



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' MEMBER NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2022 EDITION



FROM THE PRESIDENT

- ROD GRINTER

Dear Members

Welcome to our third newsletter for 2022, which comes after some mixed results, but with ten wins in a row for 2022. This is one more than 2021, and 17 in a row overall. This correlates well with Jake Bowey, wearing No. 17 and playing in all of the club's 17 wins. This is a wonderful achievement, and while our winning run has come to an end, I am sure that we are all looking forward to seeing what the rest of the season has in store for us.



Set up to watch the Queen's Birthday game from Alice Springs

I would like to congratulate Des Campbell on pulling off an outstanding reunion of past MFC players from the late 1960s and

1970s, held at the MCG in the Rd 7 clash versus Hawthorn. Over 70 past players from all over Australia made the effort to turn up; having over 200 people in the room was outstanding and this is what we are all about, creating opportunities for togetherness. Well done to all on making the effort to turn up, and to Des Campbell, Maurice Wingate and Brett Marchant for making it happen.

Huge thanks also go to Simon Johnson who, with partner Lisa Phillips, took out match day sponsorship for Round 7 (vs Hawthorn) and Round 12 (vs Swans). To find out more, visit travelpartners.com.au/ptm/lisaphillips. Thank you also to Paul Hopgood, who stepped in to host our Round 12 match day function against the Swans, with Australian and Victorian cricketer Brad Hodge (our former No. 46) as a much appreciated MC.

Talking of opportunities for togetherness, I must highlight for everyone that we do have just one family and friends match day function remaining for the season – Round 21 against Collingwood. While marking this in your diary, don't forget our annual reunion, to be held on the Thursday before the Grand Final - 22 September - in the Jim Stynes Grill at the MCG. We haven't been able to hold this event

in person over the last two years due to COVID, but we did hold two online Zoom reunions, with over 100 logging on both times for some great interviews and laughter. This year will be massive and I can't wait to have it sold out.

I hope this newsletter finds you and your families fit and healthy; to those who have lost loved ones or are unwell, if there is anything we can do to assist you and your families during these difficult times, please reach out. We are here to support you when and where we can.



Congratulations to the 100th Big Freeze slider - our own David Neitz. What a great honour, and how wonderful for him to dress up as Braveheart, with the words explaining why he did so. It was profoundly meaningful, and resonated with everyone at the MCG and watching on TV. Well done, Neita!

Rod Grinter
President
MFC P&PP&OA



MILESTONES

Congratulations to all those players who have reached significant playing milestones up to the Queen's Birthday; it has been a busy season so far for achievements:

Tom McDonald – 200 games, Round 8 vs St Kilda

Ben Brown – 150 games (career), Round 10 vs North Melbourne

Jayden Hunt – 100 games, Round 6 vs Richmond

Jake Melksham – 200 games (career), Round 11 vs Fremantle

Steven May – 50 games (Melbourne), Round 2 vs Gold Coast

Sam Weideman - 50 games, Round 3 vs Essendon

Ed Langdon – 50 games (Melbourne), Round 9 vs West Coast

Kysaiah Pickett – 50 games, Round 12 vs Sydney Swans



CAN HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF?

As we head toward the final MFC P&PP&OA Family and Friends Match Day function, a special group of past players is planning to have a reunion tied into the day. Jim Ahern, captain of the 1972 Under 17s' premiership side, and part of the team for the 1971 flag, has more to say:

What a fantastic Grand Final victory last year by the Demons! It was that win that reminded me of the 50 year anniversary of the U/17s' great win against Port Melbourne at Glenferrie Oval - in the fog, under the guidance of our coach, Gordon Duff.

But not only that, it was the first of a Threepeat by the team, which won flags in 1971, 1972 and 1973.

With this in mind, I thought we could take the opportunity to gather as a group to reminisce and revisit our victories.

This occasion also provides a rare chance to remember teammates who have passed away, moved or are not well enough to attend.

The idea is that, for Round 21, we gather as part of the P&PP&OA's match day function.

More details will be available closer to the time, but at this point we are looking for expressions of interest, and to capture as much information as possible. Please feel free to contact any of those named below to register your interest:

- Adrian Graham 0409 005 784
- Jim Ahern 0408 544 226
- Mark Pritchard 0418 326 980



MELBOURNE FOOTBALL CLUB UNDER 17 GRADE PREMIERS 1971

Melbourne 12.4—76

Port Melbourne 8.14—62

Back Row: K. Scott, R. Miller (Chairman Reserve XVIII), W. A. Rodriguez (Secretary, Reserve XVIII). Fourth Row: P. Coleman, G. Lee, G. Snell, R. Beverley, R. Sandilands, G. Moorhouse, R. Flower, G. Fawcus. Third Row: B. Mactaggart, J. Hilton, R. Potter, R. Meades, G. Smith, G. Rackham, N. Richardson, P. Manson, T. McIlvenna, K. Taylor. Second Row: A. Graham, R. Clarke, B. Lierich (V.C.), G. Duff (Coach), H. R. Stevens (Manager), P. Doran (Capt.), P. McNaught, R. Ward. Front Row: P. Blood, J. Ahern. Absent Players: M. De King, P. Fiddes, C. McDonough, N. Chamberlaine. Absent Official: P. Hogan.

BENEVOLENT FUND

Contributions to the Association's Benevolent Fund continue to grow steadily as the season progresses, and the committee is extremely heartened by the donations provided by both members and supporters since we began this fund in 2020. These donations will enable us to continue providing support for members in need, as well as delivering subsidised, affordable and inclusive events for members well into the future.

To donate, please see below in order to make a direct deposit into the Association's bank account:

Our Association's banking details are:

Account name: MFC Past & Present Players & Officials Association

BSB: 063 204

A/C: 1008 8589

Please use your name as the reference.

A full list of donors for 2020 and 2021 is listed on our website: www.mfcpastplayers.com.au

Add your name to the 2022 donor list by making a contribution now - any amount is appreciated!

We thank the following for their contributions to start 2022:

- Colin Barnes
- Demon Army
- Don Baron
- Lachlan Harlow
- Les Hopgood
- Steven Lansdell
- Western Demons

MATCH DAY SPONSORSHIP

In Rounds 7 and 12, we were very proud to have the club's former assistant property steward, Simon Johnson, take out sponsorship for the Association's match day functions, in conjunction with his partner, Lisa Phillips. Simon says that he 'wanted to give back to the club that gave him so much', and enjoyed the chance to promote Lisa's business – travelmanagers.com.au/ptm/lisaphillips. Lisa can also be contacted on 0404 855 173 or email Lisa.Phillips@travelmanagers.com.au to access travel packages and specialised airfares.



www.travelmanagers.com.au

Our final Match Day Sponsorship opportunity is coming up in Round 21, against Collingwood. Contact Jackie Emmerton via jackie-e@live.com.au or 0409 806 750 to find out more.



MATCH DAYS AT THE MCG

One of the highlights of each season for the MFC P&PP&OA? The match day functions that we get to hold, each of which creates a unique chance to catch up against the backdrop of our favourite place and watching the team in action.

A special occasion emerged in Round Seven, when Melbourne met Hawthorn, and when the Harrison Room was packed out with players, officials and support staff from the 1970s.

Following on from this, Round Twelve's match day function against the Swans was undoubtedly smaller, but no less enjoyable for everyone involved. With Paul Hopgood as host, and Brad Hodge as MC, some hits and memories of the mid-1990s featured. Not only did he star in cricket for Australia and Victoria; Brad also donned the red and blue when he played Reserves with Melbourne in 1994. One of the few men to make his maiden Test century a double, Brad Hodge remains one of the most prolific run scorers in modern cricket.



Below, we share a story from Brett Marchant, following on from the Round Seven reunion. Thank you to everyone for their enthusiasm for being involved in the Association's match day functions, and we look forward to welcoming you again in Round 21 (against Collingwood).





1970S' PAST PLAYERS REUNION

BY BRETT MARCHANT

VFL football in the 1970s was certainly different. Zoning of suburban and country areas was how players were recruited into each club. For the Melbourne Football Club, the Goulburn Valley was their productive country recruiting area, as were the zoned suburbs along the Frankston railway line including Bentleigh, Mordialloc, Chelsea and Carrum. Twelve Victorian teams played against each other at suburban grounds, the MCG and VFL "Arctic" Park, with all six games being held at 2.00pm on a Saturday. Each club had a Reserves team playing before the Seniors, and an Under

19s team playing at the opposite ground. Post-game, the opposition, the home team and the umpires all caught up for a much-needed ale. Training for Melbourne players was Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the MCG, under dubious lighting. Melbourne and Richmond were the only home ground tenants of the MCG. It was also the era that - in 1975 - saw the Melbourne jumper change from the navy blue to a royal blue with the introduction of colour television.

This era of the Melbourne Football Club was celebrated on 30 April with a reunion of 110 past players, officials and friends, who travelled from every state, country Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne to attend. A wonderful mix of players included representatives from the Under 19s and Reserves grades, through to Seniors players who had played between 1 and 200 games.

The group socialised, reminisced, and discussed key events of the decade including the controversial sacking of coach Ian 'Tiger' Ridley, the reasons for the lack of on-field success for the era, and the unlucky year of 1976 when the club just failed to make the finals due to Footscray drawing the last game with Carlton. Later in the day, stories were shared of the infamous Armadale boarding house owned by the Club, where up to 12 of the players lived under the guidance of Mrs Ough (mother of former player, the late Barry Ough). The day concluded with an evocative race call of famous Melbourne Football Club identities, conducted by Robert 'Piggy' Walters.

Well known players of the era in attendance included Frank Davis, Stan Alves, Greg Wells, Graham Osborne, Ross Dillon, Peter Keenan, Tony Sullivan, Ray Biffin, Ross



1970S' PAST PLAYERS REUNION *continued*



Brewer, Garry Baker, Paul Callery, John Tilbrook and Steve Smith. A few snippets from the day:

Running defender Ray Smith (1975 and 1976) joined the club from Essendon, and while at Melbourne, played his 100th career game, making him the first Queensland player to play 100 VFL games. In his honour the Brisbane Lions have the Ray Smith 100 game player Honour Board.

Another past player with a Brisbane

connection is former utility Marty Lyons (1975-77), whose son Jarryd is a key midfielder for the current day Lions.

A connection to the current Melbourne team is via half forward flanker Andrew Moir (1977-81), whose nephew Jayden Hunt wears the same number 29 guernsey.

The past players were appreciative



of the warm welcome from the Melbourne Football Club and MFC P&PP&OA President Rod Grinter. In welcoming the past players, MFC CEO Gary Pert stressed the importance of having them as part of the Club. The well photographed and extremely popular 2021 Premiership Cup was also a highlight of the day.

The reunion was the brainchild of Des Campbell, who was also MC for the day. Maurice Wingate and Brett Marchant ably assisted Des in the organisation of the day. They were all thrilled by the roll up and the post-event feedback, and look forward to catching up with teammates in the future, as well as enjoying the success of the current day Demons. (Photographs by Kayla Eddy)



MOTTON PRESTON NEEDS YOU!



The Motton Preston Demons in rural Tasmania (20 km south of Ulverstone, which is David Neitz's birthplace) are seeking the services of a recently retired, high profile MFC player to play a one-off game for their club. They are happy

to pay a substantial amount for the right person.

The preferred date is Saturday, 23 July 2022, and the arrangement would include attending the after-match function, with an overnight stay, and the flight back to Melbourne on the Sunday.

For any queries, please contact **Jackie Emmerton** – jackie-e@live.com.au or 0409 806 750





REV'S ROAMINGS

Ever busy and ever in touch, two months of Rev's Roamings have seen him in contact throughout the country, the main port of call for many, a regular friendly voice for others, and always a welcome figure in the MFC P&PP&OA community.

While his own health challenges slowed him down a little during April, The Rev still managed around 80 calls during this



time, keeping in touch with the P&PP&OA community on a regular basis. From Craig Notman, now in Launceston and working as State Director for Cycling Australia, through to James McDonald, just moved to a new farm north of Albury, the red and blue links are spread far and wide, with The Rev one of the vital connections to the Melbourne Football Club for so many.

Messages were left and conversations held with 115 people during

May, ranging from John Townsend in Noosa 'where it's been raining for three months!' to Paul Prymke, now in Barwon Heads and Carl Ditterich, recovering well from surgery. A number of those contacted were suffering from COVID, with well wishes going to them not only from The Rev, but from the entire Association committee and membership. We also wish Des Bell well, as he draws nearer to the century. While his birthday travel plans were sadly curtailed, the now 99 year-old has been regularly maintaining up to 10,000 steps per day, which is an impressive effort; as is The Rev's contact list. In communication terms, we are sure that this is the near equivalent of numerous FitBit workouts, and we thank him for his ongoing dedication to and pursuit of positive pastoral care.

VALE RICHARD WILLIAMS



Everyone associated with the Melbourne Football Club was saddened to hear of the recent passing of former physiotherapist, Richard Williams. Richard was Melbourne's physiotherapist during

the 1950s and early 1960s, and went on to serve as physiotherapist at the Melbourne Olympic Games. We extend our most sincere condolences to Richard's wife, Judy, and to his family and friends.

VALE RAY MANLEY



A constant in Melbourne's football department for a decade between 1977 and 1987, Manley was made a Life Member of the club in 1987, alongside then President, Stuart Spencer.

Hailing from Kyabram, Manley had two stints as the football department secretary – first from 1977 to 1980, and again from 1985 to the time of his resignation in July 1987.

He continued to maintain contact with the Demons, and was part of the selection committee that appointed Neil Balme as senior coach for the 1993 season.

Described in profiles as 'a true Demon' for his dedication and fierce support during often trying times, Manley ensured that his family remained committed to the red and blue cause, which they do to this day.

We all offer our most sincere condolences to Ray's family and friends; he will long be remembered for his service to and love of the Melbourne Football Club.

Following Ray's passing, black armbands were worn in his honour when the team played St Kilda in Round Eight.

THE STORY OF ERNIE 'IRISH' O'ROURKE, AGED 96

Thank you to Bryan and Jill Kenneally for passing this story on to us. Ernie is one of the oldest known Melbourne past players. He was born on 8 April 1926; around the start of the season in which Melbourne went on to win the club's second ever VFL premiership.

Ernie and his partner Gwen took a tour of the MCG and visited the Australian Sports Museum in late April 2022. They were absolutely thrilled by their time at the MCG, and had a wonderful tour. Ernie was also thrilled to see the premiership cup, and marvelled at how much the area around the MCG has all changed. He remembers the fields that were there and how, when he was a lad, getting to training involved taking a tram.

Ernie was recruited from Bentleigh, at the age of 19. His first game with Melbourne was on Saturday, 26 May 1945, at the Western Oval, against Footscray.

'Checker' Hughes was the coach, and Norm Smith the captain. Ernie played 39 games with Melbourne - his last was against Carlton at Princes Park in Round 18, 1948, at 23 years of age. He wore the number 22 guernsey in 1945, then number 27 for the remainder of his career. Ernie kicked the first of his 46 goals for Melbourne in his debut game; 28 of his 46 goals were kicked in 1946.

When Ernie first played for Melbourne in 1945, the MCG was occupied by the armed forces. Melbourne trained at

the Albert Ground near Albert Park Lake, and played their home games at the Richmond Football Ground (Punt Road). In Round 17 1946, Melbourne returned to the MCG to play Hawthorn, Ernie kicking 3 goals for the winning Melbourne side. Melbourne went on to be defeated by a strong Essendon side in the 1946 Grand Final, which was played on the MCG. It was the first Grand Final to be played there since 1941. Ernie - at 173cm and 71 kg - played in the forward pocket as the change rover with Alby Rodda.

Noel McMahan is the oldest living Melbourne premiership player, having played in the 1948 premiership. Noel began playing at Melbourne in 1946 and, being born in October 1926, is six months younger than Ernie.

After his playing time at Melbourne, Ernie played football at North Melbourne and Brighton before leaving to coach and



play country football. Ernie lives at Leitchville, near Cohuna in the Murray Valley. In 1957, he began coaching Leitchville, and still lives in the town.

An interview with Ernie, which was published in the Koondrook and Barham Bridge Newspaper after the Melbourne Grand Final win in 2021 can be viewed via [Ernie enjoys Melbourne's win - A chat with Ernie O'Rourke | Australian Rural & Regional News \(arr.news\)](#)





NORM SMITH ORATION

– NATHAN JONES

On the night of Thursday 2 June, one of Melbourne's greatest stars was on display when Nathan Jones took centre stage at the MCC's tenth Norm Smith Oration. With hundreds gathered in the Members' Dining Room, the lead in provided by Tim Lane and Sarah Jones – whose 'Love Letter To Football' was a superb introduction - set the perfect platform to hear from the former Melbourne captain. One of only two Melbourne players to play 300 games in red and blue, Nathan told of 'accepting my journey as my story', of realising that there is 'never a linear line to the summit', and treasuring moments such as



his 300th game, of having Robert Flower telling him to make the No. 2 guernsey his own, and of being part of the 2018 finals campaign, when he was 'the only one left from 2006...it sent shivers down my spine.'

While Nathan's absence from last season's Grand Final and – ultimately, Melbourne's 2021 premiership side – will undoubtedly become part of the club's folklore, with his dash home to wife Jerri, about to give birth to twins, this is a 'decision....I'll never regret.' In a follow up that speaks volumes of the times in which we live, he retired via Zoom, with his phone on a tripod.

Nathan Jones – once that St Kilda supporting youngster who rejoiced

in polishing his football boots – had the entire room in tears by the time his voice quietened, reflecting on training after the Grand Final, sinking within himself, and receiving advice from friend and mentor Gerard Healy, who told him to 'Go and write your next chapter.'

With that, Nathan was able to say 'I can finally accept my journey. My greatest achievement was the impact I had on people.' A pin could have almost dropped in the room as Nathan Jones took the audience to his final phrase, which rings true of both his career and the story of the Melbourne Football Club, let alone life in general.

'The beauty is in the struggle.'

Nathan Jones, thank you.

