against the world.

### Curriculum Links

*Tackling Peace* would be enjoyed by secondary students across a number of curriculum areas, including Personal Development, Values Education, Studies of Society and Environment/Human Society and Its Environment (SOSE/HSIE), Politics and Society, Health and Physical Education, Studies of Religion, Peace Studies, English and Media.

While not shirking the complexity of the political divide between Palestinians and Israelis, the program shows how sport can be a powerful force for breaking down barriers.

After discussing the pre-viewing questions, teachers could choose from the student activities that best suit the level and interests of their students

### Background to the Peace Team

Tanya Oziel, a passionate supporter of the AFL, has long harboured an ambition to see Australian football established as the sport of peace in the war-torn Middle East.

For Tanya, the Peace Team's trip to Australia in August 2008 was not so much the end, as the beginning of a dream.

'This is about more than a peace team; it's about the next generation. It's about taking our great sport to the region and bringing the two sides together through footy', says Oziel, Sydney-based Director of the Peres Centre for Peace. The Peres Centre brings Israelis and Palestinians face to face through grassroots sport, agriculture, medicine and social programs.

Oziel's dream was born after she watched the transformation of her son, Haim, who found happiness of his own after joining an AFL team.



## Background to the film

Though it has Australian football at its centre, *Tackling Peace* is not a sports film. Nor is it a political film, though politics is a fundamental part of its fabric and profoundly affects the characters in the film. Neither is it a current affairs film, though its issues are very much in the news.

Primarily, *Tackling Peace* is a human story about people under pressure trying to do something bigger than themselves, trying to rise above the labels that the world puts upon them.

*Tackling Peace* filmmaker Marc Radomsky says:

*I have always tried to do work that challenges misperceptions and gets to the real people underneath the labels or groupings that form so much a part of our society these days.*

*Labels are dangerous because they deflect from the humanity of the people being labelled – asylum seeker, Jew, wog, terrorist, whistle blower, Middle Eastern origin – these labels generalize and dehumanize, and through that dehumanization, the door is opened to all kinds of abuse, perpetuating xenophobia and legitimizing treatment of the group, whilst disregarding the people due to the label.*

*It's disturbing to me the way that perception and misinformation have become such effective political and social weapons, where deliberate misrepresentations like 'Children Overboard', or the myth of WMDs in Iraq, which indeed has damaged the entire world.*

*So I believe in uncovering the stories of real people who have to live with the effects of the political machinations, so that we can get to see truths that offer an alternative view to what is shown on the news and in the media, often biased and dancing to whichever tune the political or corporate masters happen to be playing that day. This is what inspires me and from where I draw strength and hope – that people ultimately are able to transform the ills of their societies despite the politics.*

'He was a Jewish boy in a very Jewish environment and he didn't fit into any soccer or basketball team; other codes can be very territorial,' she says.

*His whole world opened up when he joined the Maroubra Saints. He was the first Jewish boy that anyone in the club had ever met and now they're all his best mates. He was really the inspiration behind my passion in seeing how children can transform through playing AFL.*

In early 2007, Oziel met with James Demetriou, who had visited Israel's Peres Centre as part of his work with Australia's Sports Without Borders, which assists refugee and immigrant children to integrate through sport. Demetriou suggested she contact the AFL, which is headed by his brother, Andrew.

Several months and much hard work later, Oziel had secured the patronage of philanthropist and football fan, the late Richard Pratt, and the support of the AFL for a visit to Australia by a Peace Team, modelled on a professional team of Israeli and Palestinian soccer players, who play tournaments around the world.

In January 2008, more than 100 Israelis and Palestinians gathered on a field

near Tel Aviv to try out for the team. Most had never seen the game or even come face to face with the enemy. Some risked their lives to participate. It took hours for the Palestinians to get to training and there were no goal posts on the field.

But under the guidance of former AFL star Robert 'Dipper' DiPierdomenico, the team embarked on a journey that would change their lives forever.

'Before December 2007, no one believed in it,' Oziel says.

*Everyone thought it was a wonderful idea but no one thought we were going to be able to do it. No one played the sport, there was no team, there was a huge funding challenge, everyone just thought it was too big and too short a time.*

In August 2008, Oziel proved the doubters wrong and the Peace Team took the spotlight in the international line-up in Australia.

*Nothing is insurmountable. It was challenging, it was hard work, it was relentless, but it wasn't impossible. In the end it was so phenomenal that I felt it had a divine energy because everything just fitted into place beautifully.*



#### ABOUT THE AFL INTERNATIONAL CUP

In 2008, the AFL International Cup was staged in Melbourne and regional Victoria over two weeks, finishing on 7 September. Countries competing in the 2008 International Cup included: Canada, Denmark, Finland, UK, USA, China, India, Japan, Nauru, New Zealand, Spain, Ireland, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Samoa and Tonga.

Source: [http://www.getfarming.com.au/pages/farming/articles\\_view.php?fld=1520080902122523](http://www.getfarming.com.au/pages/farming/articles_view.php?fld=1520080902122523) (from an article explaining Hyundai's support for this initiative)

#### ABOUT THE PEACE TEAM

The Peace Team is an initiative of the Australian Chapter of the Peres Centre for Peace. The Peres Centre was established in 1996 by then President of Israel Shimon Peres as a non-political, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation, with the aim of bringing Israelis and Palestinians together through joint peace-building projects across a number of areas, including through sport.

The Peace Team was organised by the Peres Foundation in partnership with the Al-Quds Association for Democracy and Dialogue, a Palestinian non-government organisation, the Peres Centre's partner for sporting programs.

The team is made up of thirteen Israeli and thirteen Palestinian sportsmen aged between sixteen and thirty-six, of Muslim, Christian and Jewish backgrounds. The Peace Team is a ground-breaking initiative for Aussie Rules to provide common ground on which the players can build mutual understanding and respect.

The Peace Team's song, sung to the tune of Hawthorn's anthem is:

*We're the footy team for peace  
We glide the oval with ease  
With passion and strength we are free  
To unite to Victory!*

Source: <http://www.afl.com.au>

#### Pre-viewing questions

- How many different nationalities do you think are represented in the ethnic backgrounds at the elite level of Australian football codes – Australian Rules Football (AFL), Rugby League (NRL), Rugby Union and A League Soccer? List as many different nationalities as you are aware of.
- Are you aware of Australian Rules football being played competitively anywhere else in the world?
- In which football codes do supporters sometimes express ethnic rivalry through their identification with a particular club? Why might this happen?
- In 1936 many Jewish athletes refused to attend the Berlin Olympics in Germany and in 1972, Palestinian black September terrorists killed eleven Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. Are you aware of other violent incidents and boycotts that have occurred at any Olympic Games, such as in 1956 in Melbourne? How many of these incidents resulted from extreme nationalism being expressed in a public sporting arena?
- Do you think that playing in a team sport such as football, netball, hockey, cricket or soccer can be a unifying experience for people of different cultural and political backgrounds?
- Which sports do you associate with certain countries or ethnic groups?
- What do you think are the most popular sports played by Israelis and Palestinians?

#### Israelis and Palestinians

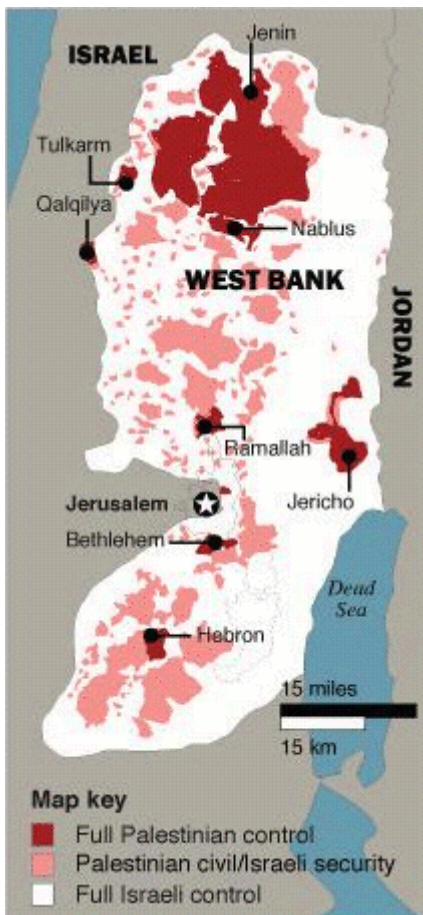
The population of Israel is 7,282,000 and the languages spoken are Hebrew and Arabic.

The population of the Palestinian Authority is 4,148,000 and the language spoken is Arabic.

Source: <http://www.afl.com.au>

Some Israelis and Palestinians also speak English, particularly Israelis who have often moved to Israel from English-speaking countries such as Australia, the USA and South Africa.

The map on page 5 shows the different territories where Palestinians and Israe-



live, often side-by-side, but divided by myriad checkpoints and barriers and constantly changing boundaries, as well as by mutual suspicion and fear.

The map above shows the West Bank area indicating different areas assigned to Palestinians and Israelis. Palestinians also occupy a small area of land on the south-west coast of Israel – the Gaza Strip. (Not shown on the map.)

Investigate online map sites for other maps of the changing occupation of Israeli/Palestinian areas.

## Background and brief history of the conflict

There has been continuing conflict and wars between people in this region of the Middle East for many generations.

Any historical account of what has happened in this region between Israelis and Palestinians is certain to be contested by different groups. We can see evidence of this in media images and reporting of this conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Any internet search of the history of the Israeli/Palestinian history and conflict

will produce accounts of the same period and place that are completely at odds with one another. Even maps are often presented differently. Emphases depend on who is telling the story and what access historians and journalists have to both the people and the areas where they can visit and film.

Source: <http://www.ccmep.org/delegations/maps/palestine.html>

Our own experience and background will also inevitably colour the way we see things. This conflict is about more than religious beliefs and disputed territory. Its roots go far back in history.

Similarly, there are many different perspectives on Australian history. Recently, a seven-part television series called *First Australians* has provided an Aboriginal account of what happened to Indigenous Australians in the wake of white settlement of this country. It is a very different account of Australian history to those we may be more accustomed to, most of which have been compiled, written and presented by non-Indigenous Australians.

No single account of what has happened in the past tells the whole story. In the case of the long and troubled history of Palestine and Israel and their presence in the Middle East, this is particularly the case. Many Israeli citizens would offer a very different perspective to that of many Palestinians. Changing regional maps tell a great deal of the story of this conflict.

At the end of World War Two, Jewish people, from Europe in particular, moved to the state of Israel, which was created in 1948 to provide a Jewish homeland for people who suffered terrible persecution in World War Two in the *Holocaust*, where six million Jews were slaughtered and many more dispossessed of everything. The United Nations established the State of Israel in the traditional Biblical Homeland of the Jews. Arabs who settled in this land in 1948 were offered citizenship of the new state. Some chose to take this up and today are Israeli Arabs who vote and have representation in Parliament in the Israeli Democracy. Others who chose not to take this up were removed. Because they were not absorbed or incorporated into neighbouring states like Jordan, they became refugees. Over a million Palestinians left the region; some resettled in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of the River Jordan and in other neighbouring countries, but many others became refugees. This came to be known to the Palestinians as 'The Catastrophe' – the *Naqba*.

Conflict and wars for territory and control over the divided regions, particularly on the West Bank, have continued for many years. Each group accuses the other of initiating violence and unrest, and the Israelis, who have much greater military power, exercise tight control over the Palestinians.

Despite numerous peace proposals over the years, a number of contentious issues remain unresolved: the borders of a future Palestinian state,



the status of the holy city of Jerusalem (in Arabic Al-Quds) and Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, and the fate of 3.5 million Palestinian refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars.

In the past eight years, Israeli military incursions (or assaults, as Arab media call them) into the occupied territory have continued, in response to ongoing rocket attacks and suicide bombings. Israel continues with the building of a security fence (or wall as the Arabs call it) through the occupied territories. This structure, while providing protection for Israelis, affects freedom of movement for many Palestinians and divides communities. There is also a view that it makes a negotiated settlement more difficult.

The events of 9/11 and The United States-led occupation of Iraq created further tensions between Arab states and the West, particularly the United States of America, which do not help the chances of achieving a lasting settlement for the Palestinian people. However, the new American administration, under the leadership of President Obama, is demonstrating a renewed commitment to assisting in the settlement of a lasting and just peace for all the people of the region, whether Israeli or Palestinian.

Fear and suspicion between different groups remains high. Most people in all societies and from all nationalities, regardless of their religious beliefs, want security and peace and to live in harmony with their neighbours, but this continues to be very difficult in the Middle East. Uri, one of the Peace Team players, cautions against being over-optimistic and says ‘...when you fall into...personal stories, you forget that the conflict is much...harder to solve, and much more deeply rooted’.

Successful initiatives such as the bringing together and training of the Peace Team offer a small window into a possible new world, one where, as Kamal, the team’s captain says, ‘We are both sides, we’re playing together and we can live together’.



## Activities

### While watching the film

As you watch this documentary, make notes on some or all of the following:

- the role of Tania Oziel in spearheading the project
- the role of coaches and mentors in preparing the team for the trip
- particular strengths of some of the individual players, both as footballers and leaders
- difficulties to be overcome in bringing the project to fruition, e.g. training time, money, flags and food
- the ongoing threat of political violence in the Middle East
- the differences between your life and opportunities and those of the members of the Peace Team.

### After watching the film

The following section includes statements made in the film and questions directly related to how the project unfolds.

#### 1. Becoming Involved

*Most Israelis have never actually met a Palestinian. They’ve only seen them on the news or perceived them to be suicide bombers. For the Palestinians, they might never have met an everyday Israeli. They perceive Israelis to be soldiers, militaristic.*

– Roni Kresner, Director of Information and Project Development, Peres Center for Peace, Israel

- What does this explanation suggest about the difficulties of getting young Israelis and Palestinians together?

‘Going into something like this you’re going to be sceptical. You’re not too sure what you’re coming up against.’

– Simon Jacobs, team coach

- What previous personal contact has Simon Jacobs had with Palestinians?

‘Peace is attainable; true peace based on the rights of both parties.’

– Naser Gous, a Palestinian and founder of the Al Quds Association for Democracy and Dialogue

- How has Naser’s background led him to become involved with the Peace Team?

‘I’ve never met a Palestinian before. In the first training session, there was a lot of tension in the air.’

– Yonatan ‘Pretty Boy’ Belik, an Israeli team member

- What will Yonatan be doing after the International Cup? What is one of his dreams?

‘I don’t know ... about this game ... but I’m going to try.’

– Fares Swaitty, basketballer with Palestinian national side and Peace Team member

- What are some of the difficulties for Palestinians like Fares in getting to training sessions on time from the West Bank?

*A Palestinian player is risking his life, in participating in this kind of activity. Every time he comes to this training*



session, a lot of people in his community start to ask questions. What's going on, how did you receive a permit, maybe you are collaborating with the enemy.

– Gal Peleg, Director of Sport, Peres Center for Peace, Israel

Not all of the people believe in peace. Some of them ask, why do you play with Israel? ... These people don't believe in peace ... maybe they can make me trouble, or maybe they kill me. You don't know.

– Kamal Abualthom, Palestinian Peace Team co-captain who has just completed his Diploma in Physical Education

- Given these difficulties and dangers, what do you think motivates these people to be part of the Peace Team Project?



## 2. Serious Training

'With only six months to go, the players must shelve the conflict and put their bodies on the line for the Peace Team.'

– Narrator

*Today is scary. We've been playing less than a year ... and we're going to be playing against people who might have been playing their whole life ... so [it's] going to be tough. I'm up for the challenge.*

– Leith Jaber, 16-year-old Palestinian team member

'Getting the team together is difficult and once-a-week training isn't nearly enough to develop proper skills or bonding.'

– Narrator

'Communication between the teammates, it's hard ... one person's communicating in Hebrew, one's in Arabic, one's in English.'

– Leith

- Can you imagine taking part in an international sporting competition playing a team sport when you've only just begun to learn the basics and there are language barriers?

'They are threatened by us, we're threatened by them. We disagree about so many things, that is the problem.'

– Yonatan

- What is at the heart of the conflict that we see developing over the use of Israeli and Palestinian flags on the team uniforms?

'It is the greatest game on earth.'

– Robert 'Dipper' DiPierdomenico, Australian football legend and match coach

- How is 'Dipper' able to motivate the team and improve their skills?

'This is where it all starts; gaining relationships.'

– Yonatan

*When we go to Australia, I want this team to show the other people that we have peace between us. We are both sides, we're playing together and we can live together.*

– Kamal

- How are Israeli Yonatan and Palestinian Leith developing a relationship?

- What qualities is Kamal showing that demonstrate his qualities as a leader?

*I found a job, so it's a big decision for me. Maybe I can't go with them ... because if I go ... I will lose my job. It's so bad for me because I believe in this.*

– Kamal

- Why is it so important for Kamal to be able to take up the job he has been offered as a physical education teacher for the Palestinian Authority?

### 3. In Australia

*They've had to learn to play together so they might one day play apart, independent nations at peace with one another. But in Australia their endurance will be stretched even further.*

– Narrator

- What does the narrator mean by this statement?
- Outline the challenges involved in providing meals for the Peace Team.

*Australian football is also a game where you need to put your body on the line ... to protect your teammate, and I think once an Israeli sees a Palestinian shepherding and putting his body on the line for him, I think that's a really, really strong message, and vice versa.*

– Nick Hatzoglou,  
AFL Multicultural Affairs

- Can teamwork on the football field during a team game provide evidence of people's capacity to work together in other contexts?
- What skills from other sports they may have played does the Peace Team successfully incorporate in their first practice game?
- Who does Uri (the Israeli co-captain) blame for what he sees as a breakdown in team discipline?
- How is the reality of their inexperience playing Aussie Rules brought home to the team after their first match against Great Britain?
- What complications do the religious demands of Ramadan create for the team?
- How does a misunderstanding in country Victoria about the timing of



the food to be served to break the day's fast almost derail the goodwill built up on the trip?

- Why is it so important for the Peace Team to win the game against China?

### 4. Reflecting on the experience

*'Their football has been disappointing, but the Peace Team's message is gaining traction.'*

– Narrator

*'Palestinian, Israeli, Russian, Gurkha, doesn't matter ... people are people and I think that's the main message here.'*

– Uri

*When they see me and Leith standing up and talking, they think that there is a chance. There is definitely a chance, because if we can do it here in a neutral place, why not at home?*

– Yonatan

*It looks great from the outside, especially here in Australia when people have such a naive perspective ... When you're far away, you can say, oh man, people can live together. Look at Yonatan and Leith. They're in the same room. Oh, it's beautiful... peace, harmony, everything is possible. You cannot fall into the personal, because when you fall into the personal stories,*

*you forget that the conflict is much harder to solve, and much more deeply rooted.*

– Uri

- Comment on the different perspectives reflected in these observations by some of the players and support crew.

*I'm not saying everyone should forget their history, but in the end it's impossible to throw all the Jews in the sea, and impossible to transfer all the Arabs.*

– Anwar Zaidan,  
Palestinian Coordinator

*If you would have spoken to me ... let's say a year ago, I would have told you no Arab or no Muslim has the right to live in Israel because you know, the Bible says that God gave the land to the Jews and it was ... religiously fuelled. But I do know that I really did try to put those opinions and those boundaries aside.*

– Danny Brill,  
assistant coach

- How does the conversation between Uri, the coaches and the support crew on the bus focus on the difficulties for Israelis and Palestinians in moving forward towards peaceful co-existence?

*What's been able to get me to this*



**Production story – Marc Radomsky, the filmmaker, describes his experience and ideals.**

Award-winning filmmaker Marc Radomsky has fifteen years experience in international television and has made more than 150 programs for local and international broadcasters and the development sector. *Tackling Peace* is far from the easiest job that he has ever taken on.

For one, he was arrested while crossing at a checkpoint between Israel and Palestine. He was detained by Israeli armed forces and forced to erase footage that he had shot during the crossing.

Says Radomsky:

*I had permission and clearance to cross these checkpoints to go into the West Bank but actual filming at the checkpoint is more of a tricky situation and I didn't have official permission.*

*I wasn't filming anything secret or terrible. I was just doing what a filmmaker does; you push the envelope a little bit and film until you're told to stop filming.*

*It's a war situation. I did get arrested, I was interrogated and I did have to erase footage I shot at the checkpoint.*

Then there was the challenge of winning the trust of the Israeli and Palestinian teammates, and those who brought them together, so he could capture their story, warts and all. But at times, situations arose that the organisers tried to keep him away from. He says of his intimate, observational style:

*In this environment there are bound to be misunderstandings and conflicts that arise – but it's about how those conflicts are resolved that gives the real picture of what's going on. I tried to get people to understand that if I didn't film the conflicts as they occurred, then portraying only the resolutions would have no credibility.*

*point at the moment is that I've left politics completely out of it. And so when I saw the little flags on our banners, I was a little taken aback. I just want to try and keep this as non-political.*

– Danny Brill

- The banner that the team carry in to Telstra Dome with the other international teams includes the Israeli and Palestinian flag as well as the peace symbol. Is it realistic and/or sensible for some of the organisers and players to want any visual national symbols excluded from the team banner?
- How do the players and organisers react to the response they get from the crowd?

**5. After the Trip**

*Three months on, the latest Middle East conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, endorsed by the Peres Centre for Peace founder Shimon Peres, Israel's President, threatens much of the team's new found solidarity.*

– Narrator

*I disagree with Shimon Peres' remarks [about] the current war we are going through. For that I am so close to taking myself out of the Peres Centre ... because if I continue I will be backing up an organisation that will be hurting my people.*

– Leith, team member in an email to Tanya Oziel

*This whole thing with the Peace Team was to put aside politics and it was all good and beautiful in Australia, and we came back to the reality and there is a war. And I'm in the army and Leith, he's a Palestinian, not in Gaza, but still a Palestinian. I hope to confront him and deal with the whole situation.*

– Yonatan

- What happens between Leith and Yonatan when they finally meet up and discuss the war in Gaza?
- How has the war held up the team plans to introduce Australian Rules to kids from both nations?

*Politics will always play a role in our conversations ... Hopefully we do get to continue to talk about different types of stuff so we can understand each other more.*

– Leith

*What happened in Australia was not in vain. I can say, yeah, I have a friend on the other side. I'm not just telling you about any Palestinian. I know someone who's a good person, who understands, who I get along with. We just need to talk, pass things on.*

– Yonatan

- Apart from offering the chance to play football in Australia, what do these final comments from a Palestinian and Israeli, in a time of continuing violent conflict, tell us about the success of the Peace Team project?

It was par for the course for the South African-born filmmaker, who worked for years in the anti-apartheid movement and appreciates the power of film and television when used in conflict situations.

It was through this understanding that Radomsky became aware of the work of the Israel-based Peres Centre for Peace, an independent not-for-profit organisation that runs cross-border initiatives in fields such as medicine, agriculture and sport.

*The vision of the Peres Centre is to proactively try and avoid a similar tragedy to what happened in South Africa – where the end of Apartheid came but the people who had fought so hard for it had no experience of the freedom that brought, and so the country was not ready for the challenges freedom demands – and things quickly become anarchic.*

Radomsky says ‘The Peres Centre is about building the infrastructures of dialogue now, so people are ready if and when a peace agreement arrives.’

Radomsky began filming the documentary in January 2008 during a self-financed trip to Israel to attend the team try-outs. With the assistance of executive producer Catriona Hughes, he eventually secured finance from Screen Australia and a sale to Network Ten. It was to be the first of five trips to the Middle East over twelve months, including a final visit early in 2009 to film an epilogue, following the latest Gaza war between December 2008 and January 2009.



While Radomsky typically works in the ‘socio-political, cultural, character-driven’ field, he had never previously used sport as a device. But he recognised a great story:

*Take this odd game, a unique mix of rugby, soccer and basketball, invented and played here at the edge of the universe, and chuck it into the middle of the Middle East conflict. It seems ridiculous to even try, but this game presented an even playing field because everyone came in on an equal level.*

*This is not a sport film; it’s a classic story of characters under pressure. They have to overcome huge obstacles. The way I work is to find the characters I need to tell my story and to spend a lot of time with them, gaining their trust and relating to them as a kind of two-headed director and camera operator – it’s a very intimate way of working.*

Often he was treated with suspicion:

*It was a constant struggle of ‘I need to get more, I need to get more access’. The Israeli team captain wouldn’t speak to me in Israel at all. He didn’t talk to me until we got to Australia. I had to be there 24-7 and be ready to film at all times, just be there and become part of the furniture, so it was a very intensive filming process that never ended for the doco team.*

As writer, producer and director, Radomsky shot much of the film himself as part of a two or three-person crew, before cutting 160 hours of footage down to the final film.

He hopes *Tackling Peace* will help people to see the shades of grey in a complex social and political environment:

*There was amazingly complicated stuff going on that the news doesn’t portray and the world doesn’t see. It’s easy to look at it and see it as a very black and white situation, but there’s no black and white, there’s only vast shades of grey.*

*I hope people engage with the journey of the characters and get a sense of the complexity; I want them to start understanding the pathos and the pain. The great sway of people really want peace and when you get them together in a meaningful way, so they can see their common humanity they really do get on. Worlds were rocked in this film. People’s entire perspectives and lives changed.*

*Hopefully people will realise that you should and can celebrate diversity. There’s value in understanding the difference, appreciating the difference and learning from the difference.*

## Challenges

Organising and filming this project presented many challenges for the organisers, the players and the filmmakers. Using the information in this guide, including the director’s statement and what you observed in the film, fill in **Table 2** (on page 11) to show how individuals and groups were able to meet most of these challenges.

**Table 2**

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	MAJOR CHALLENGES	SUCCESS AT OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES	UNMET CHALLENGES
Tanya Oziel			
Coach Robert DiPierdomenico			
Players			
The AFL			
The Peres Centre and the Al Quds Association for Democracy and Dialogue			
Marc Radomsky, filmmaker			

## Creating an AFL International Dream Team

Creating a multi-racial Dream Team is a challenging exercise as, unlike soccer, rugby league and union football, Australian Rules teams have historically been made up mostly of players from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds and from second generation migrants, though increasingly Indigenous Australians are now represented in all AFL teams. The AFL has a multicultural program and initiatives in schools whose stated aims are:

- To introduce Australian Rules football as part of settlement and integration,
- to implement community capacity building in culturally and linguistically diverse communities; and
- to influence community leagues and clubs to embrace multicultural diversity.

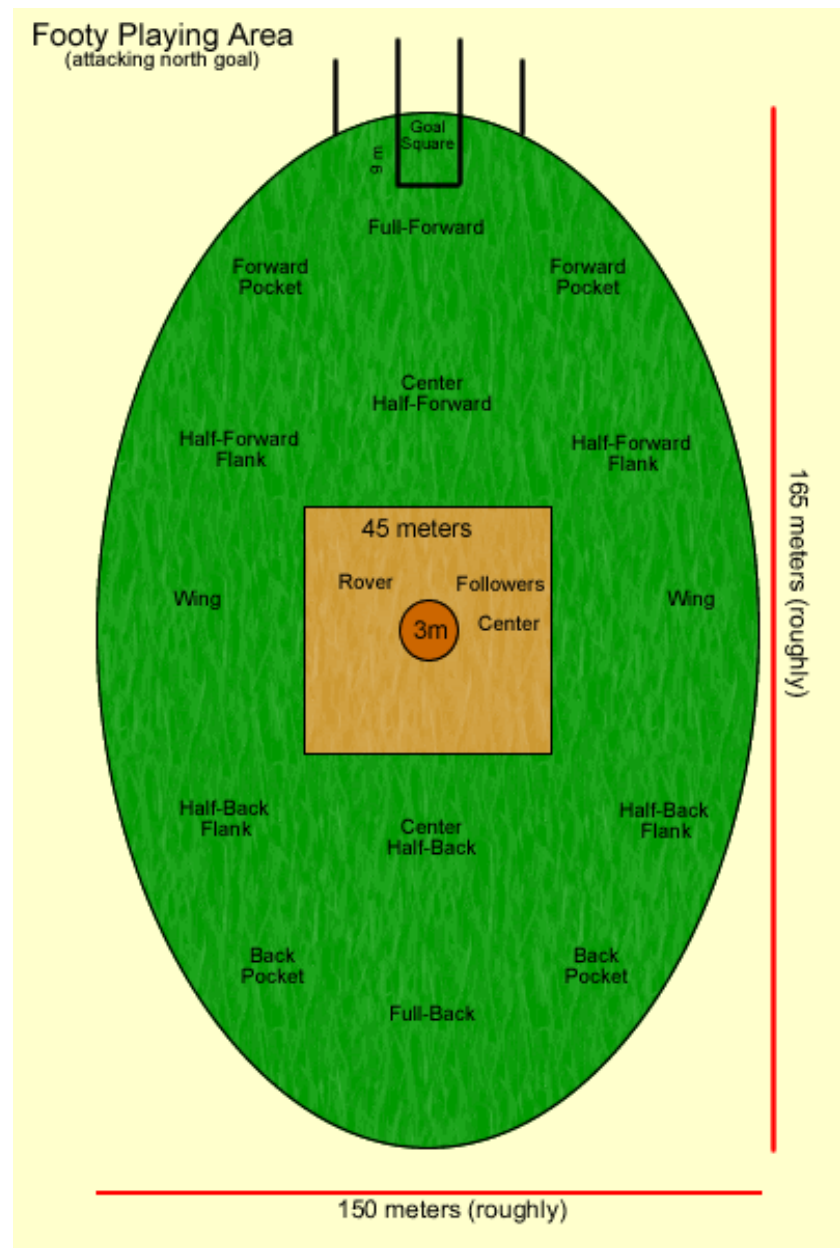
Source: From a paper by Michael Dove at <[http://originsinfo.com.au/pdf/Cultural\\_Diversity\\_in\\_Selected\\_Australian\\_Sports.pdf](http://originsinfo.com.au/pdf/Cultural_Diversity_in_Selected_Australian_Sports.pdf)>.

Such initiatives take time to show results on the field, despite the fact that audiences at AFL games are believed to represent a broad cultural cross-section of the Australian community.

Your task here is to create a team representing as many different ethnic backgrounds as possible. Players can be drawn from the current lists and, where necessary, from past players.

There are eighteen players on field in an AFL game, and three interchange players. If you include Gary Ablett, Chris Judd and Dale Thomas in your team as the three players from an Anglo-Celtic background, you will need to find others from an Australian Indigenous background and players from other ethnic backgrounds such as Irish, Asian or Middle Eastern backgrounds, or those from South America, New Guinea or Fiji.

Here are a few names to consider from the current player lists: Setanta



Source: [http://www.afana.com/af\\_faq\\_sec2.shtml](http://www.afana.com/af_faq_sec2.shtml)

<b>Full Forwards:</b>	<b>Left Forward Pocket</b>	<b>Full Forward</b>	<b>Right Forward Pocket</b>
<b>Half Forwards:</b>	<b>Left Half Forward Flank</b>	<b>Centre Half Forward</b>	<b>Right Half Forward Flank</b>
<b>Centre Line:</b>	<b>Left Wing</b>	<b>Centre</b>	<b>Right Wing</b>
<b>Half Backs:</b>	<b>Left Half Back Flank</b>	<b>Centre Half Back</b>	<b>Right Half Back Flank</b>
<b>Full Backs:</b>	<b>Left Back Pocket</b>	<b>Full Back</b>	<b>Right Back Pocket</b>

The three assigned to the ball are referred to as 'followers'.  
Their positions are referred to as Ruckman, Rover and Ruck-Rover.

O'hAilpin, Harry O'Brien, Bachar Houli, Matthew Pavlich, Alan Didak and Anthony Rocca.

Some names from earlier days: Mal Michael, Alex Jesaulenko, Sergio Silvagni, Robert DiPierdomenico, Anthony Koutifides, Peter Bell, Adem Yze and Tony Liberatore.

Go to this site for further information about the ethnic origins of AFL players: <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_VFL/AFL\\_players\\_by\\_ethnicity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_VFL/AFL_players_by_ethnicity)>.

## Drawing conclusions and moving forward

1. What did you learn through watching *Tackling Peace* about daily life for young people living in Israel and the Palestinian Territories?
2. How valuable an initiative do you think the AFL International Cup is as a way of bringing people from different cultures together?
3. Are there any lessons to be learnt



- by Australians through watching this story?
- How important is the assistance of bodies like the AFL and their development arm, as well as the contributions made by commercial sponsors, to the success of such a project? How important is the commitment of an individual like Tanya Oziel to achieving this dream?
  - This program is to be shown nationally on Channel Ten. Most locally produced documentaries are not shown on commercial television. What do you think is the appeal of this one for Channel Ten and would it get a bigger audience here than if it were broadcast on ABC or SBS, the more usual channels for documentaries to be screened?
  - Apart from providing a record of this project for both participants and supporters, what do you think the filmmakers would like viewers to get from watching this documentary?
  - Towards the end of this film we see some of the participants maintaining their friendship forged through the Peace Team project. How could the people involved in this project build on what they have achieved in other ways, and what difficulties are there for the young men when they return to their daily lives in divided and separate communities?

- How do you think the principles embodied in this project could be used in an Australian context to develop friendships, understandings and skills between groups who might otherwise not come together? Outline some ideas for such a project in your area. It does not have to be based on sport but could be a music project or art project.
- Which, if any, of your preconceptions have changed as a result of watching the film?

### References and further resources

- AFL – The official site of the Australian Football League:  
<http://www.afl.com.au>
- See Policies – Racial and Religious Vilification; Respect and Responsibility
- See Development – Multicultural; International – International Cup
- AFL football site setting out the basic rules of the game:  
<http://www.footy.com.au/dags/FAQ1v1-5.html>
- AI Quds Association for Democracy and Dialogue:  
<http://www.afdd-pal.org>

Article about cultural diversity in Australian sporting codes:

[http://originsinfo.com.au/pdf/Cultural\\_Diversity\\_in\\_Selected\\_Australian\\_Sports.pdf](http://originsinfo.com.au/pdf/Cultural_Diversity_in_Selected_Australian_Sports.pdf)

Channel Ten Tackling Peace website:

<http://ten.com.au/docos-tackling-peace.htm>

The Peres Center for Peace:

<http://www.peres-center.org>

Screen Australia Tackling Peace website:

<http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/showcases/tacklingpeace>

### Films

Other recent documentaries offering perspectives on both the Palestine/Israel situation and sport and politics:

*Hope in a Slingshot*  
 (Inka Stafrace, 2008)

*Salute* (Matt Norman, 2008)

(ATOM study guides are available for both these films.)



## Tackling Peace

A Screen Australia National Documentary Program produced by Dreamstone Productions in association with GFN Productions and the Documentary Australia Foundation. Made in association with Network 10.

Executive Producers: Mark Hamlyn (Screen Australia), Catriona Hughes, Geoff Levy (GFN Productions)

Writer/Producer/Director:  
Marc Radomsky

Narrator: Hugo Weaving

Year: 2009

Duration: 44 minutes

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A PHILANTHROPIC INITIATIVE

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