

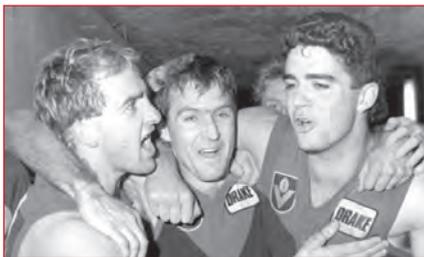


PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS'

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

GRAND FINAL EDITION 2021



FROM THE PRESIDENT

- ROD GRINTER

Welcome all, firstly congratulation to Simon Goodwin, Alan

Richardson, all other coaches, with a special mention to our own Adem Yze for getting the playing list conditioned physically and mentally to an absolute elite level to allow the players to perform at their best in the toughest competition in Australia. This no doubt allowed Max Gawn and his team to follow him throughout the year into the finals, and to win the premiership. How amazing has this been, breaking a 57-year drought from our last premiership in 1964? Can I say **I'm the proudest past player in league history.** Thank you all and well done boys, you have made so many Melbourne supporters so proud of our club again.

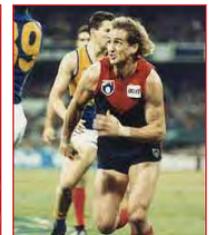
As custodians of our club's past and keeping us connected, what an amazing year 2021 has been, albeit with most of us in lockdown throughout the year, being very frustrated that we cannot get together at the footy or not even catch up to watch our team together. We have done the best we can with keeping connected, at the pointy

end of the year during the finals the connection went nuts with so many past players being interviewed, while the connection via WhatsApp groups and other social media has been amazing. Our annual reunion, held for the second time via Zoom, was sensational. Well done all to pull this off again! As you would agree, you cannot replace face to face gatherings; however, under the circumstances this was the only option for us. Well done again everyone.

Thank you all so much, I'm SO PROUD of our club and I'm SO PROUD of our MFCP&PP&OA committee for all the hard work they do in ensuring we all stay connected. Spike Harris, Paul Burnham, Lynda Carroll, Jackie Emmerton, Paul Hoggood, John Ahern, Daniel Ward & Russell Robertson, thank you all, and a special shout out to Lynda Carroll for the outstanding newsletters that she pulls together.

Go Dees!

Regards
Rod Grinter
President
MFC P&PP&OA



TEAM MESSAGES 2021

L leading up to the Grand Final, past players and support staff sent in their messages of support and encouragement to be shared with the side; an initiative appreciated by all. We hope to have more of these messages in future newsletters.

Meanwhile, here is a cross-section for you to enjoy:

G'day Simon, all coaches and of course the entire playing list. All the best for the grand final - you have all played with a great team ethos all year. Fantastic to see your team first attitude and the joy you receive from teammates efforts.

All the best, **Steve Bickford**.

Prepare for the toughest game you have ever played and there will then be no surprises.

My family and I will be supporting you in every moment.

Chris Connolly

Played 1982 to 1990



Opportunity comes with team unity, as Checker Hughes said, "go out and play with reckless abandon". Good luck boys.

Graham Wise No 23.

Played 1963 to 1966

So proud of all you boys, time to create your own history. Be your best, stay

composed and confident and let's all enjoy a great win. We're in your hands!

Jeremy Nichols

Played 1985 to 1986

Love your work Coaches, players and staff. Just one more win will make thousands of supporters very, very proud. Give it all you've got.

Spike Harris

Team Manager 1992 – 2017



Goody, Richo and all other coaches, thank you for preparing our team into an elite side and outstanding group of people. Gus & Gawny, love your Podcast. Ha ha.

To the whole squad, congratulations on making the big dance, how fucking exciting, 2021 has been such a shit year in many respects, but you all have been the shining light for me and so many others in so many ways, putting a smile on my face! Make me the proudest Past Player in league history. I look forward to catching up with you at my ACU on the first Friday in December for a couple of frothies.

Rod Grinter

Played 1985 to 1994

The whole club has done an amazing job this year and we are cheering loudly from our living room. Good luck.

Kind Regards

Brian Goldberg

U19's Played 1990 to 1991



Norm Smith's personal message to me as an 18-year-old playing in my first Grand Final in 1959 was:

"YOU MAY NEVER PLAY IN

ANOTHER GRAND FINAL - GOOD SIDES DON'T LOSE GRAND FINALS. GO WIN IT!!!

I think it is also appropriate to our 2021 team

Hassa Mann

Played 1959 to 1968

I am so proud of the team (all players this year) in how you have gone about your football. You have created such excitement and enjoyment so far. Enjoy your experience and continue down the same path as you did in your last game and I have no doubt you come away winners – This journey you will never forget. Good luck to all and enjoy.

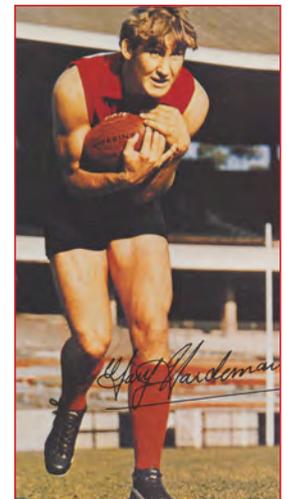
Alan Johnson

Played 1982 to 1990

To all the Players, Staff and Support Crew MFC,

Congratulations on making the Grand Final, what an amazing effort by all concerned.

As an ex player (219 Games and never played in a GF let alone a Final) I am very jealous!! I've heard on good authority that Jimmy Stynes, Robbie Flower, Sean



Wight, Troy Broadbridge, Colin Sylvia and former coach Dean Bailey have had a serious chat to Norm Smith and it is my belief the curse is soon to end. Neale Daniher deserves a mention as well for all he has done for the club.

Remember, history is history that can never be taken away from you - NEVER. Looking forward to celebrating with you all on your return.

Go Dees!!! Give them HELL!!!

Gary Hardeman

Played 1967 to 1977 & 1981

As someone who played in 1964, our last great year, I can't explain how thrilled I am my beloved Dees are primed to achieve history in 2021. I am so impressed by the grit and determination shown this year. The chasing, tackling and pressure has been absolutely brilliant.

Go hard fellas on the day that counts!!

So proud of each player and everyone involved.

I will be there to scream and shout for the boys!!

Ray Groom, Tassie

Played 1963 to 1968

While you are representing all of us, please just do the best you can on the day as you have earned your invite to the big dance and nothing can change that. May the football Gods smile on you on the day.

Stephen McCarthy

Played 1982 to 1983

Trust & Believe

Remember - enjoy the experience and the sun will come up whether you win or lose.

Brett Lovett

Played 1986 to 1997



What I'd like to say is that there's a huge number of excited Melbourne supporters in Hobart. Who knew there were so many? Maybe it's the Tassie connections over the years. And Ben Brown this year. This team is the real deal. I love the way they play their roles and most importantly play for each other. We're already proud of them, and believe they will make us even prouder.

Michael Seddon

Played 1980 to 1985



All Dees' Tragics who ride every bump, tackle and goal every game since they day they were born.

Red and Blue Blood in those veins and 'SO PROUD' of their team

Graeme Yeats

Played 1984 to 1995

To all the Coaches and Players of the Melbourne FC, I can't help but think this, your preparation, and the game, is all about moments, living in the moment! So, I've titled this "SECONDS".

Cherish every second

Enjoy every second

Live in every second

Play in every second

Make the most of every second

Do this, and you won't come second!!

Peter Maynard

Played 1980 to 1981

Enjoy the game boys. Big crowd, will be a great buzz.

Just do what you do - keep being selfless and sharing, don't do any more just because it's a GF - and that'll be enough.

It's a proud club with a long history. But that doesn't matter on Saturday. All that matters is you keep putting the team first, play your role, win the ball when it's your turn, be smart when it's not.

Go well and enjoy it.

Chris Heffernan

Played 2003 to 2005

Whatever it takes boys!! "Dare to Dream".

Shane Woewodin

Played 1997 to 2002



Hi All MFC

So happy for everyone MFC.....means so much to so many MFC people, more than any of us can imagine - personally my three boys are riding this with everything they've got in lockdown 76

Best group of Demons we've seen, so go for greatness lads, you all deserve it.

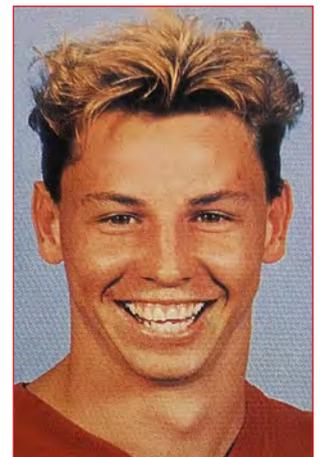
Always know we are always with you no matter the situation.

Please smash those arrogant flogs from the West

Go great

Nathan Brown

Played 1998 to 2007



TEAM MESSAGES 2021 *continued*

Could not be prouder to be a past player of this great club! You are playing the game the right way, hard at it, outnumbering and playing for each other. No luck needed, just keep believing and playing the way you have been, and the result will take care of itself.

Cameron Pedersen
Played 2013 to 2018



Boys, you've done us so proud this season as Past Players and supporters of this great club. Wishing you all the best,

and let's bring this premiership cup home!

Mark Jamar
Played 2002 to 2015

To Goody and the Melbourne Playing Group

What a sensational season you've had and a fantastic opportunity you have ahead in the Grand Final.

You are having a huge impact on the "lockdown weary" Victoria, bringing some excitement to our weekends with the way you are going about your footy and playing with such enthusiasm and fun - keep it up!

All the best, stay together no matter what, stick to the game plan, as you've proven time and again it works and it can get you out of any situation, and most importantly be confident knowing there is an army of red and blue back in Melbourne who will be watching and cheering on from afar!

Ben Holland
Played 2004 to 2008

Firstly, well done on making the Grand Final - throughout the season you guys have played the right way with an amazing brand of footy. You have made us 'old blokes' so proud as now we stand for something, because of the way you have represented this great footy club. You have got through the qualifiers and earned the right to get to the starting line of a Grand Final - Keep to the plan!! Continue to be brave, ruthless and selfless which are all traits of Nathan Jones who I know you will represent very strongly. Dare to Dream - Go your hardest, do yourselves proud and bring home the Premiership Cup that will deliver millions of smiles for this great club!!

Good Luck

Paul Hopgood and Family
Played 1993 - 2000

Hello Team,

For every one of my 90-odd games as a player for the Melbourne Football Club, I remember silently reaffirming in my mind that I was the best person to be here, at this ground, on this day, preparing to wear the Demons' jumper. Each game I would appreciate the history of the club and be proud that on this day, in the belief of my coaches, I earn the privilege to represent the red and blue jumper.



Fortunately, I was coached by some greats in my time at this club. As a friendly reminder to steal the words of

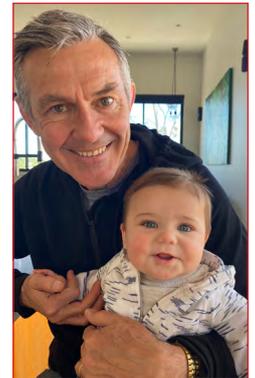
the inspirational Neale Daniher from his book *When All is Said and Done*, "if you know what you believe in, there's a certain confidence that comes with that. This is the 'courage of your convictions' and it's what guides your life journey".

Now, as a fan of you all we believe you are the best team to be pulling on the jumper when your moment arrives. Have confidence you are.

Best wishes from my family to you and yours. Go Dees.

Marcus Seecamp
Played 1995 - 2000

Loving your commitment, passion, energy, skill and unity. Ingredients for premiership success. Go Dees.



Andrew Daff
Club Doctor 1991 to 2014

Swooper Northey loved the 'experts' and media telling the group of players that ultimately participated in the '88 Grand Final that throughout the year 'they played above themselves', as his response was along the lines of 'what BS, you simply showed what you are capable of and raised the bar'. Balmey was always bemused by 'home advantage', believing it was just a piece of dirt, shaped in an oval, with goalposts at either end, which supported the 'anyplace, anywhere, anytime' mantra. You have endured both of those challenges over the past two years. 2020 was tough for all to witness knowing you were underachieving, yet with the challenge of never being at home. 2021 has been outstanding, as every one of you consistently met individual and team challenges and kept raising the bar, but you will have to fulfill your and our dreams on a piece of dirt, shaped like an oval, with goalposts at either end, that is

not our home. Your planning, preparation and execution is what has got us here. The expression 'it is ours to lose' is the proverbial double-edged sword; on the one hand it creates enormous pressure, but most importantly it confirms that we are the real deal and that with planning, preparation and execution, we will win. Enjoy every minute of it. Go Dees!

Steve 'Henry' Laussen
Support staff 1987 – 1997

We're right behind you; you've given us lots of fun, lots of joy - we can't wait - Go Dees!

Anthony McDonald (with Max, Tom and Angus)

We're there with you in spirit. We share that special bond in that we all bleed red and blue together, and we're going to be right behind you on game day.

Jack Grimes

So here it is, offered in tribute to the Melbourne Demons of 2021, but also in honour of my 4 favourite Demons of all time: my Dad, and his 3 brothers - Ted, Donald and Denis. Great sportsmen, but even better role models. How lucky we were, and remain, to call them family.

We miss them all. Go Dees

David Cordner
Played 1982 – 1987

You just have to do what is asked of you in the moment. Do your best. That will be enough to win if you all do it.

Russell Robertson

My cousin Geoff Cordner wrote this poem - The Man in the Stand - about 10 years ago

THE MAN IN THE STAND

There's a man in the stand, and he's looking at you
And he's wanting to know if you're feeling it too -
The pride in the guernsey that means so much more
When you wear it for all those who've worn it before.

There's a duty that comes with the honour bestowed
To respect the ideals of the MFC code;
So with the passion and courage of teams of the past
Play each quarter, each minute, as if it's your last.

There's a man in the stand, and it shows in his face
He'd give anything just to be there in your place
To lace up your boots, and to feel what you feel
When you pull on the armour of red and blue steel,
To be able to tell the young boy on his knee
Of the day that the fans roared for him at the 'G.

So one thing you must say as you walk from this shed
Is you'll never let this privilege go to your head,
You'll never take for granted what you've been allowed -
The chance to play footy in front of this crowd.

There's a man in the stand, but he's not on his own,
There are thousands beside, and behind, and at home
Those who wear the Club colours, and whose welfare depends
On whether their team is in front at the end.

And though between them they haven't a stat to their names,
They are the very heart and the soul of this game,
And the question those people are asking of you
Is "If you get cut today, will you bleed red and blue?"

It's a Grand Old Flag, but in this brave new world
If you want to see another flag being unfurled

Then don't waste your time on the papers or news,
Because games aren't determined by media views
Nor do crowds or the umpires decide who prevails,
It's young men with big hearts just refusing to fail
With heads over the ball, and their bodies on the line
Who when knocked down get up again time after time
And who know that there's always some more they can find
Even when the board says that they're five goals behind.

Winners don't play three quarters, or give into fear
And they don't play for money, or backslaps or beer
No, they play for each other, standing shoulder to shoulder,
When the other team's brave, then you have to be bolder
And the thing you'll reflect on one day, when you're older
Is the man you became as a red and blue soldier.

There's a man in the stand, and like those who surround him
He smiles as he turns to the faces around him
He smiles in the knowledge this team shares his pride
That this is a group who will not be denied
And he roars himself hoarse as he cheers for that team
He believes that these men can deliver that dream
And he knows that the prize they have sought all these years
Will be well worth the blood, and the sweat, and the tears.





2021 - 1964 WAS THE 'LAST' PREMIERSHIP. 2000 WAS THE 'LAST' GRAND FINAL. HERE'S AN INSIGHT INTO THE WAY WE WERE:

1964

In 1964, we played Collingwood in the Grand Final at the MCG, winning by four points.

There was little evidence of spectators wearing club colours, with most male supporters in shirt and tie.



Banners were in evidence right around the fences during the Grand Final, including for other sides! Melbourne's read 'COME ON MELBOURNE THE MIGHTY DEMONS'.

There was no centre square. After a few variations, the centre square as we know it was implemented in 1975.

There was only one field umpire – two field umpires were introduced in 1976.

This was the first season in which coaches could address players on the ground at quarter time.

Recorded vision was black and white, with a one-person narrative commentary.

The crowd was 102,471, with supporters spilling over the boundary line.

Ron Barassi was Melbourne captain, wearing No. 31. The coach was Norm Smith.



2000

In 2000, we played Essendon in the Grand Final at the MCG, losing by 60 points.

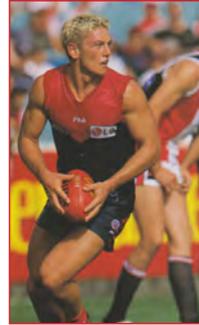
There were still cars using Yarra Park, which was ankle deep in mud.

Melbourne's Shane Woewodin won the Brownlow.

Club colours could be seen everywhere, on everyone.

The old Ponsford Stand was still in existence, with timber bench seats.

While mobile phones were by now commonplace, social media was still a few years in the #future.



The Grand Final was played earlier than usual – 2 September - due to the upcoming Sydney Olympics

The crowd was 96,249.

Umpires were still wearing white.

David Neitz was Melbourne captain, wearing No. 9. The coach was Neale Daniher.



2021

In 2021, we played the Western Bulldogs in the Grand Final at Optus Stadium (WA). In a memorable performance, Melbourne won its thirteenth flag by a club record margin – 74 points – with Tom McDonald's goal after the siren sealing the fairytale result.

The previous best Grand Final win for Melbourne was the 1956 Olympic Premiership, won by 73 points.

The MCG was left empty for the second finals series in a row, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In a continuation of the Olympic theme, it was noted that Melbourne's 1964 premiership win was the same year as the Tokyo Olympics - held there again in 2020, postponed until 2021.

Perth's Optus Stadium was full to capacity, with 61,118 in attendance.

Max Gawn was Melbourne captain, wearing No. 11. The coach was Simon Goodwin.

Bayley Fritsch kicked 6.2, the most since Darren Jarman in 1997.

Christian Petracca was named best on ground, becoming the first ever Melbourne player to win a Norm Smith Medal (the award was first presented in 1979).

Former Melbourne captain Garry Lyon presented the premiership cup to Simon Goodwin and Max Gawn.

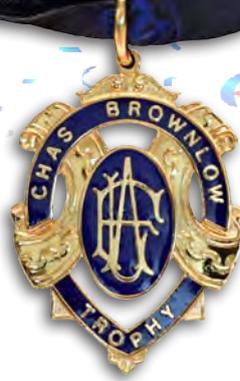
Simon Goodwin, who received the Jock McHale Medal as premiership coach, is Melbourne's fifth to fill that role.



AT THE BROWNLOW

In another season that generated the phrase 'like no other', the 2021 Brownlow presentation was centred in Perth, with involvement from all over the country, including players in black tie sitting in their loungerooms. True to human nature, though, we have by now become accustomed to odd backgrounds and squares on screens, and – for the Melbourne contingent – hopes were high on the night.

Fittingly, it was one of the closest counts in living memory, with red and blue in the mix right to the final rounds. Huge congratulations go to Port Adelaide's Ollie Wines for a wonderful win, followed by the Western Bulldogs' Marcus Bontempelli, and our very own Clayton Oliver in third place. This



trio, accompanied by fourth placed Sam Walsh (Carlton), set a record, as never before have four players achieved 30 votes or more.

As Wines himself said, 'It takes a team', and Melbourne's results reflected this, with Oliver (31), Petracca (23) and Gawn (16) leading the way in the side's total of 96 Brownlow votes. This was the best total score registered by any team, with Port Adelaide second on 91 votes.

FATHER DAUGHTER DRAFT SUCCESS

The AFLW draft delivered a historic moment for the Melbourne Football Club, with the women's program making its first ever Father/Daughter selection in Georgia Campbell. Georgia is the daughter of Adrian (1993-1994) who played two senior games for the club in addition to a reserves premiership. He also played for Footscray. Under the AFLW qualification rules, for a daughter to be eligible to join the club the father needs to have played just the one senior game.



Georgia is an extremely talented athlete who has come through the Eastern Ranges NAB League system. With a strong athletics

background, including state high jump achievements, the Emmaus College student had a terrific season. Playing as a ruck/forward, Georgia represented Victoria Metro, with her carnival earning her All Australian honours.

Through the Academy, Georgia had opportunities to spend time doing work experience with the club media team and was given a mentor in AFLW player and NAB Rising Star winner, Tyla Hanks.

The club is continually on the lookout for any daughters who may be eligible under this rule, regardless of whether or not they are currently playing football or any other sport.

ACADEMY RE-LAUNCH: GET INVOLVED

As the club recovers from COVID-19, a review of all Academy timing and structures is underway. Important to this review is ensuring we have all eligible children registered on our database so that all communication is being received. To be eligible for the Academy, the following criteria applies:

Sons must have had their father play 100 senior games

Daughters must have had their father play a single senior game

Following this review further communication around the structure of the Academy training sessions and timing for 2022 will be communicated via this newsletter, email and text message, ensuring all

eligible players are informed.

Even if you think your child is too young to be registered or isn't currently playing football, we would encourage you to register. Doing so will ensure they don't miss out on any gift packs or game experiences that may be offered.

To get your child involved please contact Todd Patterson (AFLW/ Melbourne Academy Talent Manager) on email (todd.patterson@melbournefc.com.au) or via mobile (0408 445 966).



FROM PERTH WITH LOVE

While all was quietly locked down in Melbourne on Grand Final Day, the buzz over the other side of the country was building beyond belief, as Perth took on its first AFL Grand Final. In Season 2021, this was being played between two of the most Victorian teams. Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs were at the heart of the action, and in order to share the love, we heard the build up and the match day stories of past player Darren Kowal and MFC Head Trainer, John Stanaway, along with snippets from MFC P&PP&OA Committee Member, Jackie Emmerton.



Living in Tasmania, Jackie was able to attend the game, and particularly enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with many past players, starting with a gathering on the Friday evening. The list of attendees reads like a roll call, complemented by a newspaper photo shoot from earlier in the week that included the likes of premiership player Ken Melville, and Ray Jones – 96 year-old WW2 veteran – who played for Melbourne in 1949. The more recent group included Daniel Hughes, Dean Irving, Peter Walsh, Andrew Lamprill, Nathan Carroll, Earl Spalding, Shane Woewodin, Bernie Vince and Darren Kowal – from whom we will hear shortly. Many were able to renew acquaintances at the Friday evening gathering, with the Swan Yacht Club fortuitously in the charge of another former Demon in Damien Gaspar.

Then it was match day – Grand Final Day. It was with mixed emotions that many of us in Victoria had handed over our membership barcodes to assist Melbourne past players in the west to



attend, or to sit together. In the case of Darren Kowal, this meant that he was able to sit with his wife, Annie, and children, Olivia and Jaxon, ready to see the Demons win. The atmosphere was perfect for a memorable day, evening and game:

WOW! Can't believe the build up here. Kowal family are pumped and ready to cheer loud for all who can't attend. Thinking of you all and heartfelt shout out to you Balls – legend!!! The work he has done in the lead up and prior to keep the past players together and in the memory of the current crop is simply outstanding. CARN THE DEES.

While settling in, Darren provided the following prediction:

Anticipate a cracking, high paced and close battle. Still feel that the Dees have it over the Dogs at their best; however, as we all know, GF is a different beast and anything can happen. First to settle in will win.

Darren's overall premonition turned out to be true, and by game's end, with the noise so loud it became a part of the commentary, the joy was out there:



Awesome time, amazing day and happy as a pig in shit!

A 74-point record margin, and a win in perfect conditions, for the club's thirteenth premiership – what more could any Melbourne supporter ask for? THANK YOU so much to Darren Kowal and family for their contribution and their willingness to provide updates on a very full Grand Final Day.

One Melbourne supporter who then had to make his way back to Melbourne was Head Trainer, John Stanaway. Having been through the quarantine and lock down journeys required to be part of the club's travelling party, John went through every measure required after captain Max Gawn and other senior players promoted his cause to be included. As John works with Brad Green, there was no impediment on that front, so as soon as he was given the go ahead – and did hard quarantine in Victoria – he joined the travelling party.

Being a lifelong Melbourne supporter, there was naturally a bit of trepidation in the mix for John as well. 'I was actually really nervous before the Geelong game!' As for the Grand Final? 'I was terrified on the day of the game, but I was excited to be there. There was a huge knot in my stomach.' The smile on his face at game's end shows that it was well worth it. With the premiership cup firmly in his grasp, John even admits – slightly sheepishly – that he 'had a little drink from it – I did that early, because I didn't want to get any germs, did I?!' Reassuringly, John says that – while everyone 'wanted a piece' of the cup early on – after celebrations built up and landed in Cottesloe, the cup was put away safely, ready to be taken back home.

For John, it was the dream end to a long campaign, which included everything from police escorts off the bus in South Australia to gates being shut behind the team whenever they stepped into training; from coronavirus testing every second day to a constant realisation that those back 'at home' were sadly removed from the excitement building in the west for a wonderful Grand Final.

FROM PERTH WITH LOVE *continued*

While John was one of those marooned in the rooms for most of the game, doing everything from sorting out beer for afterwards to making his way through at least twenty rolls of tape to keep the players going, he made his way to the race in time to see the triumphant end, with Melbourne's record Grand Final winning margin memorably achieved by Tom McDonald's goal after the siren. Many in that moment shed



tears of joy and relief, John being happy to admit that he was one of them. In the frantic time that followed, many past players could be seen in the rooms, with the likes of Jack Trengove, Byron Pickett, Shane Woewodin and Bernie Vince celebrating with the current team, alongside former captain Garry Lyon,

who had had the honour of handing over the premiership cup.

'It's unbelievable', says John now. 'It hasn't sunk in.' Of course, in some ways, there just hasn't been time. Packing up, moving out and heading back to Victoria has been a busy process; but he has watched the replay, and is happy to have been part of the adventure. Those of us who watched, and who have listened to the stories of those who headed west, are also happy to have shared the experience. We have seen and heard much, and now we can enjoy the fact – Melbourne, Premiers 2021.

ZOOM REUNION 2021

If there was ever a reunion that had it all – except actually catching up and enjoying the MCG – 2021 was it.

In the best possible style, the Association's second annual 'Zoom Reunion' started with a message from a delighted Neale Daniher, saying 'Go Dees! Give 'em hell and enjoy the night!'

This was supported by Rod Grinter, noting that we are 'all custodians of the Melbourne Football Club', and that our team, living out of suitcases, located on the other side of the country, was where they were because of 'genuine care...hard work.'

Comedian Titus O'Reilly noted that 'past players are some of the biggest supporters I've ever met.' One of those is Hassa Mann, triple premiership player and part of the winning 1964 outfit, who passed on the message that 'we all belong to a great football club.'

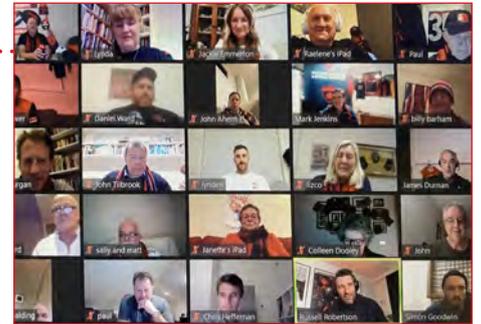
With MC Russell Robertson (almost) in charge early on, such thoughts were echoed by those who were being interviewed – toasted and roasted – and their interviewees. Paul Callery bounced off Carl Ditterich, who he recalled as the 'blond bombshell' when he played his first brilliant game against Melbourne at the Junction Oval in 1963. Noting others in the audience along the way, particularly Jim

Tilbrook, Paul and Carl exchanged their thoughts on occasions such as reunions and caring for past generations, with Carl saying '...the friendship's still there. These people are part of my heart, part of my memories....the greatest thing I ever got out of football.'

We were then catapulted to the present, as Alan Richardson zooming in from Perth. Assuring all present that the messages received from past generations were genuinely humbling, he handed over to captain Max Gawn who, while conceding that it was 'shattering not to be in Melbourne', was thrilled with the Melbourne presence in the west, and ready for what awaited, saying 'Hopefully we get a win for you on Saturday.' He was followed by Tom McDonald, comparing notes with Bryan Kenneally, who said 'I'd love to be part of the second last premiership side at Melbourne!' Jack Viney revealed that Todd was 'so excited, so nervous', and that he – Jack – was looking forward to having premiership bragging rights.

Simon Goodwin, recognised as the AFL's best coach of 2021, was ready for the challenge ahead, noting that 'the support has been amazing. We know what it means.' Having sought quiet time, he was ready for the game, saying 'we want to bring the cup back to Melbourne.'

These sentiments were echoed by



everyone from Brad Green – 'proud of the football club and where they're at' – to Lynden Dunn – 'this is what we've all been waiting for for so long' – before another interview, this time focusing on Stephen Tingay. From John Ahern and Paul Hoggood, we heard memories of a barefoot six year-old, later committed to his training, even at 11 at night. Stinga recalled being dragged along to 'a trial match at Rushworth – I kicked seven goals, and it changed my life.' He landed at Melbourne, becoming a club favourite, as well as 'a very proud Life Member.' Stinga even delivered a confident prediction of a 34-point win for Melbourne in the Grand Final. We were all hoping!

Tony Elshaug – 'this is the first time I've been at a Melbourne function since 1983' – joined forces with Peter Giles to interview Jim Durnan, who simply said 'I'm connected to so many on the screens tonight...I'm blessed to be part of the Melbourne Football Club, and red and blue blood is in my veins.' Having brought everyone from Spike Harris to Andrew Daff to David Neitz to the

Melbourne Football Club, this was a fair call, applauded by all.

Earl Spalding then took on Steven O'Dwyer, equipped with a list of questions from former teammates, happy to share tall tales and true of everyone's favourite redhead (joint MC Daniel Ward excepted). 'He was a great bloke to play next to, made you walk a foot taller.' Asked what he hoped for on the weekend, Strawba's response was typically laconic – 'A very different result to 1988.' The Spalding clan, it transpired, would be attending the 2021 Grand Final, younger members keen to don old guernseys for the occasion.

Locals were again in focus as Chris Connolly shared some further messages

from the late 1980s, particularly centred on the resurgence of his fundraising smash hit – 'C'mon Demons!' – which is an eternal favourite. He was followed by one of those in charge of the Demon Army – Sophie Galer (note – we will share more of Sophie's story in the next newsletter) – who poignantly pointed out that, having 'spent most of my life praying for a Demons premiership', she realised it was also about the experience – the MCG, the parade, the sharing of excitement with friends – and while she and everyone else was '100 per cent behind' the team, it took a mind shift to be there in spirit, 3000 km away in Perth.

By now, the Zoom was mellowing, with stories of Paul 'The Rev' Burnham being



early to training, working to retrieve goal kicking efforts from Allen Jakovich; memories of 2000 from David Neitz, when 'we had a lot of hope', while looking forward to 2021 – 'I think we're going to overpower them!' He, in the closing stages of formalities, was complemented by long time club doctor, Andrew Daff, proud of being at 'every one of Neita's games from Under 19s on – the club has always been a massive part of our life.' All were brought together on this night, on little screens across the country, ready and waiting for a Grand Final, just two days later.

MILESTONES AND CONGRATULATIONS

On 15 September, after 302 games, and in lofty company at second place on Melbourne's all time games list – in between David Neitz with 306 and Robert Flower with 272 – Nathan Jones announced that he was hanging up his boots. The sadness at this news was mixed with much joy, as he and wife Jerri welcomed the birth of twins – Odie Reign and Dove Margot, siblings to Bobbi and Remy – and Nathan shared the joy of his teammates' premiership achievement, albeit from a distance.



Captain of the club between 2014 and 2019, triple Best and Fairest winner in 2012, 2013 and 2014, and made a Life Member of the club in 2015, as well as an AFL Life Member in 2020, we wholeheartedly recognise and congratulate Nathan on being such a special figure in red and blue, and thank him for sixteen years of service, dedication and inspiration. As the man himself says:

Just like that...it feels like yesterday accepting my first jumper from the late great Robbie Flower, fortunate enough to be bestowed with such an honor to carry the #2.

Thank you, Nathan Jones.

Neville Jetta

On the Monday after Grand Final Day, a sombre note was sounded when Melbourne stalwart Neville Jetta announced his retirement. An integral part of the team throughout his 159 games since 2009, Neville departs as a much loved and respected figure, and with honours to his name that reflect his great contribution. Made a Life Member of the club in 2018, Neville was recognised with the Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award in the same season, and finished fifth in the Best and Fairest in 2017. We congratulate Neville on a wonderful career, and thank him for all he has given to the game and the Melbourne Football Club.



Jack Viney

Playing his 150th game in the Grand Final, Jack becomes part of a rare honour. He



and father Todd are the only father-son combination to have played at least 150 games for the Melbourne Football Club. Congratulations to both Jack and Todd for their special achievements, and for their longevity at the heart of the Melbourne Football Club.

Simon Goodwin

Melbourne's senior coach was named as the AFL Coaches Association's Senior Coach of the Year for 2021, celebrating his great achievements in a challenging but – ultimately – rewarding season for the club. Named after coaching great Allan Jeans:

'The award recognises the game's best formed senior coach, up to and including the preliminary finals, taking into consideration performance, resources, player talent and team management.'

Simon is Melbourne's fifth ever premiership coach, following in the footsteps of Dick Wardill (1900), Albert Chadwick (1926), Frank 'Checker' Hughes (1939, 1940, 1941, 1948) and Norm Smith (1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960 and 1964).

Congratulations to Simon Goodwin, coach of Melbourne's thirteenth V/AFL premiership team, 2021.

We also thank and recognise Aaron Vandenberg, Jay Lockhart, Aaron Nietschke and Austin Bradtke for their time at the Melbourne Football Club.

ROAD TO THE GRAND FINAL

2021 has been a special, memorable and – at times – difficult season. Here's how it unfolded for the Melbourne Football Club:

Round One – win over Fremantle at the MCG, third place on the ladder.

Round Two – win over St Kilda at Marvel Stadium, fourth place on the ladder. First time Melbourne had won opening two games of the season in four years.

Round Three – win over GWS Giants at Manuka Oval, third place on the ladder.

Round Four – win over Geelong at the MCG, second place on the ladder. Overcame wet conditions against last year's runners up.

Round Five – win over Hawthorn at the MCG, second place on the ladder.

Round Six – win over Richmond at the MCG, second place on the ladder. Nathan Jones' 300th game in the Anzac Eve victory.

Round Seven – win over North Melbourne at Blundstone Arena, top of the ladder. First time to reach first place since 2005.

Round Eight – win over Sydney at the MCG, top of the ladder.

Round Nine – win over Carlton at the MCG, top of the ladder. First time to start the season with 9-0 in 65 years.

Round Ten – loss to Adelaide at Adelaide Oval, top of the ladder. A one point thriller halted Melbourne's unbeaten start to the season.

Round Eleven – win over Western Bulldogs at Marvel Stadium, top of the ladder.



Round Twelve – win over Brisbane Lions at Giants Stadium, top of the ladder.

Round Thirteen – loss against Collingwood at the SCG, top of the ladder. This Queen's Birthday clash was moved from the MCG, while the Freeze MND slide still took place there.

Round Fourteen - BYE

Round Fifteen – win over Essendon at the MCG, top of the ladder.

Round Sixteen – loss against GWS Giants at the MCG, second place on the ladder. This loss relinquished top spot to the Western Bulldogs.

Round Seventeen – win over Port Adelaide at Adelaide Oval, top of the ladder. This win took the team back to first place.

Round Eighteen – draw with Hawthorn at the MCG, top of the ladder. This game was played in front of empty stands, as 'No crowd permitted' hit the game in 2021.

Round Nineteen – loss to Western Bulldogs at the MCG, third place on the ladder. This loss in tough conditions took the team to its lowest rung on the ladder since Round Two.

Round Twenty – win over Gold Coast Suns at Marvel Stadium, third place on the ladder. Fixture juggling, extensive travel and venue changes were challenges met and overcome by the team this round.

Round 21 – win over West Coast Eagles at Optus Stadium, top of the ladder. The team made it through a lightning strike, regaining first place on the ladder.

Round 22 – win over Adelaide Crows at the MCG, top of the ladder.

Round 23 – win over Geelong at GMHBA Stadium, top of the ladder.

This win delivered Melbourne minor premiership honours at the end of the home and away season.

First Qualifying Final – win over Brisbane Lions, Adelaide Oval. Melbourne had nine finals debutants in this 33-point win over the Lions.

First Preliminary Final – win over Geelong, Optus Stadium. In front of a crowd of 58,599, Melbourne booked a Grand Final berth, thumping the Cats by 83 points.

Grand Final – 74-point win over Western Bulldogs, Optus Stadium. Premiership No. 13.



VALE GREG PARKE

Everyone at the Melbourne Football Club was saddened to hear of the passing of Greg Parke, on Grand Final morning. A player for both Melbourne and Footscray (Western Bulldogs), with a final season at Fitzroy, Parke started his time at the Demons, playing 119 games between 1968 and 1973. In 1974 and 1975, he played 37 games for Footscray, before returning to play 15 games for Fitzroy in 1977. He also spent a season at SANFL powerhouse Norwood in 1976. In his time at Melbourne, Parke was renowned for his brilliant marking, and potency in the forward line. Best First Year Player in 1968, Parke led the Demons' Brownlow votes in the same year. In 1969, he was second in the Best and Fairest, and in 1970, he led the VFL's marking tally. In 1972, he led the club's goal kicking with 63. Greg was – and will always remain – a major figure in the story of the Melbourne Football Club, and we send our sincerest condolences to his family and friends.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all those who assisted with this special edition of the newsletter, with particular thanks to Darren Kowal and John Stanaway for stories and images, and Matthew Goodrope (MFC) for images.

VALE BARRY NORSWORTHY

It was with great sadness that all involved with the Melbourne Football Club heard of the recent passing of past player Barry Norsworthy. An

BENEVOLENT FUND

It's been a magnificent season to be involved in the Melbourne Football Club, and for the P&PP&OA, an important part of that involvement is helping to support those in need. As we continue our efforts in 2021, we encourage contributions to our Benevolent Fund. Every donation helps us to make our way towards raising \$5000 for the year, while also establishing a solid base for the future.

Our 2020 Benevolent Fund attracted just over \$3000 in donations, and we offer a huge thank you to all those who donated. If you can spare a few dollars, please support us – any amount is appreciated.

We would like to thank and recognise our generous donors of 2020:

Melbourne Football Club, The Demon Army, Western Demons, Ron Barassi AM, Don Baron, Clint Bizzell, Barry Bourke, Graeme Brassington, Paul Burnham, Lynda Carroll, Dave Cawsey, Andrew Chrapot, John Collett, Liz Coningsby, Chris Connolly, Penny Connolly, Ray 'Smokey' Dawson, Eric Dick, Colleen Dooley, Simon Eishold, Jackie Emmerton, John Gallus, Ian George, Simon Godfrey, Bernadette Grinter, Rod Grinter, Spike Harris,

Karen Hayes AM, Chris Heffernan, Ben Holland, Paul Hopgood, Mark Jenkins, Graeme Jones, Darren Kowal, Clyde Laidlaw, Ralph Laurie, Harold Lubansky, Phil Madick, Gary Marchant, David Martin, Peter McKenna, Mike McShane, Diane Mountney, Jeremy Nichols, Stephen Powell, Guy Rigoni, Russell Robertson, Cameron Schwab, Troy Simmonds, Steven Smith, Brian Stynes, Janette Sutherland, Tricia Thorne, Daniel Ward, Ken Whitfort, Anonymous x 3

Our 2021 Donors to date are:

Don Baron, Lynda Carroll, Chris Connolly, Chris Cooper, Frank Davis, Jackie Emmerton, Darrell Fenton, Paul Galwey, Phillip Goldberg, Rod Grinter, Lachlan Haig, Kaye Hargreaves, Mandy Horsburgh, Alan Jackson, Peter Lawrence, Mike McShane, David Martin Family, Alistair Nicholson, Paul Thompson, Deluxe Print

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MFC Past & Present Players & Officials Association

acclaimed rover who cemented a celebrated career with SANFL club Central Districts, Norsworthy also represented South Australia on two occasions, against Tasmania and Victoria. He played 21 games for Melbourne for Melbourne between 1977

and 1979, wearing No. 12. We offer our most sincere condolences to Barry's family and friends, and assure them that he will always be remembered as a treasured part of the red and blue family.

