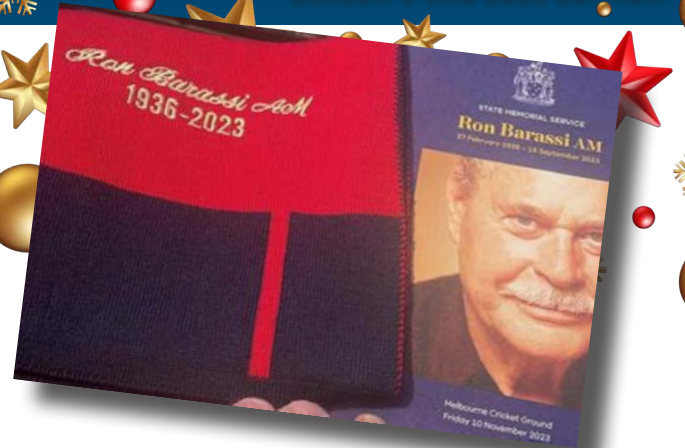




PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

# PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' MEMBER NEWSLETTER

SEASON'S END 2023 EDITION



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

- ROD GRINTER

Welcome to our fifth and final newsletter for 2023; enjoy the read.

I would like to start off by thanking the committee of our Association - John Ahern, Paul Burnham, Lynda Carroll, Jackie Emmerton, Spike Harris, Paul Hoggood, Mark Jenkins, Russell Robertson and Daniel Ward - for all your time, camaraderie, advice and productivity throughout 2023.

I was fortunate enough to be in attendance at the State Memorial Service for our own Ronald Dale

Barassi (17410, add these numbers up 17+4+10=31) at the MCG on Friday 10 November, where the temperature was 31 degrees. This two hour service was very befitting of The Man, and the memories shared by some outstanding individual speakers were heartening and uplifting, none more so than RDB's son, Ron the 3rd, who enlightened us all as to what his Dad was like away from the Icon RDB's public football and media life. In what no doubt would've been an emotional thing to do, reflecting on his Dad, he didn't miss a beat, and gave us all another insight into the great Man's life.

Vale RDB

To anyone who has lost loved ones throughout 2023, our deepest sympathies, thoughts and prayers are always with you.

Leading into a time of travel and holidays, catching up with family and close friends over the festive season, travel safe, take your time and smell some roses with those who value your company.

Merry Christmas, and may 2024 be successful for my favourite number - the 14th MFC Premiership Cup!

Regards

Rod Grinter  
President  
MFC P&PP&OA



We look forward to sharing more stories, news and information with the MFC P&PP&OA membership in 2024. Our first newsletter for next year will be with you in late January/early February, updating what's ahead for another exciting season. Until then, wishing all a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.





## REMEMBERING RON

With the passing of Ron Barassi, we have a huge legacy of

## ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER VALE RON BARASSI AM

In the middle of a run of warm spring weather, with crowds making their way to the MCG, and with two of his teams tussling their way through a semi-final, Ronald Dale Barassi, aged 87, passed away on the afternoon of 16 September 2023. Surrounded by family, he was loved by so many beyond that inner circle, and we share their sorrow and think of them.

While Ron Barassi shared his brilliance, enthusiasm and energy with so many communities and individuals – and with multiple V/AFL clubs as he moved from Melbourne to Carlton to North Melbourne and Sydney in various permutations as both player and coach – Melbourne was where it really all began.

Ron Snr, (*picured below*) of course,



stories, memories, statistics, quotes and images. But more importantly, a wonderful person has been farewelled, leaving behind



played for Melbourne – including as 19th man in the 1940 premiership side – before enlisting in WW2. Part of the 7th Division, he fought in the Middle East, and died at Tobruk on 31 July 1941. The club's Coterie pledged to care for Elza and Ron Jnr, strengthening the ties for all time. Elza was assisted with employment, while Ron returned to his grandparents in Guildford, just south of Castlemaine, before returning to the suburbs for his secondary education.

Even then, football was solidly on the agenda, with Coterie's influence playing a huge part. Ron was 15, training with Melbourne's Thirds in 1951, and playing his first games in 1952. It was time for the father-son rule – linking sons of players who had played a certain number of games (then 50) to their father's club – to be implemented, ensuring that Ron Barassi would become a Demon.

The red and blue influence went even further, with coach Norm Smith – also a teammate of Ron Snr – helping out

him a treasure trove of riches. We honour him, thank him, and pay tribute to him:

with accommodation when Elza remarried and moved to Tasmania. It was 1953, and Barassi was training with the seniors. His proximity to the coach was a mixed blessing. No special treatment was offered; in fact, Smith was harder on the youngster than on many other players. It did mean, however, that Barassi really knew he had earned every opportunity by virtue of his own determination.

Too short for ruck duties, and too big to be a rover, he showed his mettle early on by forging a new position – ruck rover. In later years, Peter McFarlane would spell it out, saying: 'he had pace for a man of his size and enormous strength with which to burst packs open. He could leap for marks and was above all so thoroughly determined to succeed that no physical accident of build was going to deter him.' Throughout 1953 and 1954, young Ron moved between the Seconds and the seniors, until his new role clicked. Developing an invaluable combination with Denis Cordner, Barassi had found his niche and a permanent place in the senior side. He was set to be at the heart of Melbourne's golden era.

The ultimate team man, Barassi was vice-captain to John Beckwith between 1957 and 1959, before taking the helm between 1960 and 1964. Together, this pair formed one of the game's youngest and most potent leadership combinations. Having already played in two premierships – 1955 and 1956 – another flag had been added to the list by the time the club's 1957 annual report declared that Ron Barassi was 'Perhaps the Mr Football of Melbourne, he is without a doubt one of the big names in football today.'

This reputation only grew over the



intervening seasons. Despite being part of a devastating loss to Collingwood in 1958, Barassi went on to play in six Melbourne premierships, stretching over a decade. The team rebounded to win the flag against Essendon in 1959, then gained redemption with victory over Collingwood in 1960. It was Barassi's first year as captain, and he was named in the side's best. The following year, he won his first Best and Fairest with Melbourne. In 1962, Barassi was made a Life Member of the Melbourne Football Club (still then the Melbourne Cricket Club Football Club), 'in grateful recognition and high appreciation of ten years' honorable service.' It cemented his place as one of the central figures in the club's history. In 2008, he would recall that 'I'm a life member of all four clubs I have been associated with. I reckon this one means the most to me.'

Barassi was still captain in 1964, when the Demons won yet another flag against Collingwood. To add to being part of Melbourne's twelfth VFL premiership, Barassi finished his time in red and blue with a second Best and Fairest award. He and 'Bluey' Adams had played in six



later years to writer Ben Collins, he wanted to 'see if I'm a good coach in my own right. That way, if I succeed it's mine, and if I fail it's mine'. The Smith influence loomed large, and it was time for Barassi to depart.

After Carlton, Barassi headed to North, where he was instrumental in delivering the Kangaroos' first two VFL premierships, in 1975 and 1977. He then returned 'home' to coach the Demons between 1981 and 1985; while the ultimate success

premierships each with the Demons; the most of any Melbourne players.

It was a devastating blow when Barassi headed to Carlton after the 1964 season, taking the Blues to two premierships as captain-coach between 1965 and 1971. As he explained it in

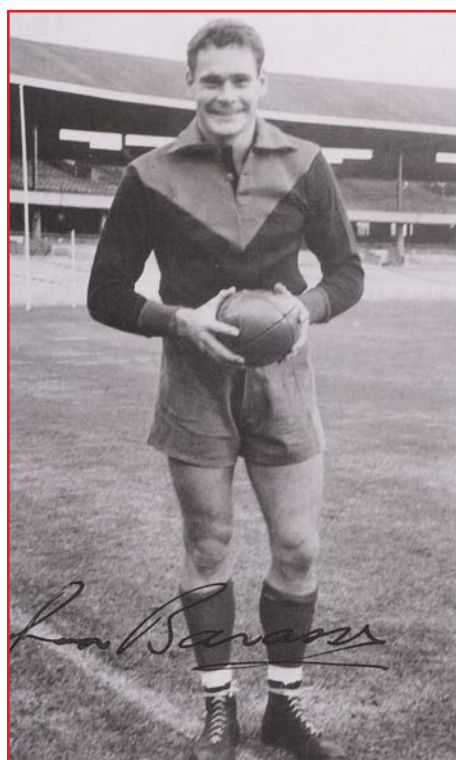
eluded him on this occasion, he was instrumental in laying the groundwork for future success. Barassi was also one of the major players in implementing the 'Irish Experiment', which would bring Jim Stynes and Sean Wight to the club, and in helping to separate the football club from the Melbourne Cricket Club as part of the increasingly professional era of the game.

Once his time at Melbourne was up, there was another small spark in the Barassi coaching tank. Heading north, he took on the challenge of coaching the Sydney Swans between 1993 and 1995, helping to educate the interstate side in the ways of the game.

But Melbourne was his home, within a short drive of the MCG, not far from Melbourne's old training ground at the Junction Oval, and over the years his connections with his first VFL club remained strong. A constant in Melbourne's life – both the club and the city – he was regularly recognised and honoured. From AFL and MFC Teams of the Century, through to Halls of Fame Legend status, as a patron for bequests and fundraising; the Barassi presence shone through as a constant. But it was not only the accolades that made him special. He would willingly appear for functions, reunions, signing sessions, family days and match day photo sessions, ready to speak, grab a pen, and explain to the curious the reason behind the extra numbers on his autograph: '17410'. He had played or coached in 17 Grand Finals, for ten premierships.

Even now, as we start the long farewell to Ron Barassi, so much part of our world, we can realise just how wonderful this is. He will always be with us, through the stories, the Septembers and the joy that the game brings. As he celebrated with enthusiasm in 2021 at the winning of Melbourne's elusive thirteenth premiership, so should we commemorate him, through every season that was, and every season to come.

**Vale, Ronald Dale Barassi.**





## SEVENTY SEASONS SINCE THE BOYS OF 1953

Seventy seasons ago, back when the 1950s were still in their infancy and wartime rationing was just beginning to ease; back when Norm Smith was in his second year as Melbourne coach, Denis Cordner was captain, and great red and blue achievements were still some way off in the future; well, back then, there was a group of young VFL footballers in red and blue, just starting out on a great adventure.

In 1953, there were eighteen players who made their senior debut for the Melbourne Football Club. One small aberration exists, as is the way with football club lists; while Trevor Johnson is named, his senior debut was actually delayed until 1955, primarily



due to National Service. But then, he made up for lost time, playing in the premierships of 1955, 1956, 1957 and 1960. Winner of the Best First Year Player award in 1955, Johnson was popularly known as 'The Phantom' for his unassuming nature, both on and off

the field.

Seven others who made their senior debut in 1953 went on to play in Melbourne premierships, giving beautiful evidence of the 1950s and early 1960s as a golden era for the Demons.

Ken Melville went on to take out dual honours in 1953, winning both the Best and Fairest and the Best First Year Player award after playing seventeen games. It was said of him in review that:

Commencing on the wing and later finishing in the centre, this player, by his courage and tenacity, won almost every encounter with his respective opponent; one of our many amateur players, Ken, with his modest demeanour, is a real find, and a credit to the game.

Made vice captain in 1955, Melville played in the 1955 and 1956 premierships, before retiring to become a Presbyterian minister. In 1973, he delivered the funeral service for Norm Smith, and was the only speaker on the day.

Another who played seventeen games on debut in 1953 was Peter Marquis, a chunky customer who hailed from Devonport. Starting out at full back, he was immediately effective, and went on to make that position his own. Marquis played 99 games for Melbourne, including the 1955, 1956 and 1957 premierships. In the middle of his triple run of flags – 1956 – it was noted that:

*Peter at full back displayed the aggressive cleverness and purpose that place him high as one of the best full backs playing in the VFL today.*

Upon hanging up his boots with the Demons after the 1958 Grand Final, Marquis returned to Tasmania and a successful run as captain of North Hobart, adding two more premierships to his tally.



## SEVENTY SEASONS SINCE THE BOYS OF 1953 *continued*

Just behind Marquis and Melville, Don Williams played sixteen games in his debut season, in what would prove to be the start of his first stint with the Melbourne Football Club. Between 1953 and 1959, then on return between 1964 and 1968, Williams played 205 games for the Demons, including premierships in 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959 and 1964. The gap in his red and blue CV speaks volumes of the disharmony that existed at the time around the dashing half back flanker. He headed to a fulfilling time at West Perth, then headed back east to Sale, before taking his rightful place for Melbourne's twelfth VFL flag in 1964.

Way back in 1953, however, he was just starting out, part of a dedicated Melbourne family, and sharing the honours with Peter Marquis for an 'Outstanding First-Year Service' award.

Geoff Case was another who took the senior step for the first time in 1953, achieving a round dozen games, and starting to build a reputation for his run and kicking from the half back flank. Originally from Melbourne High, he only turned 18 in September of 1953 – after the team had won just three games for the season – and must have occasionally doubted that he would end up playing in premierships in 1955, 1957, 1959 and 1960. Curtailed on occasion by injury, as well as the demands of National Service, Case was nonetheless one of those named from early in his career for his 'remarkable lift and enthusiastic drive'. Retiring at the end of 1962, Case would go on in later years to serve the Melbourne Football Club as a director.

Despite playing just two senior games in 1953, Gerald 'Terry' Gleeson was on his way to 100 games and two

premierships, registered in 1955 and 1956. Known as a loyal and selfless team player, the combined forces of injury and competing ruck stocks meant that he missed out on being part of more premierships before his retirement at the end of the 1962 season.

Frank 'Bluey' Adams was another to make his senior debut in 1953, totalling four games in this season. His first senior game was against North Melbourne in Round 14. Adams was wearing No. 41, some way removed from his latter-day No. 6, and enjoyed being part of one of Melbourne's three wins in 1953, contributing a goal to the victory over North.

Another senior debutant – Ron Barassi – managed six games and no goals in this first season, appearing for the first time in Round Four, which was unfortunately a loss to Footscray. In fact, his best experience in this debut season was a draw against Richmond. However, Barassi in his No. 31 was set for much brighter days, rounds and seasons ahead.

Both Adams and Barassi would go on to play in six premierships apiece – 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960 and 1964 – which is the most for any Melbourne player, and would forge their respective places as legends of the Melbourne Football Club and the game itself.

So, 1953 might never be seen as a glorious season, but it was an important one, and the start of bringing some wonderful careers to fruition. It was with justification and a touch of fortune telling, therefore, that the club's Annual Report recorded:

*...it is comforting indeed to survey...new players of the calibre of Geoff. Case, Ron Barassi, Frank Adams, Trevor Johnson, all in the 19 years and under age group... This mention of a few of those first-year players who wore the Red and the Blue with distinction in 1953 shows that we are in a sound position.*

## THE MARTIN FAMILY – DONOR TESTIMONIAL

The Martin family and Maxx Pro Solutions have both held a long and close association with the Melbourne Football Club and former players, spanning over 120 years and four generations.

Our father, Ian Martin AM, who held MFC membership for 77 consecutive years, was also an active Gold Pass Member during the 1980s. His passion for the Dees was passed on to both his sons – David and Jonnie – who have played significant roles in various sponsorships and marketing initiatives for their beloved Demons over many years.

The Melbourne Football Club has such a rich and significant history, that needs to be continually nurtured, and a story to be told. We are, and will continue to be, proud supporters of the MFC P&PP&OA, and we support their tireless works with connecting and providing welfare and assistance to all members of the past and present Melbourne Family.

Go Dees!

**David Martin**



**MAXX  
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SOLUTIONS**



## RON BARASSI MEMORIAL

In front of a crowd of over 5000, on a warm November day, with the ground cricket carpet green, Ronald Dale Barassi AM was at the forefront of events. It was an odd time for him to hold court on his favourite stage, but memories of him will dominate our thoughts and stories for decades to come. Even the temperature obliged – as it should – reaching 31 degrees in perfect recognition of Ronald Dale Barassi.

Everyone who spoke on the stage knew Ron, and channelled his words and thoughts. We sitting in the stands – a block of the Members, Levels 1 and 2 – shared laughter and memories, shed a few tears, and recognised faces on the screen. It was like a footy day in miniature, with Ron Barassi at the heart of it. We had Ron in 2021, happy with the thirteenth Melbourne premiership cup. There he was in 1964, triumphant with the twelfth Melbourne premiership cup.

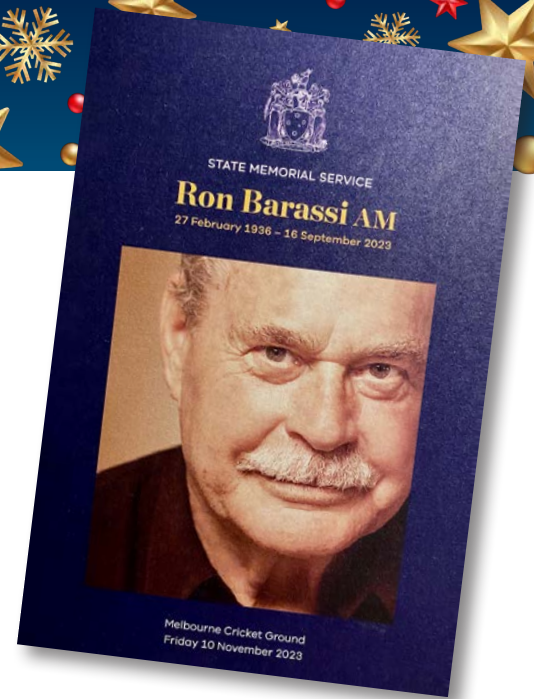
We learned new parts of the world of Ron Barassi – his friendship with Indigenous elder, Aunty Diane Kerr – and their shared link to this sacred ground that we embrace as the MCG. Amos Roach, son of Archie, gave us the haunting sounds of 'Kangaroo Dreaming', and Brigadier Robert Marsh channelled another haunting thought – the favourite Barassi saying of 'If it is to be, it is up to me!' Surely we could all hear it in Ron Barassi's voice, just as a rare breeze blew into the stand.

MC for the occasion, Eddie McGuire maintained the footy rivalry that has always been part of a day at the MCG, regretting the use

of the father-son rule that meant Barassi's zoning – Collingwood or Carlton – was negated. But it was indeed very special, as Ron Snr had fallen at Tobruk, and Melbourne's Coterie, along with Legacy, pledged to care of Ron Jnr and his mother, Elza. This led to ensuring the younger Barassi ended up wearing red and blue and 31, just as his father had, and forging a legend that we would all celebrate, commemorate and treasure.

At the heart of the matter was the next Ron Barassi – son of Ronald Dale – who gave us such a generous insight into his cheeky, competitive, tough father. 'Dad was the chief, the rest of us were a tribe.' When he barracked for four clubs in four decades, Ron, like his sister and brother, 'was really barracking for Dad!' On a poignant note, linking all the generations together, his voice unwavering, Ron also parted with a gem epitomising his father: 'The air is full of courage, and all you need to do is take a deep breath and move forward.'

So many people spoke of Ronald Dale Barassi – familiar figures themselves, yet somewhat in awe of him – Premier Jacinta Allan, recalling his honours as Melbournian of the Year (2006) and Victorian of the Year (2009), as well as his 'generosity of spirit' and his moustache that 'outlived trends'. AFL CEO, Andrew Dillon, who praised and detailed Barassi's belief and move towards a national league, working to obliterate the 'Barassi Line', dividing V/AFL and non-V/AFL states. John Bertrand, long a family friend, quietly recalled a 'beautiful man' alongside the competitive nature. Ricky Ponting, ever grateful to Barassi for coaching his beloved North Melbourne to two premierships, also proclaimed him as one of his 'all-time sporting heroes'. Brent Crosswell and Sam Kekovich both recalled the competitive figure who coached them both to premierships, mixing



awe, fear and affection in varying measure. Both had no doubt, as Kekovich proclaimed, that the phrase 'fair dinkum' applied to 'no one more so than Barassi.'

Moving north to different times and sports, we heard from Swans' champion Paul Kelly, ever appreciative of Barassi – a 'beacon of light and hope' – who did more than anyone to foster the national competition; a sentiment echoed by John Eales and Richard Colless in their respective roles and links to Barassi, along with biographer, Peter Lalor, who wrote beautifully of his subject that 'He keeps pushing into time.' Even as we farewell him, that will always be true.

Sitting down with Leigh Matthews and Kevin Sheedy, Eddie McGuire dragged forth some wonderful memories from the two legends talking about another legend. Matthews coached against Barassi – Collingwood against the Swans, when the Magpies had to win to progress to finals – only to be outsmarted by Barassi in his last game in charge of the red and white. Sheedy, remembering the Melbourne Football Club of the 1950s and early 1960s, echoed the thoughts of many when he said that Barassi was an 'inspiration as coach – think what he could do to you as a player!'

That, of course, made most listeners laugh, as did Matthews' memories of a landmark trip to Botswana, when





## RON BARASSI MEMORIAL

### *continued*

'the lions were scared of Barassi!' Ever ready to take on forces beyond the typical, Sheedy also recalled the moment when Barassi's bravery was on show, with the then 73 year-old leaping to the defence of a woman being attacked by thugs, his efforts widely hailed and recognised. But 'if it is to be, it is up to me.' And so it was.

Throughout proceedings, there was naturally a strong red and blue streak, echoing the ceremonial scarves around the necks of many in attendance. Steven Smith, coached by Barassi, said what so many were thinking: 'He loved Melbourne, and we all loved him.' We always will. Smith also channelled the spirit of generations before, expressing the belief that Barassi would have won four Norm Smith Medals if the award had been in existence when he was playing. Ron Barassi – Norm Smith

– what a connection that was; truly something to treasure.

Melbourne President Kate Roffey continued the red and blue theme, adding to the story when telling of Barassi's advocacy for AFLW, as well as his twinkling humour when carrying the 2021 premiership cup off the ground, saying with a grin 'This one took a while!' 57 years, Ron, and so much more rewarding for you being around to welcome it home.

Garry Lyon, who knew Barassi as both coach and media colleague, hailed him in so many realms: 'One of the greatest educators...captured the imagination... one of life's great teachers.' More than that, his bravery in defending the attacked was typical of the man, showing the strength of his convictions. Barassi, said Lyon, 'never hesitated to jump in...the defender of us all.'

With former Premier Steve Bracks issuing a clarion call for the premiership cup to be called the Barassi Cup, the formalities moved back to the musical,

following on from the ceremony of the national anthem, and the joy of Mike Brady's adapted rendition of 'Up There Cazaly', honouring Barassi. The crowd fell quiet as Kate Ceberano sang 'The Rose', a favourite of both Ron and his wife, Cheryl.

Then, after an hour and a half, it was over. Formalities were finished, spectators shuffled off into the distance, thoughtful, sharing their own Barassi anecdotes, wiping away a tear or two, laughing at a story. Ronald Dale Barassi – 17410, Mr Football (no doubt!), Kokoda trekker at the age of 70, ever curious and ready to be there – will always have that impact on us, even now that he is no longer with us in person. We will think of him, and his family, and remember his time with us.

And, when the game starts for a new season, Barassi will be recalled, as legends always are, no matter if they are still with us in person. He is part of us, red and blue, Demon Spirit, at the heart of the game and beyond. Thank you for everything.







## MFC FROM MARK

**T**hank you again to Mark Jenkins for his many and varied contributions across 2023: below, we hear from him regarding everything from the Annual Reunion to the AFLW.

The 2023 MFC P&PP&OA's Annual Reunion was again held on the Thursday evening before this year's AFL Grand Final in the Jim Stynes Room and was attended by a broad cross-section of former players and officials. The function was slightly different from previous years in that most stood or sat on stools rather than at designated tables - this encouraged a more open form of discussion across the many eras, and seemed to be well received.

Sadly, the function was held under the pall of the passing of our great player, coach, mate and mentor Ron Barassi Jr, spoken about in more depth in another part of this newsletter. That said, the attendees made sure Ron was properly remembered through the telling of many interesting and entertaining stories.

Led by former MFC captain Garry Lyon, the recollections and experiences of a number of Ron's former players from the 1980s, including Chris Connolly, Greg Hutchinson, David Cordner, Adrian Battison, Peter Tossol and our own Kelly O'Donnell, afforded those in the attendance an insight into the many parts that made up the man. It was a fitting tribute for a true Demon, who will be missed by all.

While your Board prefers to keep this celebration on the same day and location, we have been actively surveying the membership to ensure the function remains affordable and well attended. Once these deliberations have been completed, all members will receive an update in plenty of time for the 2024 reunion (not long to go now!!!)







## 2023 AFL Premiership Season: Final Rounds

### Qualifying Final 1

Melbourne vs Collingwood  
Collingwood won by 7 points  
**No Milestones or Debuts**

### Semi Final 1

Melbourne vs Carlton  
Carlton won by 2 points  
**No Milestones or Debuts**

Melbourne was therefore eliminated from the 2023 AFL Finals and finished fourth (4th), winning 16 games and losing 7 at a percentage of 125.2%

The Association congratulates Simon, Max and the team on another fantastically competitive season. We also congratulate Collingwood for the premiership win.

## AFLW update



The 2023 AFLW season saw the Mighty Demons enter as reigning Premier after a truly memorable win over Brisbane last year.

The AFLW Demons inaugural Premiership will be remembered by many as a watershed moment for our great club', when coach Mick Stinear and captain Daisy Pearce lifted the cup, representing the huge efforts that coaches, players, support staff and administrators went to in bringing this dream to life.

Now, EVERY little girl and boy can really dream to become a Demon player – something that only eight years ago was - at least for those girls - unavailable to them.

### Season 8 of AFLW was played over 10 Home & Away matches

#### Round #

- 1 Melbourne vs Collingwood  
**Melbourne won by 42 points**  
Tyla Hanks – 50 Games
- 2 Melbourne vs GWS Giants  
**Melbourne won by 77 points**  
No Milestones
- 3 Melbourne vs Bulldogs  
**Melbourne won by 42 points**  
No Milestones
- 4 Melbourne vs Hawthorn  
**Melbourne won by 59 points**  
No Milestones
- 5 Melbourne vs Geelong  
**Melbourne won by 49 points**  
Maddison Gay – 50 Games
- 6 Melbourne vs Crows  
Crows won by 10 points  
No Milestones
- 7 Melbourne vs WC Eagles  
**Melbourne won by 70 points**  
No Milestones
- 8 Melbourne vs North Kangaroos  
**Melbourne won by 23 points**  
No Milestones
- 9 Melbourne vs Fremantle  
**Melbourne won by 33 points**  
Shelley Heath – 50 Games
- 10 Melbourne vs Brisbane  
Brisbane won by 25 points  
Libby Birch – 75 Games

### The AFLW Finals are currently underway

#### Finals Week 1

Melbourne vs North Kangaroos  
North won by 41 points  
Tyla Hanks – 50 Games

#### Finals Week 2

Melbourne vs Geelong  
Geelong won by 2 points  
Olivia Purcell – 50 Games  
Mick Stinear – Coached 75 Games

Melbourne's AFLW team has now been eliminated from the 2023 AFLW Finals and will have finished in the top four (4) after winning 8 games and losing 2 at a percentage of 222.9%

Congratulations to Mick, captain Kate Hore and the entire squad for a fantastic season which fell agonisingly short of expectations.

## AFL All-Australian Teams

The MFC P&PP&O Association extends its congratulations to Christian Petracca on being named on the forward line of the 2023 All Australian Team. It is the third time Christian has been awarded this honour!!

The AFLW All Australian team will be announced on the 27th of November 2023; however, we are thrilled to note that four (4) of our players have been selected in the squad from which the final team will be chosen:

The MFC P&PP&OA congratulates the following players for their inclusion in the 2023 AFLW All Australian squad:

Tahlia Gillard, Tyla Hanks, Kate Hore and Eden Zanker.



## BEST AND FAIREST

Congratulations to all who were recognised at the club's 2023 Best and Fairest awards, with Christian Petracca leading the way:

Keith 'Bluey' Truscott Memorial Trophy (Best and Fairest) – **Christian Petracca**

Syd Anderson Memorial Trophy (2nd Best and Fairest) – **Jack Viney**

Ron Barassi Snr Memorial Trophy (3rd Best and Fairest) – **Jake Lever**

Ivor Warne-Smith Memorial Trophy (4th Best and Fairest) – **Angus Brayshaw**

Dick Taylor Memorial Trophy (5th Best and Fairest) – **Steven May**

Troy Broadbridge Memorial Trophy (Best VFL Player) – **Deakyn Smith**

Ian Ridley Memorial Trophy (Club Ambassador) – **Ben Brown**

Norm Smith Memorial Trophy (Coaches' Award) – **Trent Rivers**

Harold Ball Memorial Trophy (Best Young Player) – **Judd McVee/Jacob Van Rooyen**

James McDonald Trophy (True Player) – **Tom Sparrow**

Ron Barassi Jnr Memorial Trophy (Leadership Award) – **Angus Brayshaw**



## LIFE MEMBERS

The decision to award Life Member status to fully retired players who have been part of at least one Melbourne Football Club premierships team meant that a number of familiar names were a welcome addition to the Best and Fairest awards. This process will continue in upcoming seasons; meanwhile, we congratulate:

**Ken Emselle**  
Guernsey No. 10  
1962 – 1969  
97 games, 109 goals  
Premiership - 1964

**Graeme Jacobs**  
Guernsey No. 20  
1964 – 1967 (MFC)  
36 games, 49 goals (MFC)  
Premiership – 1964

**Len Mann**  
Guernsey No. 34  
1960 – 1964  
46 games, 5 goals  
Premiership - 1960

**Ken Melville**  
Guernsey No. 38  
1953 – 1956  
71 games, 1 goal  
Premierships – 1955, 1956

**Ray Nilsson**  
Guernsey No. 38  
1960 – 1963 (MFC)  
41 games, 44 goals (MFC)  
Premiership - 1960



**Brian 'Doc' Roet**  
Guernsey No. 18 (1961 – 1965), 23 (1968)  
1961 – 1965, 1968  
88 games, 1 goal  
Premiership – 1964

**Alan Rowarth**  
Guernsey No. 2  
1958 – 1963  
70 games, 90 goals  
Premierships – 1959, 1960

**Jim Sandral**  
Guernsey No. 8  
1956 – 1957  
22 games, 2 goals  
Premiership – 1956

**Barrie Vagg**  
Guernsey No. 32  
1962 – 1969  
115 games, 132 goals  
Premiership - 1964

**Athol Webb**  
Guernsey No. 15 (No. 5 in 1958 GF)  
1955 - 1959  
74 games, 146 goals  
Premierships – 1956, 1957

**Graham Wise**  
Guernsey No. 23  
1963 – 1966  
40 games, 1 goal  
Premiership – 1964

These past players were joined by newly retired **Michael Hibberd**, a member of the 2021 premierships side, who was presented with his Life Membership by club legend, Hassa Mann.

Congratulations to all on becoming Life Members of the Melbourne Football Club.

## UNSUNG HERO

As in recent seasons, a vote was held to decide on the Melbourne Football Club's 'Unsung Hero' for 2023. With Harrison Petty holding the honours for the first two seasons of the award, a new name was announced this season: Judd McVee. Recognised in the Best and Fairest as Best Young Player

(Harold Ball Memorial Trophy – joint with Jacob Van Rooyen), we greatly anticipate seeing Judd in action again in 2024, building on his full first season – 25 games – in 2023.





## COTERIE

Many a word has been written and spoken about the great **Ronald Dale Barassi**, and while tragic to lose Ron too soon, thank you all the past players and officials who have contributed and shared their stories over the last few months, both public and within the Club inner sanctum. The celebration of Ron's life and legacy has been made all the more special as we heard of Ron's time as player and coach, the impact he had on individuals, teams, and even some end of season footy trips.

For Coterie, we have lost a true friend, with many of our current and past members having a lifelong friendship with Ron. Ron was very generous with his support for Coterie, and for this we will be forever grateful. His mere presence at Coterie functions and events would light up the room, but for many, even with all of Ron's accomplishments and accolades, his sense of humour will be what is remembered. He was a special person in so many ways. We will ensure Ron's legacy to Coterie will be honoured and embedded into Coterie long into the future.

## What a year...

As the 86th year of Coterie draws to a close, Coterie's future is as strong and bright as ever. We had so many successful functions and match day events this year, Coterie membership is growing, attendance was high, we tried some new initiatives, brought back some old traditions, and continued with the favourites. Thank you to President Kate Roffey and CEO Gary Pert for their strong support of Coterie throughout the year, and for allowing us access to the many resources of the Melbourne Football Club family to make Coterie a success.

Penny Collins will be continuing as President in 2024 and Coterie looks forward to strengthening the relationship between Coterie and the P&PP&OA. Thank you to Rod and the P&PP&OA committee for your support and we would also like to thank to all club players and officials, past and present, who have given their time so generously throughout the year at our many Coterie functions.

## 2023 Draft

It was great to see Kynan Brown, son of club great Nathan, being drafted to the club. We look forward to welcoming Kynan, along with Koltyn Tholstrup, Caleb Windsor and other new players at the 'Coterie First Year Players' pub lunch early next season. This lunch was a new initiative in 2023 and was a great success, we will keep you updated for those who would like to come along in 2024.

## Keep an eye out...

The MFC Coterie Golf Day will be back in early 2024; we will have a date and details locked in soon.

We will also be launching an updated P&PP&OA Coterie Membership; details will be out soon.

## BENEVOLENT FUND

As always, we thank those who have contributed – and continue to contribute - to the MFC P&PP&OA Benevolent Fund. The Association benefits immeasurably from the support given so generously by both Association members and those involved with the wider football community. All donations help us to conduct our events and activities, as well as assisting with providing member support. We welcome donations year round to our Benevolent Fund, as we keep working to build both camaraderie and care.

**To make a contribution at any time, our Association's details are:**

**Account name:**

**MFC Past & Present Players & Officials Association**

**BSB: 063 204**

**A/C: 1008 8589**

**Please use your name as the reference.**

Demon Army	Lachlan Haig
Western Demons	Spike Harris
John Astle	Georgie Herbert
Colin Barnes	Robbie Kerr
Don Baron	Anthony McDonald
Liz Coningsby	Brian Marks
Chris Connolly	David Peel
Greg Cunningham	Shaun Perry
Eric Dick	Cameron Schwab
Darrell Fenton	Michael Thomas
Doug Grant	

We acknowledge our donors so far in 2023; thank you for adding your names to the list:

Thank you to those who donated as part of our recent Annual Reunion; and don't forget, it's still possible to add your name to the list for 2023.





## REV'S ROAMINGS

Even though the season is over, the annual reunion is in the rear view mirror, and the festive season is right in front of us,



one man keeps on keeping on. The Rev – Paul Burnham – is keeping the calls, contacts and communications going. With well over 60 calls in his last installment – a 'good innings' he calls it, the day after Australia's World Cup win against India – there have been some memorable moments. Contact with Brent Crosswell – one of the segment highlights at Ron Barassi's Memorial – is

up there, as is contact with Bob Turner, who was best man at Ron and Cheryl's wedding. This brings to mind a recent special anniversary, with Darren and Annie Kowal celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary (congratulations!). Some more recent Demons have also been chatting with the Rev, from Aaron Vandenberg to Dom Tyson, who hopes to make it to a match day function in 2024. We look forward to seeing you there!

## VALE PETER YEO



All involved with the Melbourne Football Club were saddened to hear of the recent passing of past player, Peter Yeo.

Peter came to Melbourne during 1972, after playing with both Port Adelaide and Sturt; the latter was also his

father's club. He showed good form in the Reserves, playing three of the last four games before heading overseas, effectively ending his VFL career.

Peter returned to the Melbourne Football Club in 1975, working as the Demons' first fundraising coordinator.

In later life, Peter Yeo became a quadriplegic after slipping at his Noosa home in 2002, and breaking his

neck. He went on to become a strong disability advocate, including time as a consultant with the Brisbane Lions.

Having forged many friendships during his involvement with the Melbourne Football Club, Peter was a much loved member of the red and blue community. We offer our most sincere condolences to his family, friends and former teammates.

## REUNION SURVEY SNAPSHOT

Following the Annual Reunion, a survey was sent out via email to MFC P&PP&OA members, in order to gain some feedback regarding this very important function. With over 70 completing the survey, here is a snapshot of responses:

**Attendance or not?** – 50% yes, 50% no. Those who said 'no' cited a number of reasons, ranging from their age prohibiting travel at night, to full schedules or living interstate. Cost of attendance was not mentioned as a prohibitive factor.

**Venue – MCG?** – 95% approved. Within the small number who disapproved, the venue cost was the main motivation for this opinion.

**Date** – as is? 85% were fine with the current date. A wide range of alternatives were provided by those disagreeing, with the common thread being that Grand Final Week is busy.

**Value for money?** – 85% agreed that the function is value for money.

**Format** – as is? 92% feel that the current format is satisfactory, with those who suggested change coming up with a variety of worthwhile ideas. The main concern centres around encouraging more recently retired players to attend.

