

The Weekend West

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AMBUSH ERA OVER

Whether it is West Coast or the Swans that kick the first goal at Optus Stadium tomorrow, AFL history will be made.

And when the goal umpire waves his or her flags another piece of history will be made — it will be the first time in 26 years TV viewers won't see Messages on Hold signs in the crowd behind the umpire.

The giant hands have appeared behind the goals at every Eagles home game for the best part of three decades, having started as a guerilla marketing stunt in 1992.

A formal sponsorship arrangement was struck between the Eagles and Messages on Hold the following year that continued to last season.

But the boundary fence at Optus Stadium is over a metre higher than it was at Subiaco Oval, and considerably further away from the goal posts, which means TV camera angles at the new stadium have removed the Messages on Hold money shot.

Messages on Hold managing director Kym Illman called it the end of an era.

"The tight goal umpire shot was unique at Subiaco," Illman told *Inside Cover*.

"Where to now for us? Unsure, but we'll certainly be keeping our eyes on other sports broadcasts, looking for quirky opportunities."

Illman kindly supplied us with an image of the very first "ambush".



The first stunt in 1992.