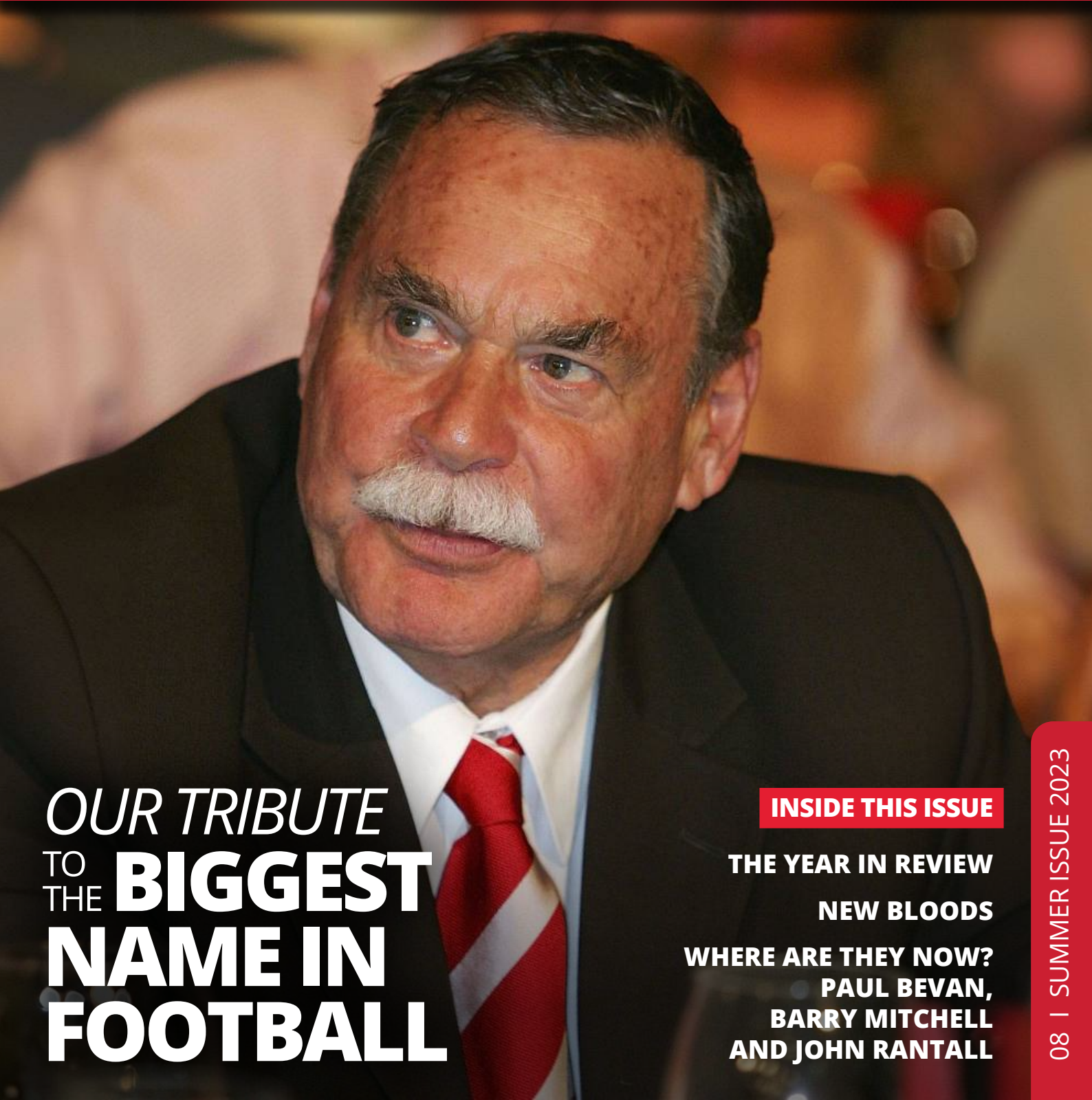




# BLOODS FOR LIFE

**PREMIERS** 1881 | 1885 | 1888 | 1889 | 1890 | 1909 | 1918 | 1933 | 2005 | 2012

**RUNNERS UP** 1880 | 1886 | 1896 | 1899 | 1907 | 1912 | 1914 | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1945 | 1996 | 2006 | 2014 | 2016 | 2022



*OUR TRIBUTE*  
TO THE **BIGGEST**  
**NAME IN**  
**FOOTBALL**


## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

NEW BLOODS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

PAUL BEVAN,  
BARRY MITCHELL  
AND JOHN RANTALL



# BLOODS FOR LIFE



*Sydney Swans stalwart Lynn Ralph with AFLW player Lisa Steane. Lynn has been a significant figure for many years in the development of the Club in Sydney and also a driving force behind the successful introduction of the AFLW to the Club.*

*As the inaugural Number 1 Ticketholder of the AFLW Team, Lynn can reflect on a magnificent second season, from their first victory to a winning finals debut.*

## **BLOODS FOR LIFE: PAST AND CURRENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS OF THE SYDNEY SWANS FOOTBALL CLUB**

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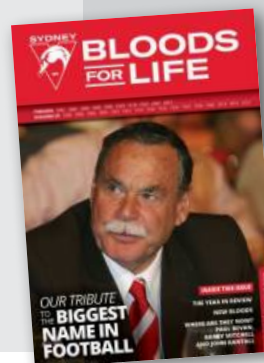
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*The legendary Ron Barassi, a giant in the game of Australian Rules Football.*

# Bloods For Life Magazine

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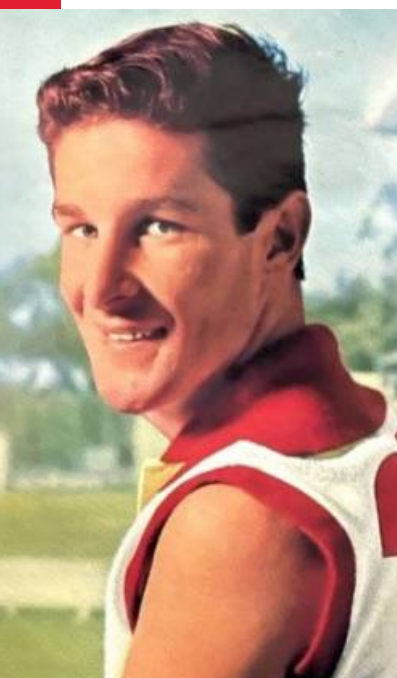
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# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## JOHN RANTALL

By Gina Keeble

---



**PLAYED**  
1963-1972  
1976-1979

**GAMES 260**  
(336 VFL/AFL  
GAMES IN  
TOTAL)

**GOALS 8**  
(10 IN TOTAL)

**NUMBER 5**

**Had John Rantall decided, approaching his teens, that footy was not the game for him, and had he not gone on to have the long and decorated career that he did, he still would have been able to dine out on one of the all-time great football stories for years to come.**

At the age of twelve, the slightly built kid from Scotts Creek, near Cobden in Victoria's Western District, was playing in the Under 16s for his local footy team, and was invited to have a run with the seniors. John explains, "Where we lived was pretty remote, and there was a prison farm not far away. The seniors decided to have a practice game against the prisoners and I was invited to go along and play. I was petrified. I remember running out onto the ground and this prison bloke with tattoos all over him came up and shook my hand and said 'Listen son, I've got a bit of advice for you. Stay out of my way, because I want to get injured.' I couldn't understand why, until he said, 'I want to get out of work leave for the next month'. He gave me a warning. The first time the ball was bounced, it came towards us and the pack came too.... He ran into that pack like a lunatic and got smacked, and they carted him off. I played in the forward pocket and got through the whole game. It was a really good experience, but he scared the living daylights out of me."



*1963 Victorian State team: John Rantall (back row; 2nd from right) with Bobby Skilton (2nd row from front; 2nd from the left).*

Thankfully the large incarcerated man with a desire for injury did not scare John off football for more than a moment, and his junior career continued apace. When he won the Judd Cup, awarded to the Best and Fairest Under 18s player in the Hampden League, VFL recruiters came calling.

While John had been keen to play for Geelong - the team he barracked for - it was South Melbourne's approach to recruitment that most impressed his father and the matter was settled. 17 year old John would move to Melbourne to train with South's Under 19s.

Having snared their young star, the Swans were keen to ensure he stuck around.

"They put me into a boarding house with a lot of other footballers from all over Australia. And they brought a couple of my Cobden teammates down to train with South Melbourne so that I would be quite comfortable. It was daunting. I hated the city. I hadn't been to the city all that much, but I didn't like it - I liked the country. So they were

trying to make sure that I would stay there."

Stay he did, although for one anxious moment, he believed he was about to be packing his bags. "We did all the training," he recalls, "and it was time for practice matches. They put six sides up on the board and I was in the fifth side. I thought to myself 'how am I ever going to get into the firsts?' So I played, and at half time the club secretary Alby Goodall came out onto the ground and told me they were taking me off. I thought, 'Oh well, I'm going home'. But he explained they wanted to play me in the senior side. I must have shown something - so I played in the senior side for the last practice match, and that was the beginning of my story. I never looked back."

So in round 1, 1963, John Rantall made his senior debut for South Melbourne - against Geelong at Kardinia Park. "We got beaten, but I'll never forget my first game. I went to school with the Lord twins, Alistair and Stewart, and they were playing for Geelong. I

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### JOHN RANTALL

---



played on John Sharrock, it was his first game too. He went on to be a really great player for Geelong, and we've been mates ever since."

Only six games into his career, and despite South having won only one of those matches, John was selected to play for Victoria in a side which toured to Perth and Adelaide. Alongside Bob Skilton, who was on his way to Brownlow number two that year, John embarked on the adventure of a lifetime. "It was my first flight on an aeroplane, my first time out of Victoria. We went to Perth and beat Western Australia, then came back to Adelaide and beat South Australia. It was surreal - I'd gone from boiled lollies to old gold chocolate."

Never was he to be "boiled lollies" again. From 1963 to 1972, in a team which boasted the likes of Skilton and Beford in the midfield, half-back-flanker John Rantall was a star with exceptional skill and judgement which ensured he was rarely beaten. In 1965 he ran third in the Club Best and Fairest behind Bob Skilton and Graeme John, while in 1971 and '72 he was runner-up to Peter Bedford and Russell Cook respectively.

When Bob Skilton missed the 1969 season due to injury, John took on the role of captain, and led the club in his own right in 1972.

He was exactly the kind of player other clubs would have been extremely keen to poach.

Prior to the 1973 season, the VFL announced

that any player with ten years' service at their current club could move to another club of his choice. Famously, North Melbourne began a recruiting spree which saw Essendon's Barry Davis, Geelong's Doug Wade and John move to Arden Street.

Initially he was reluctant, as his burning desire was a Premiership and he didn't see that North was a more likely contender than South. However, a change in coach at South and the persistence of North saw John make a difficult decision.

"We had Norm Smith as coach from 1969 - we'd had virtually no success at all in the time I'd been there, but Norm Smith turned the whole club around. I thought he was an absolute sensation. We managed to get into the four in 1970 and played a final. Then in '71 and '72 we weren't going all that well, and they sacked him - that made my decision easier. I was probably the last one North signed because I was humming and haa-ing and really didn't want to go. But I knew that if I only had four or five years left to play, I wasn't playing in a grand final with the Swans, I knew we were still a long way off. So I made the choice and told North to sign me up."

It was a move which paid off. With Ron Barassi at the helm, the 1972 wooden spooners finished just one game out of the finals in 1973, and made the grand final in 1974, the year John was awarded the Syd Barker Medal.

It would be 1975, however, that John's dream of playing in a Premiership came true as he was among North's best players when they defeated Hawthorn to win their first flag.

That was to be the last game of John's three-year deal with North. A deal which he had cannily devised to ensure that he was cleared to the club of his choice when it came to an end. So it was that he returned to the Lake Oval for the 1976 season and continued his career in the red and white. John played a further 70 games for the Swans, but his time at the club ended in unpleasant circumstances.

On the eve of the 1980 season, John was only three games shy of breaking Kevin Murray's VFL games record of 333 matches. Sadly, he would not do so in South Melbourne colours. "Ian Stewart was our coach, and he was pushing for a younger team. I had a couple of discussions with him and he said he'd support me to break the VFL record, then the week before we were to play the first game against Geelong he told me I wasn't in the team. I was three games short of the record, and I walked out. It was never resolved."

Fitzroy, however, threw John a lifeline - and Kevin Murray's famous #1 guernsey - and with Murray's blessing, John played six games for the Lions before retiring due to recurring tendinitis, creating a new record which would ultimately be surpassed by Kevin Bartlett.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### JOHN RANTALL

Only two years after John and the Swans had parted company, however, he was back in the fold, and appointed senior coach in late 1981. It was a tumultuous time for the club as a move to Sydney was mooted, and the pro-Sydney and Keep South At South factions were at loggerheads.

"It was a huge debacle, the whole thing," recalled John. "I jumped in on the Keep South At South side. There were two groups, and I was training the group who didn't want to go to Sydney. It was really bad on both sides - there were players getting abuse from spectators, and mates starting to dislike mates....it was really, really bad. It got to the stage where some of the players couldn't even walk down the street because of the abuse, and it was an awful situation."

Ultimately, John's tenure as coach would finish before it had begun, and South would move to Sydney under the guidance of coach Rick Quade - a former team-mate of whom John speaks fondly. "Rick and I never had any differences - he never questioned me and I never questioned him. We were both in bad situations - he was probably getting more abuse in Melbourne than I ever got."

So it was that John would leave the club with a bitter taste in his mouth for the second time. "It took a long time for it to get better. I was bitter. So I wasn't anywhere near the club for about 10 years. I moved to Queensland and I thought I'd get on with my life, so I went and



*John Rantall - Big V representative with Bloods Legend Bobby Skilton*

coached up there, then I went to Cairns with work."

It was his old coach Ron Barassi who ultimately healed the rift between the Swans and John. "Eventually when Barassi took over, he rang and said 'We want you to come back to the club and be involved', so that was the reason I went back. I wasn't doing anything official - he wanted me just to appear and to mix with the players and get to know them. I'm glad I did, because I was so bitter that I couldn't even watch them on TV."

The 2005 Premiership, he says, cemented his renewed relationship with the club. "I felt a sense of pride, absolutely. It was fantastic to finally get the monkey off our backs. From the turmoil the club had been in, to that - it was just unbelievable. That made things a whole lot different for me."

For years, John lived in Queensland, working as a recreation officer in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. He maintained an involvement in football, and when he moved to Yamba in northern New South Wales,





accepted the invitation from Paul Roos to help with coaching the northern arm of the Swans Academy. "That," John says, "was like coming back home."

John's decorated career has been recognised in many ways. In 1996, he was among the first inductees of the Australian Football Hall of Fame. A member of both the Swans and North Melbourne Teams of the Century, he was also honoured with inaugural membership of the Swans Hall of Fame in 2009.

In addition to having held the VFL record for a time, for almost three decades John held the Swans' games record, which was broken when Michael O'Loughlin played his 261st senior match in 2007. John recalls that day at the SCG fondly. "It was great. I admire Mick. I handed him his jumper before he went out that day. He was terrific, a sensational player and an even better bloke. It was a great day, and I was proud."

These days, John is back where it all began, in the Western Districts of Victoria. He and wife Deb relocated so John could be close to his

brothers. They spend a lot of time together, and recently enjoyed celebrating John's 80th birthday. He plays a lot of golf and competitive table tennis - still fit, healthy, active and competitive despite his knees and ankles constantly reminding him of his long and illustrious footy career.

It's the friendships he formed during his career that John treasures. "I made lifelong friendships. You take up where you left off when you see your old teammates, and you probably act like the 18 year olds you were when you first met, it's great. I have a special bond with my premiership teammates from North, and I wish that had happened at the Swans, but it wasn't to be. I've got a lot of memories I cherish from my days at the Swans, and nothing will dim them.

"And I have a huge amount of brothers, I suppose you could say. I'm hugely lucky because I played for such a long time that I have a collection of them from all three clubs, even though I didn't play too many games for Fitzroy. If I was starting off all over again, I wouldn't want it any other way. No regrets." ▼

## NEW BLOODS

# THE 2023 FREE AGENCY, TRADE PERIOD & DRAFTS

*By Kinnear Beatson*

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**The 2023 Free Agency and Trade Periods were busy times for the Swans, as the List Management Committee recognised the following key objectives as priorities to be addressed leading into season 2024.**

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## OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

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- Add midfield depth and experience to the squad.
- Replace and improve our Ruck division following the retirement of Tom Hickey.
- Add Key Defensive depth to the squad.
- Strengthen our 2024 draft hand.

Also, as the final key objective set by the Swans' list management team for season 2023, the Club was able to retain our 2024 first round and fourth round selections, as well as securing selection 19 in the 2024 draft from North Melbourne in the trade for Dylan Stephens. This gives us a strong draft hand for next year.

## UNRESTRICTED FREE AGENCY RECRUITS:

Via the Unrestricted Free Agency period, the club was able to recruit young Melbourne midfielder **James Jordon** and experienced Fremantle key defender **Joel Hamling**, without having to give up any of our 2023 draft capital.



### JAMES JORDON

DOB | 20 December 2000

CLUB | Melbourne Football Club

#### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 2021 Melbourne FC Premiership
- Rd 8 2021 NAB AFL Rising Star Nominee
- 65 AFL Games

*James Jordon interview*



### JOEL HAMLING

DOB | 9 April 1993

CLUB | Fremantle Football Club

#### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 2016 Western Bulldogs Premiership
- Also played with Geelong & the Fremantle Dockers
- 91 AFL Games

*Joel Hamling interview*



# NEW BLOODS

## THE 2023 FREE AGENCY, TRADE PERIOD & DRAFTS

### TRADE PERIOD RECRUITS

Prior to the 2023 AFL National Draft the club was able to recruit Melbourne ruckman Brodie Grundy and experienced Collingwood midfielder Taylor Adams to the squad. Both players were looking for greater opportunities in their preferred positions for season 2024 and were eager to join the Swans after meetings with key Swans administrators and coaches.



**BRODIE GRUNDY**

**DOB | 15 April 1994**  
**CLUB | Collingwood and Melbourne**

#### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 2011 & 2012 U18 All Australian
- 2018 & 2019 Copeland Trophy (Collingwood Club Champion)
- 2019 AFL All Australian
- 194 AFL Games

*Brodie Grundy interview*



**TAYLOR ADAMS**

**DOB | 22 September 1993**  
**CLUB | GWS and Collingwood**

#### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 2011 U18 All Australian
- 2020 AFL All Australian Initial Squad of 40
- 2020 Copeland Trophy (Collingwood Club Champion)
- 2017 Runner-Up Copeland Trophy
- 206 AFL Games

*Taylor Adams interview*



## NATIONAL DRAFT RECRUITS

### WILL GREEN

**Northern Knights**

**DOB | 8 September 2005**

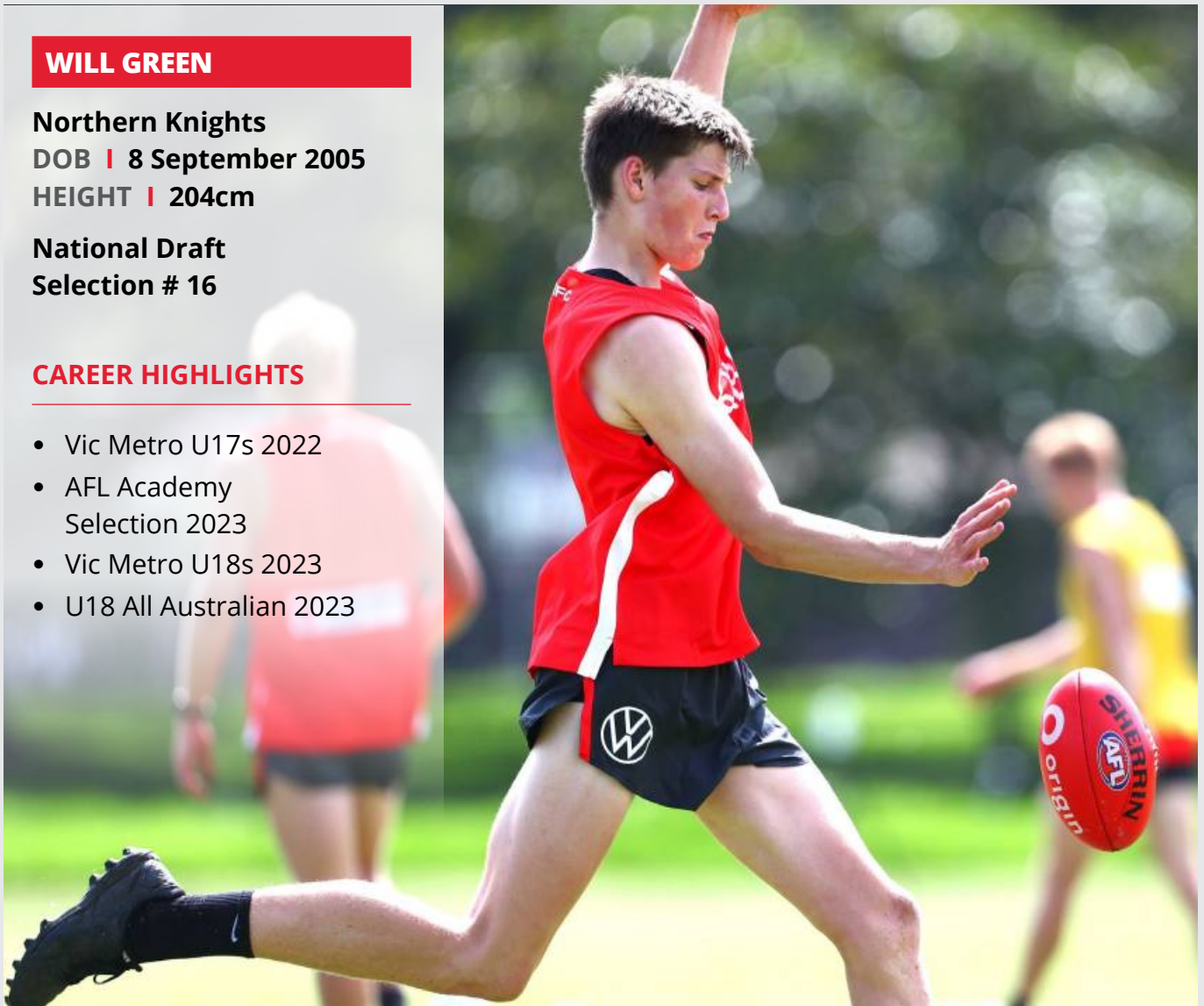
**HEIGHT | 204cm**

**National Draft**

**Selection # 16**

### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Vic Metro U17s 2022
- AFL Academy Selection 2023
- Vic Metro U18s 2023
- U18 All Australian 2023



Green was the Swans 1<sup>st</sup> Round selection in the 2023 AFL National Draft and is one of the best ruck prospects the club's recruiters have seen for some time. During this season he has been mentored by Anthony Rocca (former Collingwood star) and had an exceptional year representing the Northern Knights, Vic Metro and the AFL Academy at various levels. For a 200cm plus player he is very good at both ground level and overhead. His

ruck craft shows intelligent tap work and his ability to read and predict the play is one of the key attributes that impressed the Swans' Recruiting staff. With the recent recruitment of Brodie Grundy this year and Peter Ladhams last year, there will be no rush with Will, which will allow him time to add the required body mass to compete at the elite AFL level.

***Will Green Highlights***



## NEW BLOODS

# THE 2023 FREE AGENCY, TRADE PERIOD & DRAFTS



### CAIDEN CLEARY

**QBE Sydney Swans Academy**

**DOB | 5 March 2005**

**HEIGHT | 182cm**

**National Draft Selection # 24**

### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Allies U18s 2022 & 2023
- AFL Futures Squad 2022
- AFL Academy 2023
- U18 All Australian 2023
- 6 Swans VFL Games in 2023

Caiden has been a member of the QBE Swans Academy since he was 10 years old. Collingwood bid for Caiden with selection 24 during the National Draft, and the Swans had no hesitation to match the bid. He is a strong inside midfielder who wins his own ball and puts enormous pressure on the opposition with his relentless pressure and tackling. He has worked hard on developing his skills and decision-making and was well rewarded with All Australian honours for his consistency during the 2023 AFL National U18 Championships.

*Caiden Cleary Highlights*



## AFL ROOKIE DRAFT RECRUITS

### INDHI KIRK

**QBE Sydney Swans Academy**

**DOB | 31 August 2004**

**HEIGHT | 181cm**

**Priority Category B Rookie Selection**

### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- NSW U19s 2022
- Allies U18s 2023
- 8 Swans VFL Games 2023

*Indhi and Caiden Campbell Interview*





**Patrick Snell Highlights** 

**PATRICK SNELL**

**Wilson-Grange Football Club /  
Brisbane Lions Academy**

**DOB | 18 July 2005**

**HEIGHT | 194cm**

**National Draft Selection # 53**

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**

- Allies 2023

Patrick was born and bred in the Northern Territory and still lives there when not boarding at St. Joseph’s Nudgee College in Brisbane.

Having only been a member of the Brisbane Lions Academy for the last two years he didn’t qualify to the Lions under current AFL Northern Academy rules.

A natural left foot kick, he is a disciplined, task focused key defender who was a key member of the undefeated U18 Allies team that won the AFL National Championships this year. He is highly regarded by new Swans Assistant Coach Mark McVeigh who coached the Allies in 2023.

Indhi is the son of Club Legend Brett Kirk. He is a versatile hybrid mid, capable of playing both inside and outside roles. For his height, he is deceptively strong in overhead marking contests and is a smart ball user. He added considerable size and strength to his body during his time in the QBE Swans Academy.





**WELCOME SWANS  
PAST PLAYERS**



*John Stevens and Troy Luff*

# **THE BLOODS PAST PLAYERS AND OFFICIALS GATHER IN SYDNEY**

*Bloods For Life were pleased to arrange a function for Past Players & Officials held at Swans HQ prior to the Round 24 match against Melbourne at the SCG on Sunday 27 August 2023.*

Approximately 130 past players and officials were able to attend and catch up with former teammates and colleagues, and enjoy a tour of the striking new facilities at Swans HQ.

Club CEO Tom Harley welcomed our guests to the inner sanctum, and reiterated the priority for the Club of remaining meaningfully connected to our past players and officials.

Many thanks to the amazing work of Amanda Turner and her team in ensuring the success of the function. As noted in this report, similar functions are planned for next season. ▼

***We would like to hear from you & receive your feedback***



*Matty Lloyd*







*Attendees checking out the impressive Swans HQ*



*David Murphy and Ryan O'Keefe*



*Rod Carter, Craig Davis, Tony Morwood and Leigh Gazzard*



**PAST PLAYERS & OFFICIALS:  
MATCH DAY FOR SEASON 2024**

Bloods For Life are pleased to announce that pre-match functions for Past Players & Officials will be held at Swans HQ prior to the following home games in 2024:

**OPENING ROUND v MELBOURNE:  
Thursday 7 March**

**ROUND 22 v COLLINGWOOD:  
fixture date yet to be  
confirmed by AFL.**

Full details will be communicated in the weeks prior to these events.

There will also be events of a more informal nature arranged prior to games in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth next year - stay tuned for details!

Past Players and Officials are also encouraged to meet pre and post home games in the Foyer Bar at Swans HQ. Check out the Sydney Swans match day Hub for opening hours weekly.

Access to ticketing for home and away games will be available for Past Players upon request; further details will be communicated prior to the commencement of the 2024 Season.

The Club is currently finalising a full calendar of events for the Club's 150th Anniversary Year including the above functions, and this will be distributed to all.

**THE BLOODS  
PAST PLAYERS AND  
OFFICIALS GATHER  
IN SYDNEY**



*Andrew Bomford and Michael O'Loughlin*



*Ingrid and Dennis Carroll  
checking out the new lockers*



*Steve Taubert, Michael O'Loughlin and Leo Barry (you)*



*Mark Eustice, Tania Murphy  
and Ian Roberts*



*Wayne Carroll and Tony Franklin*



*Tim Barling and Mark*



*Steve Taubert, Mike Pyke and Rick Quade*



*"They're not that heavy, Dad!"*



*Rob Spurrs, Ed Barlow and Nick Smith*



*The one and only Jason Love*



*(star!)*



*David Willis, Dennis Carroll and Doug Priest*



*Kerrie Hayes, Neil Cordy and Rod Gillett*



*"Wally" Eustice*



*Nick Malceski, David Murphy and Heath "Reg" Grundy*

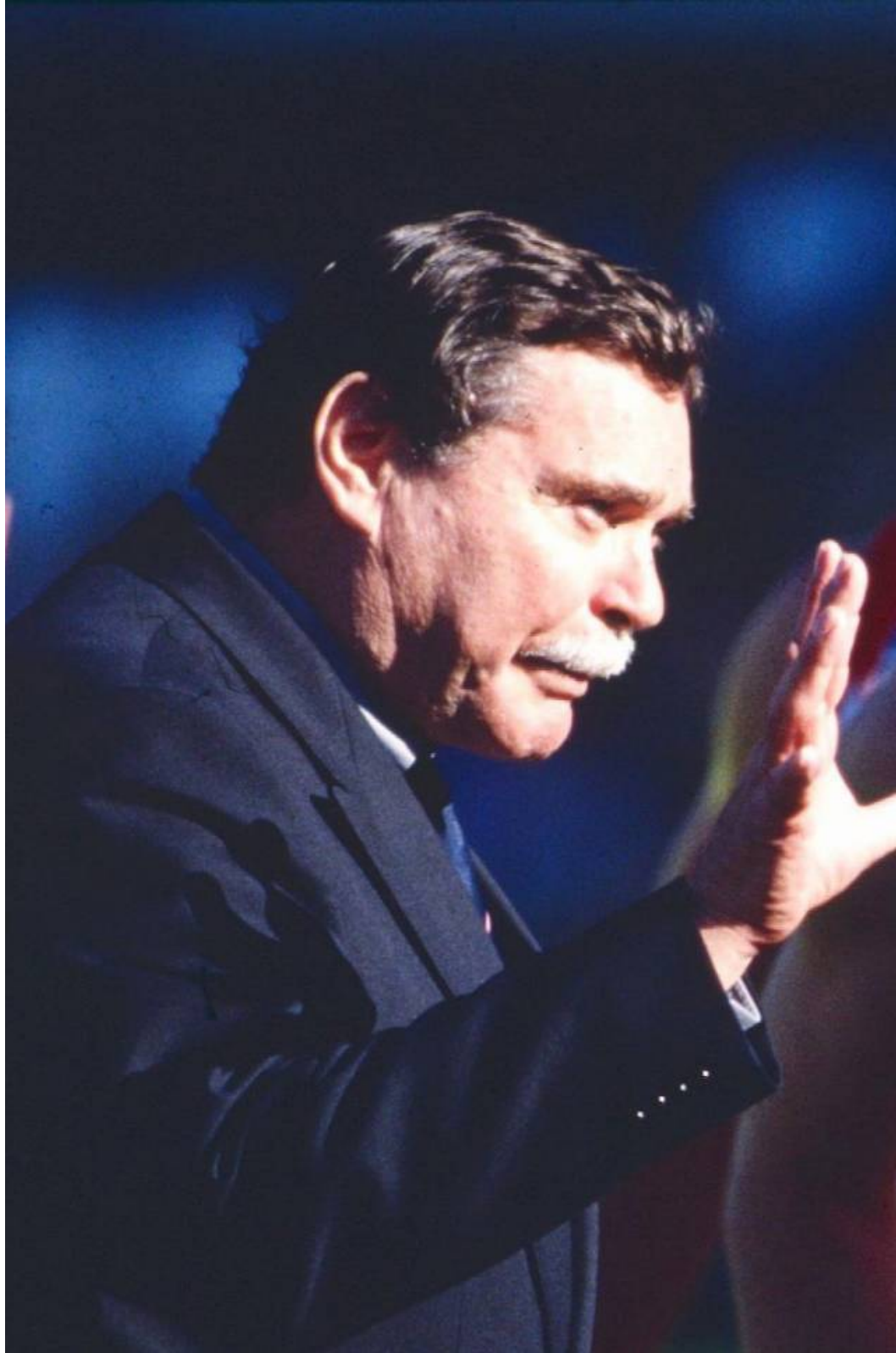
**FEATURE  
ARTICLE  
A BIRD'S  
EYE VIEW**

*Although decades apart, Ron Barassi and his mentor Norm Smith each made a monumental contribution to the Swans when it most mattered.*



*A tribute by  
Joe Moore*

*(Joe Moore is a Hobart-based writer. He has been writing for the Sydney Swans since 2015)*



# THE **BIGGEST** NAME IN FOOTBALL



lounge room of his uncle's house in Footscray, five-year-old Ronnie and his Mum, Elza, felt the comforting support of two of the family's closest friends—Norm and Marj Smith.

Norm Smith had been one of Ron Barassi Sr's closest friends, and the pair were premiership teammates at Melbourne. The club's coterie vowed to take care of the boy; it would become their duty.

That boy grew into a champion.

After Smith retired from playing, he embarked on a coaching career that saw him return to the Demons via Fitzroy. In his teens, Barassi moved into a bungalow in Smith's backyard and immersed himself in football and the Melbourne Football Club, debuting at 17.

Melbourne always had an unwavering desire to recruit Barassi, but he didn't qualify through the league's zoning system. As a result of their coterie's lobbying, and much to Smith's delight, the VFL

When Ron Barassi was six, his grandfather bought him a russet-brown kelpie. He named the dog Koda—in tribute to the Australian soldiers who'd captured the Kokoda Track—and, for the first time, he discovered true friendship.

On Friday, 10 November 2023 thousands of Barassi's mates

and admirers gathered at the MCG with Ron's family to celebrate a true visionary: a colossus in Australian football history.

One of Barassi's earliest memories was the defining moment he was told his Dad, Ron Sr, had been killed at the Battle of Tobruk and was never coming home. In the

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

*The biggest names in football*

introduced the father-son rule in 1951, with Barassi and the Demons one of the early beneficiaries.

"Norm Smith loved his footy. That suited me fine. His ability with young people, his strength of character, his ethics and values came into my life at the right time," Barassi said in the golden years that followed.

The parallels between two of history's most outstanding footballers is fascinating. As a young player, Smith learned under the legendary coach Checker Hughes. Tiger legend Jack Dyer once described Hughes as 'the greatest psychologist the game has produced.'

Smith played in four Melbourne premierships and was selected at full forward in Melbourne's Team of the Century. He coached the Demons to an incredible six premierships and was also named coach of their Team of the Century. Barassi played in all six flags under Smith and was named ruck-rover and captain of the Team of the Century.

They joined forces again



*Young Demon Ron Barassi*

as ruck-rover and coach when the AFL selected its Team of the Century in 1996. In 1964, Smith won his 10th premiership—the most in the game's history. In 1977 at North Melbourne, Barassi claimed his fourth flag as a coach, joining Smith on ten. Remarkably, both men were in their 40s—when most coaches today are beginning their careers—when they lifted their tenth premiership cup.

When Smith finished coaching, he was enthusiastic about joining Melbourne's committee. However, he grew disillusioned with that process, and when South Melbourne president Brian Bourke began the search for a new coach late in 1968, Smith was available. Initially,

the Swans sought his advice on who to pursue. They soon realised the solution to their problem was sitting right before them.

South hadn't finished higher than 8th for 16 years, and while the Lake Oval faithful were spoiled for champion players, they hadn't seen a final since 1945. Bourke wanted a highly credentialed coach, and Smith came in to straighten the place up.

Though many felt his wrath, Peter Bedford says Smith was the coach you'd run through a brick wall for. John Rantall says Smith turned his whole life around, and Bob Skilton lauded Smith for building a team spirit he'd never experienced in all his years at the club.



*Norm Smith addresses his troops*

But, the task was ahead of the master coach. In *The Red Fox*, Bourke told author Ben Collins, "I told Norm once, 'I reckon the apathy's in the mortar. It's holding this bloody building up.' He took that on board to try and change it. In a sense, he did change it, but it was a Herculean task. I don't think there was much culture at South, but he tried to inject some."

During a practice match ahead of Smith's first season at South in 1969, disaster struck when triple Brownlow Medallist Bob Skilton snapped an Achilles tendon and was out for the season. They lost the first five games, but Smith kept morale high. Regular gatherings at the George Hotel gave the players an audience with one of the

game's brightest minds and they loved it.

"We'd often go along together for a meal and a couple of beers, but it was always about football with Norm," Rick Quade says. "He was a tremendous orator. He'd have us all eating out of the palm of his hand, relaying some of his stories and the reason for their success at Melbourne, and he was very keen to succeed again at South."

He was so keen that he made the trip to the Quade's Riverina property seven times to secure the promising youngster's signature. In Smith's initial season, which he called an 'assessment year', South finished 9th. He added Quade, John Murphy, Reg Gleeson, Gary Brice and Shane McKew, and with a

fit-again Skilton, hopes for an improved season were high.

The emphasis on skill execution was too. Smith instructed and joined in sessions focusing on foot and hand skills on their non-preferred side. The players were well-drilled with a strong foundation in the basics of the game. Smith chose a smaller, quicker team and promoted an attacking game style, moving the ball by hand and playing on at every opportunity.

Many attribute handball-based 'play-on' football to Barassi. Because of it, the 44-point comeback he orchestrated in the 1970 Grand Final changed the game. Barassi credits Norm's brother Len, who employed the tactic with the Fitzroy

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

*The biggest names in football*

teams he coached. The South Melbourne players of 1970 believe Norm Smith made the practice popular, and their direct, decisive play had them climbing the ladder.

In 1969 Barassi was 34 and had already engineered the 1968 premiership at Carlton after insisting his players become more disciplined and committed to the club. When the Blues came to the Lake Oval in Round 7, most thought they'd take the points. But Smith was intent on claiming a scalp, and with slick ball movement, the Swans prevailed by a stunning 77 points.

The first to visit the home team's rooms and congratulate Smith was Barassi.

Watching his team's emergence filled Quade with mixed emotions. He debuted in Round One but suffered a knee injury which required a full reconstruction. "If Norm hadn't been there, I'd never have played football again, there's no doubt about that. I was a bit of a guinea pig regarding getting the reconstruction because, in



*Norm Smith and his disciples including Russell Cook, John Rantall, Ian Thorogood, John Murphy and Rick Quade*

those days, if you did your ACL, that was the end of your career."

"Some of the committeemen weren't keen to keep me, but Norm backed me in, so long as I did the work. He told me to sell my car and get a bike. I had to build a special table in my room at the George Hotel where I was living so I could do weights, and I went to the beach twice a week. Norm kept me involved, and Norm encouraged me the whole time to keep going."

Initially recruited as a full-forward, Quade had all the attributes Smith identified years earlier as necessary for the revolutionary new role of ruck-rover. In the Swans' definitive history, *In The Blood*, Jim Main wrote: "The young Quade had built an enormous

reputation in the country, and Smith believed his star recruit would be as good as Barassi."

The Sydney Swans are renowned for their first-class player welfare system these days. But, in the semi-professional era of the 1970s, it was far from commonplace. A man of great principle and foresight, Smith made it a priority.

When negotiating his move to the Lake Oval, Smith insisted his coaching team of Ian Thorogood, Clyde Laidlaw, and Donny Williams come too. He enlisted John Trainor to record statistics at each match. All of this was revolutionary for the South Melbourne Football Club, and for the first time in 25 years, they played a final in 1970.

The club's old timers had





glorified the 1945 Bloods for two and a half decades—now they could all move on. Many believed Smith's achievement in getting his team to the final four was equal to his feats at Melbourne due to the disparity in star power between South and their rivals.

Sadly, it was the only final two club legends, Bob Skilton and Peter Bedford, would play. In front of an enormous crowd of 104,239 success-starved supporters, South, despite leading at halftime, was outplayed by the Saints, going down by 53 points.

"The noise from the crowd that day nearly knocked me over. But it was a fantastic experience," Skilton later said.

After the game, Smith told *The Sun*, "I am sorry and

disappointed for South Melbourne supporters, but deep down, I am tremendously proud of the efforts of the players. We all realise we had limitations, but the boys played to the best of their ability. No coach can ask for any more."

Smith sat at the MCG two weeks later, eating ham sandwiches and watching the Grand Final. Barassi's Carlton played Collingwood in one of the great grand finals. The Blues won, and Smith proudly told reporters that Barassi had "really arrived as a coach."

Despite the finals loss, the Swans had not seen promise like this in a very long time, and the club's 1970 annual report even dared to dream —'The future! It is what we

make it.' However, beyond 1970 the anticipated success never arrived. A few more high calibre players wouldn't have gone astray!

"We loved Norm, even though he was hard on us," Quade says. "I really think in those two years, he wasn't well at all."

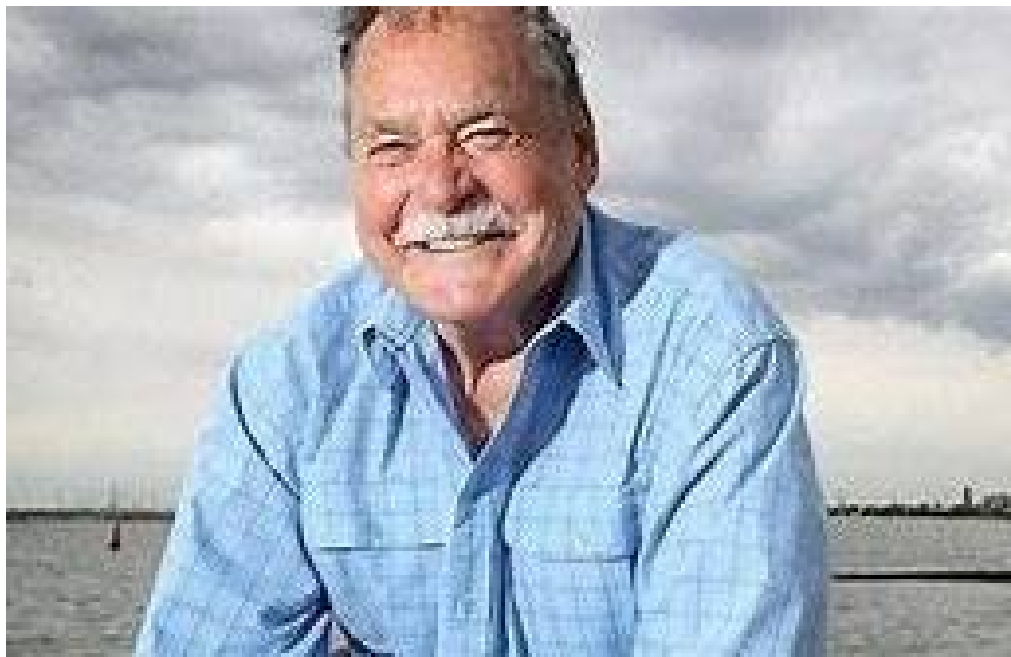
Barassi felt Norm was dealt a rough hand and got him to join his team at North Melbourne in 1973 but soon after he was diagnosed with a brain tumour and died aged 57.

The football world entered a collective state of shock, and the day he passed away, Marj Smith called Quade with the sad news. She also relayed Smith's wish that he act as one of his four pallbearers. Honoured and

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

*The biggest names in football*



forever grateful, Quade stood alongside Barassi, Norm's son Peter, and former Melbourne player Ross Dillon as they laid the fatherly figure to rest.

Courtesy of Smith, Barassi enjoyed a comprehensive football education and the game's overall welfare was always of paramount importance.

Perhaps the game's greatest innovator, Barassi, brought the need for expansion to the fore. In the late 1960s, writing a regular column in *The Sun News Pictorial*, called Column 31, he mused, "I'm convinced the most supercharged sports event in Australia would be Melbourne playing Sydney at Australian Rules football."

During his coaching prime at North Melbourne in the 70s, Barassi was asked what he thought he'd be doing in 20 years. "Coaching a team in Sydney", he said.

Rick Quade had that job when

the Swans played their historic first home match at the SCG against Melbourne in 1982. He led the team to a famous victory under immense pressure, and a post-match discussion with his coaching opponent that day remains a fond memory.

"Ron Barassi coached the Demons, and he was tremendous. After the game, he came in and said, 'I'm really enthusiastic about a national competition, and if you ever need any help, if there's anything I can do, please reach out'. That summed Barassi up—he always put the game before the club or individual, and I thought it was a really nice gesture," said Quade.

A little over ten years later, the Swans did need help. Neglected by the AFL, which had never provided the investment necessary for a Sydney expansion, the club only survived due to the

dedication and enormous financial assistance of the private ownership group that took charge late in 1988. A significant restructuring of club operations occurred in 1993, and by April, they needed a new coach.

In short, the club was on its knees—and, by extension—the national competition in jeopardy. When the AFL appointed Swans' board representative, Ron Joseph, entered Barassi's Mountain View hotel in Richmond, he appealed to Barassi's sense of responsibility. The 'Two Ronnies' had orchestrated North Melbourne's seminal moment, winning the club's first flag in 1975, and looked set to reunite in Sydney.

Just prior, Joseph had requested to meet with Barassi, and the Swans board, led by Peter Weinert, enthusiastically endorsed the idea. Joseph spoke with Barassi, and the pair walked



down the road to AFL Chief Executive Ross Oakley's house. Oakley satisfied Barassi's concerns regarding AFL support, and soon after that, Barassi found himself in the unusual position of being interviewed for a coaching job.

Mike Willesee, in his autobiography *Memoirs*, described the scene, "The AFL had set it up so that for some reason, Craig Kimberley, Peter Weinert, and I had to interview for the job. We didn't know what to ask him because we would never have presumed to know more about the game than him."

"He opened up by saying he didn't know what to say either. I've been a coach for almost thirty years, and I've never been interviewed for a job before."

Barassi's impact on the game transcends tribal colours. As Melbourne's premiership captain and most decorated

## CAREER SNAPSHOT

### NORM SMITH

#### PLAYER



#### MELBOURNE

**1935-1948**

210 games

546 goals



#### FITZROY

**1949-1950**

17 games

26 goals

**MELBOURNE CAPTAIN 1945-1947**

**MELBOURNE BEST AND FAIREST 1939, 1944**

**MELBOURNE LEADING GOALKICKER**

**1938, 1939, 1940, 1941**

**VFL LEADING GOALKICKER 1941**

**MELBOURNE PREMIERSHIP PLAYER**

**1939, 1940, 1941, 1948**

**MELBOURNE TEAM OF THE CENTURY**

**Full-forward**

#### COACH



#### FITZROY

**1949-1951**



#### MELBOURNE

**1952-1967**

**SOUTH MELBOURNE**

**1969-1972**

**COACHED 452 games**

**MELBOURNE PREMIERSHIP COACH**

**1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1964**

**MELBOURNE TEAM OF THE CENTURY Coach**

**VFL/AFL TEAM OF THE CENTURY Coach**

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

*The biggest names in football*

figure, he switched to rival Carlton in 1964. It changed the game forever. His biographer, Peter Lalor, says the move was like the prime minister changing political parties.

Defying the traditional notions of football gave Barassi the impetus to impact the game on a broader scale, and, as an eternal advocate for northern expansion, he accepted the job, joining the ailing Sydney Swans. Just as importantly, his wife Cheryl told him she'd run the pub.

Richard Colless became chairman almost simultaneously and describes the club as being in a death spiral. Barassi compared the place to post-war Berlin. He told Lalor, "It was a mess. It was just disgraceful, just disgraceful, a blot on our game. I think Mick (Allen) Aylett and the others just wanted to get the Sydney thing going. They didn't do a lot of planning and all the dreams had failed to come to anything. It was what footy was like before the war. They had nothing, and they needed help."

In *The Red Fox*, the chapter



on Norm Smith's time at the Swans is called 'The Saviour of South Melbourne.' While Barassi would indeed deflect any such claim in reference to Sydney, the significance of his appointment can never be overestimated.

In fact, the similarities in their Swans appointments are extraordinary. Both men, Melbourne legends, joined the club in an hour of need. Both men, in their mid-50s, had nothing left to prove. Both men embraced the enormous challenge, and in many ways, Smith's arrival led to a revival; Barassi's led to our survival.

Barassi agreed to coach a team suffering a 20-game losing streak. Morale had

reached an all-time low, and the players were embarrassed to walk through the airport in their red and white tracksuits. Rick Quade recalls one of Barassi's first moves as coach, "Ron called all the players in one night at training, along with the five or six trainers we had. Without warning, he asked the playing squad to tell him the names of the trainers, and most of them didn't know. He really gave it to the players and told them they all had to introduce themselves to the trainers by the next time they saw him."

Quade reflects, "It just reminded me so much of Norm. He believed the trainers were an integral part



of the club, and he made sure they were all looked after." Smith was renowned for his ability to recall the names of staff, volunteers and players' family members, promoting inclusion at every turn.

And Barassi galvanised this group. While his training methods and tactics were no longer revolutionary, the experience garnered from playing or coaching in 17 Grand Finals in his first 24 seasons of league football started infiltrating the psyche of his Swans players.

Their coach's famous motto, 'If it is to be, it's up to me', impacted immediately. Paul Kelly led the club with a quiet

## CAREER SNAPSHOT

### RON BARASSI

#### PLAYER



#### MELBOURNE

**1953-1964**  
204 games  
195 goals



#### CARLTON

**1965-1969**  
50 games  
35 goals

**MELBOURNE CAPTAIN 1960-1964**

**MELBOURNE BEST AND FAIREST 1961, 1964**

**MELBOURNE LEADING GOALKICKER 1958, 1959**

**ALL-AUSTRALIAN 1956, 1958, 1961**

**MELBOURNE PREMIERSHIP PLAYER  
1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1964**

**MELBOURNE TEAM OF THE CENTURY  
(Ruck-rover)**

**VFL/AFL TEAM OF THE CENTURY (Ruck-rover)**

#### COACH:



#### CARLTON

**1965-1971**



#### NORTH MELBOURNE

**1973-1980**



#### MELBOURNE

**1981-1985**



#### SYDNEY SWANS

**1993-1995**

**COACHED 515 games**

**CARLTON PREMIERSHIP COACH 1968, 1970**

**NORTH MELBOURNE PREMIERSHIP COACH  
1975, 1977**

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

*The biggest names in football*

ferocity. He says he applied Barassi's mantra while playing and continues living by those values today.

Seven games into Barassi's Sydney career, the Swans faced Melbourne at the SCG. In a famous win, they snapped the demoralising 26-game losing streak, and the old tin shed known as the Moore Park Bowling Club has never seen a party like the one that night. While consistency came later, building a sustainable culture was already underway.

It was the only win in his first season. In his second year, there were four. Ahead of his third season in 1995, a group of impressive younger players were joined by two of the biggest names in football—Tony Lockett and Paul Roos. "They'd started to put the right people in place, and a big part of going up there was being coached by 'Barass'," Roos says.

The Swans improved markedly in 1995, winning eight games with a percentage of 100, and narrowly missed a finals berth. During the year, Barassi coached his 500th game. In his honour, the team



played exceptional football to beat Carlton, the eventual premier. In his final match against Collingwood, they won again for their coach, with affection filling the winners' rooms.

Afterwards, an emotional Barassi explained, "It's been fairly successful. One thing we have left people with this year is the knowledge that, on certain nights, we can play very good football."

To assess Barassi's influence on the Swans by ladder position is an exercise in futility. His appointment brought credibility; his passion spread hope, and because of his direction, Sydney played in a Grand Final the year after he finished coaching. When the

infamous 72-year premiership drought was broken in 2005, he shed tears of joy with childhood friend John Curtain and his late wife Karen.

Barassi had invested 11 years of his life into the Swans at a time when he'd already done it all. A life member of all four clubs he represented, he'd dedicated a lifetime to football, and to see the 'Sydney experiment' succeed meant the world. The national competition he fiercely advocated for was thriving, and perhaps those final-siren tears were for footy.

Martin Flanagan once wrote, "Barassi is worth meeting. He is an original thinker; not many are." Once he finished coaching, Barassi joined the

*It's been fairly successful.*

*One thing we have left people with this year is the knowledge that, on certain nights, we can play very good football.*

**- RON BARASSI**

club's board of directors, imparting his innovative approach to the game in a fundamentally critical time for the club and the code in NSW.

Spokesman, ambassador, mentor, competitor. Ron Barassi was instrumental in rebuilding a fractured club, unloved and unwanted by the people of Sydney (with apologies to the true believers). In his eulogy at Barassi's state memorial service, Richard Colless highlighted Ron's legacy, "In the 50 years prior to Ron joining the club, we played in a miserable six finals games. We lost them all. In the 25 years post Ron's involvement the club has played in 50 finals, 25 victories, including seven Grand Finals, resulting

in two premierships."

"No one associated with the club today thinks that we are masters of the universe, but there is clarity and a sense of purpose that wasn't seen for half a century, and there is that elusive quality—substance—in large measure."

Rick Quade saw Norm Smith's legacy play out in Peter Bedford's impact on his South Melbourne teammates. He saw the likes of David McLeish, Russell Cook, and Reg Gleeson carry Smith's highly-principled values into the next phase of the club's remarkable journey.

Nobody knew the impact of Smith's philosophies better than Barassi. Two decades after Norm passed away,

Ron brought them to Sydney. Three decades later, they form the bedrock of a culture our contemporaries envy.

Both have left an indelible mark on Australian sport. As a reflection of Smith's supreme ability to perform on the game's biggest stage, the VFL instituted the prestigious Norm Smith Medal in 1979—awarded to the player judged best afield in the Grand Final. Perhaps Barassi's enduring premiership legacy will also be recognised in a more formalised way.

The Sydney Swans are honoured and privileged to have experienced the care and influence of two of the game's most legendary and iconic personalities. Norm Smith and Ron Barassi were greatly admired and respected by their players, staff, board members and Swans supporters from 1969 to 1995, who, because of them, felt they had something to believe in.

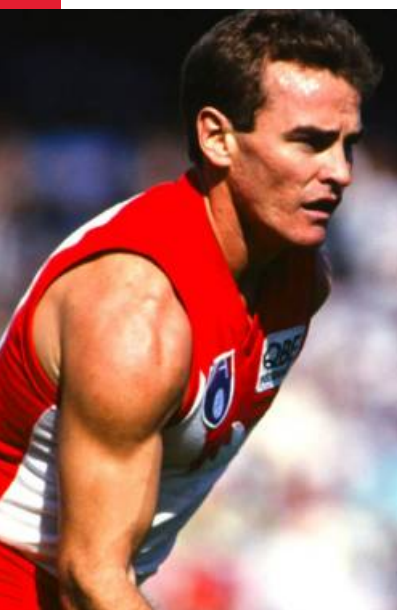
As we embark on our 150th season, we thank and salute two of the best there's ever been. ▼

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## BARRY MITCHELL

By Gina Keeble

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PLAYED  
1984-1992

GAMES | 170  
(221 GAMES  
IN TOTAL)

GOALS | 214  
(247 IN TOTAL)

NUMBER  
10

**Once upon a time, young Barry Mitchell sold Football Records at VFL Park. But he always knew that what he really wanted was on the other side of the fence.**

Soon enough, he would get his wish, when the talented youngster from the Mulgrave Football Club was invited to play for the South Melbourne Under 19s. It was 1983, and the Swans was a disjointed club, with the 19s still based in Melbourne and the senior team - at

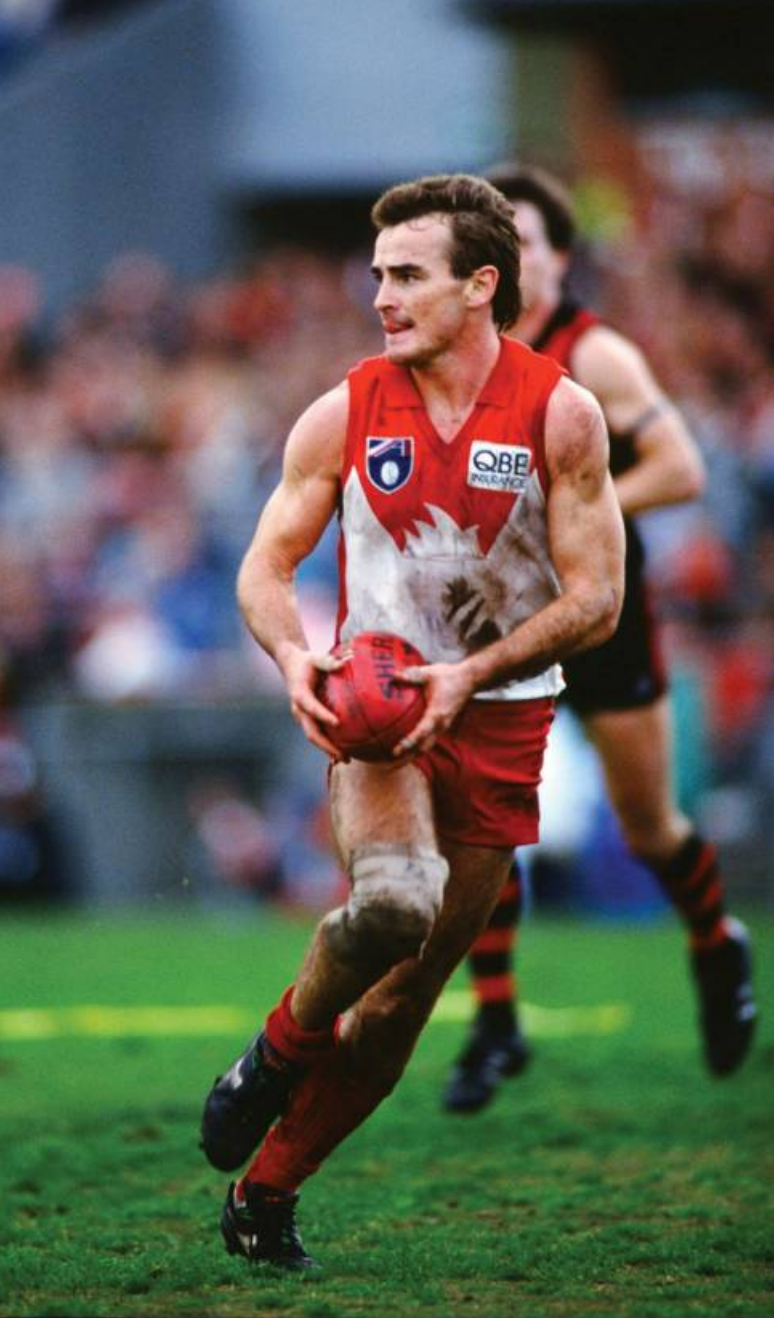
least nominally - in Sydney, although at that time not all players had made the move.

Stories - probably apocryphal - are told of players introducing themselves to team-mates before games, and Barry jokes that as an Under 19s player called up for his first night series game alongside members of the senior team, he was met with the question, "What's the Record boy doing in the rooms?".

Soon everyone would know exactly who the Record boy was, as his stint in the 19s quickly evolved to regular selection in the reserve grade side, and then, at the age of just 18, Barry made his senior debut in Round 16, 1984. In the 26 point victory over Footscray at the SCG, the debutant in #49 was not out of place, collecting 17 disposals and kicking two goals, and ensuring he kept his place in the team for the remainder of the season.

Barry quickly became one of the Club's most consistent and durable players, missing only a handful of games over the rest of the decade. A skilful, courageous and supremely competitive rover with a handy knack of kicking goals exactly when they were most needed, he was pivotal to the Swans achieving





long-awaited finals appearances in 1986 and 1987.

They were halcyon days on-field. Barry explains, "In 1985, the Swans were a just outside the finals type of team. Then the following year, players like Greg Williams, Gerard Healy, David Bolton and Bernard Toohey arrived - they brought in about eight great players, it was very good recruiting. We did very well in 1986, finished second on the ladder. But because there were no home finals back then we had to play in Melbourne, and we were narrowly beaten in both finals. 1987 rolled on, and we were pretty good again, but I think we were running out of puff by the end."

However, the following year, the team finished

out of the finals once more and began a gradual decline which would reach crisis point only a few years later.

"We had a very good senior list, which meant we had a very stable team - but that meant guys who were playing well in the reserves missed a bit of development opportunity. Warwick (Capper) had gone to Brisbane. By the early 90s, Gerard (Healy) had retired and Greg (Williams) had gone to Carlton. We were slowly running out of resources and the club fell on hard times, we were heading towards the bottom of the ladder. You could see the decline but I'm not sure what could have been done to arrest it. I think it probably had to be looked at earlier than it was."

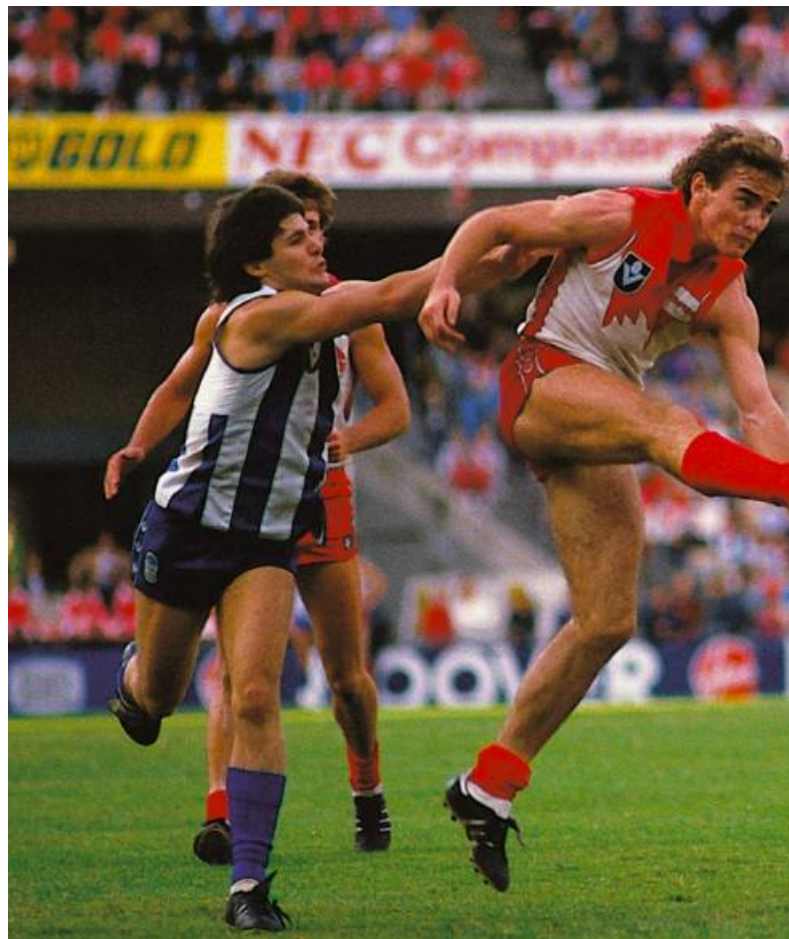
Barry continued to be one of the team's shining lights - Swans leading goalkicker and All-Australian in 1988, All-Australian, E. J. Whitten Medalist for best afield in the Victorian team and Swans Club Champion in 1991, and second to his close mate Paul Kelly in the Club Champion award in 1992.

By then, however, he knew his time at the Swans was drawing to a close.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### BARRY MITCHELL

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"When I decided to leave," he says, "I think I had come to the end of the energy I could give the club. I was trying as hard as I could - everyone was - but I just couldn't see the direction for us, and that was the hardest thing, not knowing how we could get out of this. The call of home was there too.... My time at the Swans was great, and I look back on it very fondly."

The 1993 season saw him in the black and white stripes of the Collingwood Football Club, an arrangement which only lasted one year before he headed to Carlton on a three year contract. He fitted in seamlessly with the likes of Kernahan, Silvagni, Bradley, Madden and Ratten, and finished a respectable fourth in the Carlton Best and Fairest in his first season.

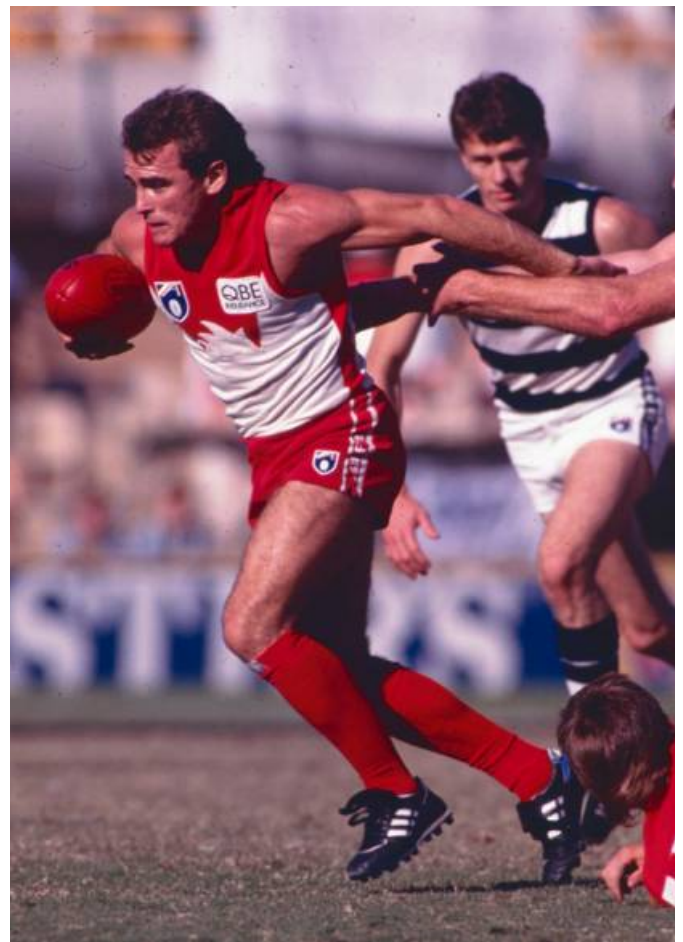
Barry hung up the boots at the conclusion of 1996, but maintained his involvement with football for many years afterwards, taking up assistant coaching positions firstly with Carlton and then Hawthorn, before heading

west to coach alongside Mark Harvey at Fremantle.

Eventually, he found his way back to where his AFL career started, accepting a position as an opposition analyst and recruiter at the Swans.

His return to the Club coincided with a difficult time in his life, however, as early in his tenure, Barry was diagnosed with a life-threatening brain tumour which saw him undergo delicate surgery and hospitalised him for nearly two months. He estimates that he was not fully recovered for a couple of years following this frightening experience. "The illness knocked me about," he says, "it was pretty significant. I suppose you'd describe it as pretty harrowing."

Barry is fully returned to good health these days, but the pace of his life has changed somewhat. So now he pursues a very different talent and passion - penning short stories and vignettes, many of them recognisably based



on his time in professional sport. "I do a lot of writing now. I write short stories. It's mainly for me, but a lot of it is lived experience."

And footy? He keeps his hand in, helping out as much as he can at Bairnsdale Football Club, where his son Will is the reigning Best and Fairest. Other son Tom recently added a Premiership medal to his long list of AFL honours. Barry speaks very proudly of both his boys, and of his daughter Chelsea, a former gymnast who works as a physiotherapist.

A Swans Life Member and Hall of Fame inductee, Barry reflects fondly on his time playing in red and white, but does not yearn for the old days in such a pressurised environment, and believes his life experience away from the game has given him great perspective.

"I was in footy my whole life and now I'm okay to be out of it. I go and watch my boys play,

and that's enough for me. What I learned from footy was that you have good times and you have some hard times, and you can't go back and say 'i should have done this or that'. I'm happy with my time in footy. I'm still great mates with Kell and others. I got great friends from the Swans, and I'm happy with that. You see where people have a hard time - with illness, for example, I had my struggles, Michael Parsons who I played with passed away.... Dean Wallis, who I became very friendly with when I worked at Freo, had a major heart attack. All that stuff pops into your life when your footy career's over, and you realise that footy was important - it was the main thing - but there's certainly life after footy." ▼

***We would like to hear from you & receive your feedback***





# CLUB UPDATE

**What a whirlwind this year has been – it's hard to believe that here we are again, approaching Christmas with our men's pre-season having already begun. Our club has achieved so much this year and when we reflect on it, we should all be incredibly proud.**

The move into our new home, Sydney Swans HQ at the Royal Hall of Industries, has been very significant. For our on-field teams, it has delivered a world-class training base with equitable men's and women's facilities, as well as a dedicated hub for our QBE Sydney Swans Academy. For our staff, it's an inviting space to work that they are excited to come into each day, and we have watched both our off-field and on-field teams thrive in this new environment.

In December, the indoor field of HQ was transformed into an impressive function space for a special celebration with those who have played key roles in making our new home possible. On the night, Club Patron Basil Sellers and former Chairman Richard Colless were inducted to the Swans Hall of Fame, while we revealed the name of our new home, which will be formally known as the Basil Sellers Richard Colless Centre. To everyone who has donated to the project or worked to make it possible I want to extend a heartfelt thank you, as you have helped lay the foundations for our club's future.

Sydney Swans HQ has also finally given our members a place to call home, whether it's before or after games, or during the week to shop in the Locker Room or to see the display



*MC Adam Spencer reliving the good old days with Craig Kimberley, Peter Weinert, Paul Kelly*



of Premiership Cups – a taste of what is to come as we embark upon the next stage of the project to establish a museum.

On the field our men’s football program made the finals for the 18th time in 21 years, while we were all thrilled to celebrate the standout season of Errol Gulden who claimed his first Bob Skilton Medal. Through the trade and draft periods we have bolstered the squad with fresh talent headlined by experienced recruits Brodie Grundy, Taylor Adams, Joel Hamling and James Jordon, and we are confident these players can help us improve.

The success of our women’s team this season has given everyone at the club a reason to cheer, cheer – from their first win at North Sydney Oval, to watching the

leadership of co-captains Chloe Molloy and Lucy McEvoy, and the seeing the team win its first ever final. It’s a credit to Kate Mahony and Scott Gowans, and the program they have established. A congratulations must also be extended to Scott on being named AFLW Senior Coach of the Year – which is a remarkable achievement – along with Laura Gardiner, who was named our AFLW Club Champion after a season in which she averaged almost 30 touches a game.

Season 2024 is a very important one for our club. We will be striving to set a new benchmark of 75,000 members as we celebrate 150 years of South Melbourne and the Sydney Swans. Significantly, we open the season on Thursday, March 7 against Melbourne at the SCG. Our Opening Night will mark our birthday celebration in Sydney ahead of what promises to be another exciting season. We look forward to sharing it with you. ▼



**Tom Harley | CEO, Sydney Swans**

# CONGRATULATIONS

*A big Bloods For Life congratulations to several of our members on recent magnificent achievements.*



## **BOBBY SKILTON WAS ELEVATED TO LEGEND STATUS IN THE SPORT AUSTRALIA HALL OF FAME**

**In September 2023, the greatest Blood of all, Bobby Skilton, was elevated to Legend status in the Sport Australia Hall of Fame, only the 4th AFL player to achieve the honour**

Bob joins the likes of Sir Donald Bradman AC, Dawn Fraser AC MBE, Cathy Freeman OAM, Rod Laver AC MBE, Ian Thorpe AM, Shane Warne AO, John Eales AM and Wally Lewis AM as a Legend of Australian Sport.

“Bob Skilton had the rare distinction of being a player beloved by the supporters of South Melbourne while also being respected across the competition for his brilliance as

a footballer, but also for his courage and fairness and commitment to the game,” Sport Australia Hall of Fame Legend and Chair, John Bertrand AO said.

He went on to add that Bob was the true definition of a Legend. He was an inspiration when playing and continued to inspire others to strive to get the best out of themselves, and emphasises everything that is good about sport in Australia.

## **BASIL SELLERS AND RICHARD COLLESS INDUCTED INTO THE SWANS HALL OF FAME**

Basil and Richard have been acknowledged for their immense contributions to the Sydney Swans by being inducted to the Swans Hall of Fame and have had the new Swans HQ named in their honour.



*Basil Sellers upon induction with Andrew Pridham and Andrew Ireland*



*New Hall of famer Richard Colless interviewed by Swans great Gerard Healy*

Basil and former chairman Richard became the only administrators since Craig Kimberley to receive the honour of becoming Swans Hall of Famers, on the same night that it was announced that Sydney Swans HQ will be formally known as the Basil Sellers Richard Colless Centre.

Sydney Swans Chairman Andrew Pridham said "It is appropriate that the naming reflects two people who have been critically important figures in our club's history. Both Richard and Basil have been as important in forging our future in Sydney as they have been in preserving our heritage as South Melbourne. Two cities, one club; two great men, one building."

## **ANDREW IRELAND JOINS THE AFL COMMISSION**

After almost 50 years in football, it was announced in September that legendary



*Andrew Ireland*

former Sydney Swans CEO and Director Andrew Ireland is taking up a new challenge and joining the AFL Commission.

Andrew has been part of the Sydney Swans for almost 22 years, first joining the club as the General Manager of Football in 2002, before becoming the club's Chief Executive

## CONGRATULATIONS

in 2009 – a role he held until he retired in December 2018. Since then, he has continued to serve as a Director on the Sydney Swans Board.

Under Andrew's guidance the Swans had success on and off the field, including two premierships and record-breaking membership. He also played a key role in establishing both the QBE Sydney Swans Academy and club's the new state-of-art home, Sydney Swans HQ at the Royal Hall of Industries.

As a result of joining the AFL Commission, Andrew will be stepping down from the Club's Board of Directors.

### **ERROL GULDEN HAS CAPPED A STELLAR 2023 BY TAKING OUT THE YOUNG ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AT THE 2023 NSW SPORTS AWARDS.**

Aged just 21, Errol had a stellar 2023 AFL season, averaging 27 disposals, five tackles and a goal in season 2023.

He has won many awards this year including his first Bob Skilton Medal as the Sydney Swans Club Champion and finishing fourth in the Brownlow Medal, polling more votes in a season than any Swans player in club history.

He was also selected in the All Australian team and voted Paul Kelly Players' Player by his teammates.







**THREE MEMBERS OF BLOODS FOR LIFE AND GREATS OF THE SYDNEY SWANS HAVE BEEN INDUCTED AS LIFE MEMBERS OF THE SYDNEY CRICKET GROUND.**

Former Chairman Richard Colless, Bloods champion player Michael O'Loughlin and Club benefactor Basil Sellers are the first representatives from Australian Rules and the Sydney Swans to be awarded this honour.

This is the highest individual honour awarded for sporting excellence and contribution at the Sydney Cricket Ground and Allianz Stadium.

The inductions took place at a special function held on the SCG field of play on 6 December 2023. The 12 new inductees are pictured above, left to right:

- David Campese (Rugby Union)
- Ken Arthurson (Rugby League)
- Mark Taylor (Cricket)
- Michael O'Loughlin (Australian Rules)
- Belinda Clark (Cricket)
- Glenn McGrath (Cricket)
- Steve Waugh (Cricket)
- Cheryl Salisbury (Football)
- Nick Politis (Rugby League)
- Richard Colless (Australian Rules)
- Graham Arnold (Football)
- Basil Sellers (Philanthropy)

*We would like to hear from you & receive your feedback*





*Dedicated Swans ladies enjoying the event*

# AROUND THE GROUNDS

**Around The Grounds this edition focuses on the recent Christmas function held by the Past Players & Officials group in Melbourne.**

Special thanks must go to the spiritual leader of this group, Ernie Scott, who works tirelessly for the Bloods. Well done Ernie and many more functions to come!

Also a big thank you to Karen Lingard for providing the photos.

***We would like to hear from you & receive your feedback***



*Tony Morwood interviewing Torch McGee*



## **AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...**

***Collingwood Premiership player Mason Cox presenting the US National AFL Premiership Cup to his brother Nolan Cox (right) and Kane Murphy, son of Swans Hall of Famer David Murphy (156 games and member of the Swans Team of the Century) after the win of the Austin (Texas) Crows.***



*Robert Dean*



*Peter McCracken*



*Frank and Nina Seymour*



*Wayne Henwood, Michael Joyce and Rob Pascoe*



*Stuart Gull, Ken Boyd and Ted Carroll*



*Our fearless leader,  
Ernie Scott*



*Martin Plumb, Ernie Scott and Torch McGee*



*Irene and Clem Goonan*



*Tony and Karen Morwood*



*Matty Lloyd, Michael Joyce, Craig Huckler, Warwick Capper,  
Harry McAsey, Wayne Henwood and Alex Prelac.*

# WEEKEND AT HARRY'S

**One of the great driving forces behind the recognition and connection with the Club's past players is the redoubtable Darren "Harry" McAsey.**

Happy Handsome Harry (a very appropriate nickname bestowed by himself) has been a key factor in past player functions and catch-ups over many years, with many Swans victories over the years cheered home by past greats at Harry's Alexandria Hotel.

Harry (34 games for the Bloods 1985-1991, including a Mark of the Year contender in 1985 that ended up on the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald) has been a tireless contributor to the compilation of the Bloods For Life database, a massive task which remains a work-in-progress. Without his work, it is doubtful we would have got started.

In recent times, Harry and his wife Fabiana and their two beautiful children, Milly and Arlo, have relocated to the Indonesian resort island of Bali. Harry is now a shareholder and a key member of the Executive Management team at FINNS Beach Club, teaming up with another past Blood, Tony Smith.

Harry's roles include being Director of Security, so I guess we can assume that our safety at the world's best beach club can be assured!

Harry also takes his role in guest relations very seriously, as the following shots of Harry hard at work indicate.

During 2024 we will be seeking support from Past Players and Officials to take the BLOODS FOR LIFE concept to new heights, including match day arrangements and functions.

We're hoping that the Happy Handsome One can again lead the way by showing the promotions people at FINNS how much we love their Club! ▼



*Best behaved AFL team to ever visit Finns*



*Harry and Swans legend Michael O'Loughlin*



*With Aussie acting star Garry Sweet*



*Harry and Western Bulldogs superstar Aaron Naughton*



*Big H with the even bigger NRL Superstar Nathan Cleary and his father Ivan*



*Will Hayward getting some workout advice from Harry*



*Brodie Grundy*



*James Jordan*

# FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

**Resilience is one of the most important lessons that football teaches us. Often individuals and/ or the team just have to find a way.**

After having a difficult start to the season with some personnel issues we went on a run of winning 6 straight games and again qualified for another finals campaign – for the third season in a row. Unfortunately, in the first final, despite coming back a number of times during the game, we came up 6 points short against Carlton. It was disappointing to exit.

In this caper, it's hard not to judge success based upon pure premierships, after all, that's what it's all about. However, I am very proud of how the players fought back to give ourselves the opportunity to play in our 18th finals series over the last 21 years. And hopefully we learned something about ourselves that will hold us in good stead.

The growth of some of our younger players has certainly been pleasing. Errol Gulden had a breakout year, and his first All Australian blazer. Nick Blakey, Braeden Campbell, Angus Sheldrick and James Rowbottom also showed great improvement. Some of our more experienced boys also contributed well... Jake Lloyd and Harry Cunningham were as consistent as ever and Luke Parker stood up when we lost a number of experienced players.

We also said goodbye to some of our greats. Tom Hickey, Paddy McCartin and Lance Franklin all called time on their careers. They impacted the Swans in their own way – and I thank them for their service.

To Buddy specifically, the memories of the countless times that you got the team over the line with your will to win, and your smile and embrace at the top of the players race



Nick Blakey



Errol Gulden

when you did it, will sit with us forever.

Off the field we settled into our new Sydney Swans HQ and community centre at the Royal Hall of Industries, a facility which we believe will play an important role in us striving to achieve sustained success to both the men's and women's football programs. We cracked our all-time membership record, hitting more than 65,000 which is a fantastic milestone – we are so lucky to have such a wonderful fanbase.

So we now look ahead to 2024. We feel we have recruited well over the off season. Brodie Grundy, Taylor Adams, Joel Hamling and James Jordon will bring a wealth of experience and bigger bodies to our side, while in the draft we picked up a talented young ruckman in Will Green, a competitive midfield QBE Academy player in Caiden Cleary, and a young key position player in Patrick Snell.

We do have a list that is within the younger teams in the competition- even with some experienced additions this year. However, when the siren sounds at the start of each quarter, our opponents don't really care about that. Whilst we have the enthusiasm of youth, we have also played a lot of football together over the last 3-4 years. Older heads on young shoulders are what we're after. We think we have the tools to be competitive again in 2024 and give our members and fans reason to believe we can be there at the pointy end of the season.

That's what we are striving for, sustained success and sustained finals campaigns.

Have a great Christmas and bring on season 2024! ♥

**John Longmire**  
**Senior Coach, Sydney Swans**



*The Sydney Swans line up for their historic first AFLW Final*

# AFLW REPORT

**Season 2023 is one of those seasons that we reflect on with immense pride. We exceeded all expectations.**

Twelve months ago we had just completed our first season, winless and sitting last on the ladder. It was an incredibly tough entry into the AFLW competition, but it wasn't for lack of effort, it simply came down to time. We needed time to grow, to develop, and time to build a competitive list. Our young playing group had not had the time to develop physical capacity to compete at the required level prior to season 7, so we used the off season between seasons to work hard and develop both fitness and footy skills. Our whole playing group bought in and the results have shone through.

This year we claimed our first victory, finished in the top eight, competed in our first ever finals campaign, made it through to the semi-finals, had three rising star nominations, and

three All-Australian selections.

Round 1 was catalyst to our success this season. It showcased our resilience under pressure as we came from behind to secure victory against our cross-town rivals. It demonstrated the development of our system, it established our brand and our DNA.

We often talk about our processes and what we are trying to do at this club, we are a team that strives for sustained success. We want to improve all the time. Our goal isn't to solely win premierships, it's about being competitive all the time and letting the results take care of themselves.

We've seen players develop in leaps and bounds. Brenna Tarrant was a force to be reckoned with in defence, whilst Ella Heads, Ally Morphett and Sofia Hurley improved out of sight to each earn a rising star nomination this year.





Crucial to our success this year has been the leadership both our captains Chloe Molloy and Lucy McEvoy. Chloe is a moments player, and she delivered a highlights reel full of them in the red and white. Lucy is a quiet achiever, mature beyond her years, with experience that guided our younger talent through an exciting year of firsts.

Just as important as the wins are the losses, and whilst we'd rather not have them, they come with a lot of growth. We took many learnings away from this year. Our losses to Carlton and Hawthorn, and our semi-final loss to Adelaide, showed us there is still a long way to go to be the benchmark of the competition. This is all part of the journey.

It goes without saying that our success this year wouldn't have been possible without the support from our Swans members and fans. We finished the regular season with the highest

average crowd attendance, pulling nearly 5,000 fans to every home game. That is a staggering achievement for a club still in its infancy in the AFLW competition, we are so lucky to have such an incredible fanbase.

As we look ahead to 2024, we do so with optimism and excitement. We will continue to build on our skills, our resilience, and our competitiveness. We will continue to strive for sustained success.

Have a great Christmas, and bring on 2024. Cheer Cheer!



**Kate Mahony**  
**Executive General Manager**  
**Sydney Swans AFLW**

### QUESTION 1.

Who are the men that have coached both the Swans and Melbourne?

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### QUESTION 2.

What is the significance of Round 1 of the 1982 VFL season?

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### QUESTION 3.

What is the significance of Round 13 of the 1993 AFL season, and who was the leading goal scorer in that match?

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### QUESTION 4.

Which current Sydney player's grandfather played senior football at Melbourne?

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### QUESTION 5.

Who was the player who arrived at Melbourne in 1983 as part of a mega deal and was also the CEO of the Swans for 7 years?

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### QUESTION 6.

Who are the three players that have played the most consecutive senior VFL/AFL games?

*(Clue: the first two are from Melbourne and the third is from Sydney).*

### QUESTION 7.

Since 2000 (excluding James Jordon and Brodie Grundy) who is the sole Melbourne player to be traded to Sydney?

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### QUESTION 8.

How many All Australian teams was RDB selected in post the regular ANFC Carnival?

---

### QUESTION 9.

Who is the last player to have won a senior Best and Fairest award at both the Swans and the Demons?

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### QUESTION 10.

Which Swans player has won the most Brownlow Medals and which Melbourne player has likewise won the most Brownlow Medals?



# Quiz:

## HOW SWANS SAVVY ARE YOU?

### QUESTION 11.

Which 4 former Melbourne players played for the Swans in season 1988?

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### QUESTION 12.

What is the biography of Norm Smith written by Ben Collins called?

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### QUESTION 13.

Who was the multiple Melbourne Premiership player who in his role as a Presbyterian Minister conducted Norm Smith's funeral in 1973?

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### QUESTION 14.

Which former Melbourne coach has two brothers; one who played for South Melbourne and the other for Sydney?

### QUESTION 15.

Who are the Melbourne players that have represented Australia at cricket?

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### QUESTION 16.

Who are the Swans players that have represented Australia at cricket?

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### QUESTION 17.

Which Sydney player's father played in Melbourne's 1941 VFL Premiership team?

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### QUESTION 18.

Which player from each of the Swans and Demons has the highest individual score in a game?

*(Clues: the Melbourne player had 19 scoring shots, and the Sydney player had 16).*

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### QUESTION 19.

How many Brownlow Medal votes did Errol Gulden receive for his 42 possession, 2 goal game against Melbourne in Round 24 2023?

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### QUESTION 20.

How many Wooden Spoons (if any) did VFL teams coached by Norm Smith and Ron Barassi "win"?



Check your answers by clicking on the icon

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## PAUL BEVAN

By Gina Keeble

---



PLAYED  
2004 - 2011

GAMES 129

GOALS 39

NUMBER  
42

**When little Paul Bevan was born, it's likely his family assumed that if he were to be a sportsman, he would make his name in rugby league. After all, his father, grandfather and - most famously - great-uncle had all played the sport to a high level. But family circumstances and geography would intervene, ensuring young Paul ended up with a Sherrin, not a Steeden, in his hands.**

"I was born in rugby league heartland, on the Central Coast of New South Wales," Paul

explained, "but Mum and Dad split up when I was about three, so Mum moved me and my two sisters to Corowa, where we had some family. That's how I was exposed to Aussie Rules, and where I played junior football. As I got older, Mum decided it would be good for me to be a bit closer to Dad, so before I started high school we moved back to the Central Coast. At school, there was no Aussie Rules so I had to play League, and I enjoyed it, but Aussie Rules was my focus."

So focussed was Paul on his chosen code that he made an extraordinary commitment to travel between the Central Coast and Sydney during the second half of his high school education in order to represent the Wests Magpies.

"I ended up moving in with Dad on the Central Coast and commuting to Croydon Park for training, which was a bit of a struggle - catching a train from Gosford to Strathfield, changing trains, going to Burwood and then walking to training, and obviously the reverse when we had finished. So it was a big mission, two or three times a week. I'd do my homework on the train, and it was a bit of a



*Bevo and Premiership teammates after the 2005 Grand Final:  
Brett Kirk, Paul Williams and Barry Hall*

late night by the time Dad picked me up at Gosford Station. That was all the way through Year 11. At the time, I didn't think about it, I just did it, but looking back, it was a big commitment"

An even bigger commitment was required of Paul when he was selected for the NSW/ACT Rams. Heading into his final year of high school Paul, along with fellow Central Coast resident and Rams team-mate Jarrad McVeigh, made the move to Canberra where he lived with a host family as he juggled schoolwork and a budding footy career.

His dogged determination to play footy at the highest level possible paid off. Heading into the 2003 season, Paul was invited to pre-season training with the Sydney Swans.

"It wasn't the best start," Paul recalls, "because I got shingles in my first week of training in Sydney. It was a shaky start, so I really didn't think I was much of a chance to be rookie listed, but they saw something in me, and they gave me a spot."

Paul grabbed the chance he was given with both hands, and set about becoming the best

footballer he could be, playing a full season in the Swans Reserves team competing in the Canberra League.

"Reserves was a big step up for me," he recalls. "I didn't have the greatest start to the year, but the second half was better, so they probably saw something in me that warranted giving me that extra year or two. I was always a competitive sort of kid, I think they liked that. They wanted someone who just played their role and did their job with no fuss. I modelled myself on Crouchy, and on Stuart Maxfield. I loved being around Stuey and those types who trained so hard and prepared so well. I had to learn a lot. I didn't really see myself as a backman, I saw myself as a forward, whereas the coaches thought the opposite, so I really had to work on my defensive game."

Clearly the coaching staff were happy enough with his defensive abilities heading into round 1 of the 2004 season, as they trusted the young debutant in the #42 guernsey with a pretty big job.

"At the captain's run before Round 1 against Brisbane, we were doing a quick hands

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### PAUL BEVAN

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drill and Tadhg Kennelly went down with a knee injury. I wasn't even aware I was an emergency, but I got a call-up as a result of that. So I got my first game against the three-time premiers at the Gabba. I was playing on Craig McRae, who had about 350 games more experience than me. It was pretty daunting, that's for sure. I wouldn't say I kept him quiet, but I don't think he kicked too many on me."

Paul did not miss a game for the remainder of the season. In round four, he was nominated for the AFL Rising Star Award, and was rewarded with the Club's equivalent honour at season's end. "It was a great time in my career," he reflects, "when no one expected anything much of me, and I was able to go into the team and do what was needed - it was good."

His 2005 season started full of promise, but after thirteen games, Paul found himself out of the team as the Swans marched towards the Grand Final. The team had been extraordinarily settled during the latter half of the season, but one last change was made following the Qualifying Final loss to West Coast, and Paul was recalled to the side ahead of the legendary semi-final against Geelong.

"I was hopeful that I'd get back, but I don't think I was confident. I wasn't setting the world on fire playing reserves, but I think I got lucky and had one or two okay games before they made that final change during the finals series."

The rest, as they say, is history, and Paul's defensive role on the dangerous Ashley Sampi (nine disposals, no score) was a vital component of the team's close victory over West Coast on Grand Final day.

"He was a player who didn't need a lot of the footy to hurt you, so I knew going into that game that he might touch it under ten times but he might kick two or three, so it was nice to keep him pretty quiet for the biggest game ever. There weren't as many rotations then, so I spent a bit of time on the bench, particularly in the last quarter. But we were never a team that put too much emphasis on how many touches you had, so I thought I did my job."

"Being a Premiership player.....", he says, "I think about it more post my career than I did in the moment. I was pretty naive then. At 20, you think you might win another one or two in your career. It was great at the time, obviously, but it's more a thing to reflect on now."

Paul went on to play 129 senior games over eight years for the Swans, and like all Premiership players, is a Life Member of the Club.

When his time at Sydney drew to a close, Paul and his wife (then girlfriend) Hailey embarked upon another adventure, and while his new footy club didn't deliver on-field success, it gave the young couple some great life experience.

"I signed a two year contract with the Perth Demons. It was a really good experience, we went over there, had no expectations, we had no family or friends there, but we loved it. Hailey got a good job, and I got a sales position. It's a good standard of semi-professional footy, so you still train three days a week, and the expectation is you prepare yourself well. We ended up staying an extra year because we loved it so much."

After their time in Perth, Paul and Hailey returned to Sydney for a year before again relocating - this time to the Sunshine Coast. Once again the lure of footy was strong, and Paul became involved in 'One On One Football', a freelance coaching initiative, as well as playing a few seasons for



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### PAUL BEVAN

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Maroochydore, before work commitments meant he was unable to train as regularly as he would have liked, and finally he hung up the boots.

Paul and Hailey are still living in Queensland with their three daughters - Mila, 8, Harper, 6, and Lola, 4. "They're very girly girls," Paul laughs. "I've tried to get the Sherrin in their hands as much as I can but they lose interest pretty quickly." His weekends are now spent taking his daughters to dance lessons - an activity which is a five-day-a-week commitment for the three little Bevan Ballerinas.

It provides a nice contrast from his weekday work as a product specialist for a medical equipment company. "Weekdays, I'm in theatre next to a surgeon, talking them through their technology. It probably has a bit of similarity to sporting environments in that you have to perform under pressure, because they expect you to know your stuff. I had a pharmaceutical role for about six years prior to this so I have background in the clinical space.... But it's a challenging role."

Paul believes his time at the Swans prepared him well for all that would come after. "I'm still



someone who's super diligent. I've got that ingrained in me now, I'm always doing some exercise or training... It's the discipline. That has stayed with me, and I don't think it will ever leave me."

And he looks back on his footy career with fondness and gratitude.

"I stand proud every time I say I'm an ex Sydney Swans player. I'm forever grateful to be associated with this great club. All the individuals who have been through the club and contributed along the way..... I probably didn't get a chance to thank everyone during my time, but I want to thank everyone who played a part in my career, for any part that they played. I appreciate the opportunity to chat about this, I appreciate the opportunity to have myself heard." ▼

*We would like to hear from you & receive your feedback*





# 2023 THE SYDNEY SWANS YEAR IN REVIEW

## CLUB AWARDS

### CLUB CHAMPION

#### 1. Bob Skilton Medal

Errol Gulden ( 738 votes)

#### 2. Adam Goodes Trophy

Nick Blakey (481)

#### 3. Peter Bedford Trophy

James Rowbottom (471)

4. Luke Parker (456)

5. Chad Warner (453)

6. Oliver Florent (448)

7. Jake Lloyd (430)

8. Callum Mills (426)

9. Tom Papley (411)

10. Harry Cunningham (392)

11. Isaac Heeney (381)

12. Hayden McLean (313)

13. Braeden Campbell (287)

14. Tom McCartin (285)

15. Justin McInerney (284)

16. Logan McDonald (277)

17. Will Hayward (274)

18. Dane Rampe (223)

19. Robbie Fox (203)

20. Aaron Francis (179)



*[Voting: Club Champion votes are awarded by Sydney Swans coaching staff. A player can be awarded a maximum of 50 votes per game, and coaches can allocate up to 10 votes for as many or as few players as they deem appropriate, per match.]*

# 2023 THE SYDNEY SWANS YEAR IN REVIEW

## OTHER AWARDS

### PAUL KELLY

#### PLAYERS' PLAYER:

Errol Gulden

#### BARRY ROUND BEST CLUBMAN AWARD:

Harry Cunningham



#### DENNIS CARROLL MOST IMPROVED AWARD:

Hayden McLean



#### RISING STAR AWARD:

Angus Sheldrick

#### VFL PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Corey Warner

## VFL DEVELOPMENT SQUAD PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Jake Bartholomaeus



## SYDNEY V GWS GIANTS

### BRETT KIRK MEDAL:

Game XXVI –

Errol Gulden

### CLUB MILESTONES:

John Longmire - 300 games as Senior Coach

Callum Mills – 150 games

Luke Parker – 100 games as Captain

Tom McCartin – 100 games

Nick Blakey – 100 games

### PLAYER MILESTONES:

Lance Franklin - 350 games (168 for Sydney)

## RETIRED PLAYERS:

Lance Franklin - (172 games for Sydney, 354 in total)



Tom Hickey - (49 games for Sydney, 151 in total)

Paddy McCartin - (28 games for Sydney, 63 in total)

## AFLW

### CLUB CHAMPION:

Laura Gardiner



1. Laura Gardiner (223 votes)
2. Chloe Molloy (136 votes)
3. Ally Morphet (87 votes)



4. Sofia Hurley (84 votes)
5. Lucy McEvoy (69 votes)
6. Tanya Kennedy (67 votes)
7. Brenna Tarrant (56 votes)
8. Rebecca Privitelli (48 votes)
9. Ella Heads (36 votes)
10. Cynthia Hamilton (25 votes)

**PLAYERS' PLAYER:**

Laura Gardiner

**RISING STAR AWARD:**

Sofia Hurley



**BEST CLUB PERSON:**

Maddy Collier

**BEST PLAYER IN THE FINALS:**

Brenna Tarrant

**AFLW CHAMPION  
PLAYER OF THE YEAR:**

Laura Gardiner (Runner-Up)

**AFLW SENIOR COACH  
OF THE YEAR:**

Scott Gowans (Joint-winner)

**AFLW BEST &  
FAIREST AWARD:**

Chloe Molloy (Runner-Up)



**AFLW ALL-AUSTRALIANS:**

Laura Gardiner

Chloe Molloy

Ally Morphet

**AFLW UNDER 22 TEAM:**

Laura Gardiner

Ella Heads

Lucy McEvoy

Ally Morphet

**AFL**

**BROWNLOW MEDAL:**

Errol Gulden (27 votes)

Chad Warner (16)

Luke Parker (10)

Nick Blakey (5)

Tom Papley (4)

Joel Amartey (4)

Callum Mills (3)

Isaac Heeney (2)

Dane Rampe (1)

Logan McDonald (1)

Hayden McLean (1)

Will Hayward (1)

**40-MAN ALL**

**AUSTRALIAN SQUAD:**

Nick Blakey

Errol Gulden

**ALL AUSTRALIAN TEAM:**

Errol Gulden (Wing)

**RISING STAR NOMINATION:**

Angus Sheldrick



## 2023 THE SYDNEY SWANS YEAR IN REVIEW

### AFLPA AWARDS 2023

#### NOMINATION FOR BEST CAPTAIN:

Callum Mills  
Luke Parker  
Dane Rampe

#### NOMINATION FOR MOST VALUABLE PLAYER:

Errol Gulden  
Luke Parker  
Chad Warner



#### NOMINATION MOST COURAGEOUS PLAYER:

Callum Mills

#### NOMINATION FOR BEST FIRST YEAR PLAYER:

Jack Buller

### NEW SOUTH WALES PLAYERS

#### CAREY-BUNTON MEDAL 2023:

*Awarded to the Best NSW Player in the AFL based on AFLCA Votes*

**Winner** – Errol Gulden (88 votes; original club UNSW-Eastern Suburbs)



**Third** – Nick Blakey (38 votes; UNSW-Eastern Suburbs)

**Eighth** – Isaac Heeney (16 votes; Cardiff)

**Ninth** – Callum Mills (14 votes; Mosman Swans)

### NSW AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL HISTORY SOCIETY STATE OF ORIGIN TEAM 2023:

*Selected by Gerard Healy, Mike Sheahan, Wayne Carey, Mark Maclure, Rod Gillett, Richard Colless (Convenor)*

#### **Nick Blakey**

(Original Club: UNSW-Eastern Suburbs)

#### **Braeden Campbell**

(Pennant Hills)

#### **Harry Cunningham**

(Turvey Park)

#### **Errol Gulden**

(UNSW-Eastern Suburbs)

#### **Isaac Heeney** (Cardiff)

#### **Callum Mills** (Mosman Swans)

#### **Senior Coach:** John Longmire

#### **Assistant Coaches:**

Jarrad McVeigh; Ben Mathews



# The Bloods of Old

In this edition, Swans Historian Barb Cullen OAM profiles players from the Club's first Premiership team in 1881.

With thanks to author and historian Mark Pennings for all the statistical information.

## JAMES ALEXANDER YOUNG



**BORN** 22/10/1858  
**DIED** 05/02/1947

**PLAYED** 1880-1894  
172-178 games  
24 goals

Married in 1883 to Margaret who died a year later aged 24. Young then married a widow, Fanny, in

1889.

His death notice in the Argus newspaper stated "Old South Melbourne Footballer". He is buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery with his wife Fanny.

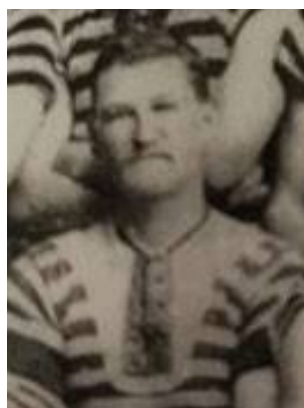
He played 17-20 games for Albert Park FC before joining South Melbourne FC.

He was a member of an Intercolonial team against South Australia in 1881 and with the South Melbourne team against Adelaide in 1882.

Member of South Melbourne Team of the Century as determined by author Mark Pennings.

**OCCUPATION:** 1908 Cab driver. In 1912 he bought an hotel in Upper Beaconsfield, Victoria.

## HENRY LATCHFORD



**BORN** 1855  
**DIED** 04/05/1932

**PLAYED**  
1880-1882, 1884  
41-48 games  
31 goals.

Buried in Springvale Cemetery, Victoria.

Latchford played with Albert Park FC from 1877-79. He married Sarah Ann McKnight in 1878 and they had 11 children, including twins who were all born in the South Melbourne area. Two of his children died at an early age. He played in 1882 with South Melbourne FC game against Adelaide and was an official with the 1890 SMFC Team. He was a trainer with the club for many years. In 1931 he was living in Clarendon St. South Melbourne with seven members of his family.

**OCCUPATION:** Bootmaker

## ROBERT GILCHRIST



**PLAYED**  
**34-42 games**  
**3 goals 1879-84**

Robert was born 1862 in Emerald Hill, Victoria, the eldest of nine children born to Margaret and Robert Gilchrist. He

died 14 December 1932 in Albert Park. He is buried in Melbourne General Cemetery with his wife and baby Grace. He married Marion Allan in 1885 and they had six children all born in Emerald Hill. His eldest son, Lieutenant Harold Gilchrist was KIA in WW1 on 04/10/1917 in the Battle of Passchendaele after serving at Gallipoli. In 1928 Robert and his wife travelled to Belgium to see his grave site. Two other sons, Robert and Andrew served in WW1 and his son Arthur served in both WW1 & WW2. After the death of her husband Marion lived with her youngest son, Keith, an optician, in Ballarat. Debuting at the age of 17, and playing for six years for South Melbourne FC it is unknown if he continued his football career with another club.

**OCCUPATION: Storeman**

## JOHN CRAIG GIBSON



**BORN 25/01/1858**  
**in Launceston**  
**Tasmania.**

**DIED 22/ 04/1906 in**  
**Queensland**  
**aged 48.**

**PLAYED 41-44**  
**games, 2 goals,**  
**1879-1882**

He married Jenny Bryce in 1893 and they had four children. His son Private Douglas Gibson was KIA in France in 1917 aged just 19. After WW1 Jenny moved to California, USA to live with her son John.

Gibson played with Albert Park FC in 1877 then transferred to South Melbourne FC and became Captain in 1879. Described as a robust key defender he was a Member of the Champion of the Colony team (Equivalent to All Australian) in 1879, 1881, 1882. Captain of a Victorian team against the first Inter Colonial games in South Australia in 1880. He played in the Intercolonial team in 1881 against South Australia and an 1882 game against Adelaide.

Gibson played for South Melbourne Cricket Club in 1882. He moved to Queensland in 1883 and became Captain of the first Queensland Intercolonial team. He was the inaugural President of the Queensland Football League in 1904 and a Member of the Queensland Hall of Fame.

**OCCUPATION: Manager**

# AFL PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION ALUMNI INJURY AND HARDSHIP FUND

Established in 2017, the AFL Players injury & Hardship Fund provides ongoing support for the health and wellbeing of past players. The injury & Hardship Fund has various payments and benefits which may be applicable to past players.

## LIFETIME HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

AFLPA Alumni members may be eligible for reimbursement of medical costs and expenses for any joint surgery. Medical costs and expenses for a dental injury incurred whilst training or playing with an AFL / VFL club may also be reimbursable under the program. Members with private health insurance are eligible for reimbursement of up to \$8,000, while those without private health insurance can access up to \$6,000. Hardship support may be available to members who do not have private health insurance due to financial hardship.

## HARDSHIP FUND

As life doesn't always work out the way it was intended, support may be available to Alumni members in financial hardship. The Hardship Fund has assisted over 160 past players with more than \$2 million since the launch of the Alumni Program in 2007.

## HOSPITAL EXCESS REIMBURSEMENT

AFLPA Alumni members can apply for reimbursement of any excess paid for a hospital stay or procedure conducted in a hospital up to \$500. Note, these procedures do not have to be football related.

## VISIT [AFLPLAYERS.COM.AU](http://AFLPLAYERS.COM.AU)

For lifetime health care, past player hardship support, hospital excess reimbursement and the AFLPA Alumni program in general, contact Tim Harrington, Chris Smith or Luisa Meoli

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