



# WESTERN BULLDOGS PAST PLAYERS

Newsletter March 2020

## SEASON LAUNCH DINNER & 1985 LIST REUNION UPDATE

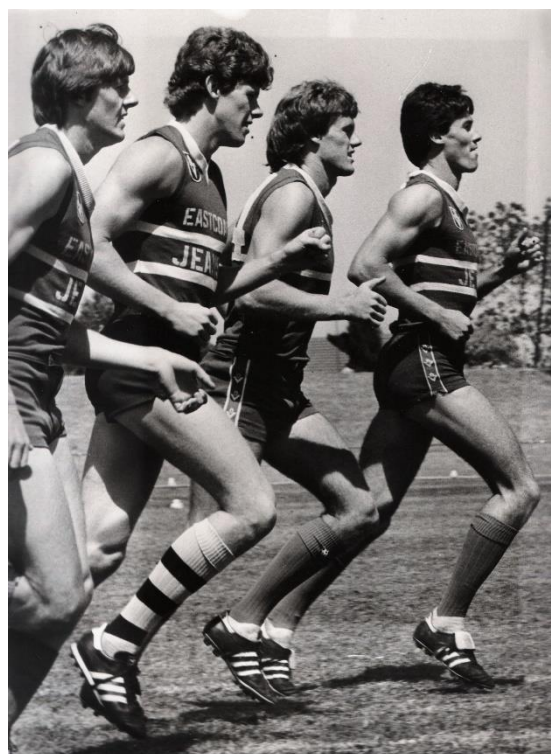
We have had a positive response.

Mick Malthouse, Jim Edmond, Rick Kennedy, Simon Beasley, Steve MacPherson and Doug Hawkins have key roles at the Dinner.

Others attending include: Peter Foster, Shane O'Sullivan, Brian Cordy, Darren Baxter, Brian Royal, Graeme Cordy, Matt Mansfield, Graeme Cook, Nigel Kellett, Mark Komp, Colin Boyd, Glenn Calvert, Andrew Howlett, Len Cumming, Alan Stoneham, Don McKenzie, Ron McGowan, George Brown, Gary McGorlick, Adam Contessa, Graeme Joslin, Phil O'Keeffe, Shane Keogh, Jack DiNatale, Ray Walker, Bruce Reid, Ian Morrison, Ilija Grgic, Colin Dell, Owen Madigan, Kevin Meddings, Jack Slattery, Kevin O'Neill, Les Bartlett, Lynton Fitzpatrick and Matt Johnson.

About 50% of those attending will be accompanied by their wife or girlfriend.

To assist with catering please **BOOK NOW**.



# WESTERN BULLDOGS PAST PLAYERS SEASON LAUNCH DINNER

## INCLUDING 1985 LIST REUNION

### ROUND 1 v COLLINGWOOD FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup> MARCH

All **Past Players and Officials and their partners** are invited to attend the Season Launch Dinner. This event will include a Reunion of the 1985 list. It is an opportunity to celebrate the service to the club and a great way for former teammates to catch up with one another.

Time: **Dinner starts at 6pm** before the 7.50pm start of the match  
Venue: **Danvers Room** at Marvel Stadium (enter via **Gate 6** and go to Level 2)  
Tickets: \$40 per person.  
Package: Includes dinner and reserved seat (Cash Bar)  
MC: Kevin Hillier  
**Special Guests:** **Mick Malthouse** **Jim Edmond** (WB# 656)  
and a **Mystery Guest**

#### **Presentations:**

Rick Kennedy (WB# 712) to Simon Beasley (WB# 715)  
Stephen MacPherson (WB# 718) to Doug Hawkins (WB# 664)



**RSVP: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March**

**Owen Madigan** (Secretary)

Phone: 0408 105 151

Email: [belplas1@bigpond.com](mailto:belplas1@bigpond.com)

#### **Payment options:**

##### **Direct Debit:**

*Footscray Western Bulldogs Past Players*

**BSB:** 063 893

**Account:** 10 100 208

Use **surname** as payment identification.

##### **Credit Card:**

Andrew Howlett (Treasurer) 0418510635

**Cheque:** *Footscray Western Bulldogs Past Players*

c/o Owen Madigan

8 Bellevue Court

Boronia 3155



## 1985 PROFILE written by *Ross Brundrett*

**ROBERT GROENEWEGEN**, (79 games, 29 goals, 78-86)

THERE are some old footballers whose exploits on the field become more dazzling with every re-telling, but Robert Groenewegen is definitely not one of those types.

The jovial big man is humble to a fault, so humble he even seemed bemused that he was the subject of this interview. "I thought you wanted me to talk about Dougie," he confessed.

Dougie, of course, is his former partner in crime and life-long mate Doug Hawkins. The pair played all their junior footy together at the Braybrook Football Club. "I think it was seven grand finals in seven years," he said.

While the Hawk went on to become an institution at Whitten Oval, the Wagon had to battle hard for his place in the team and was often switched from one end of the ground to the other. "You'd be up against a Stephen Icke one week and a real attacking player like Paul Roos the next .... so it was always a bit of a challenge," he said.

It didn't help that while still in his teens, he did an ACL, and apparently the legendary Charlie Sutton was the man to blame.

"For some reason Charlie was helping with some of the training and he got me to stand Shane Loveless during some marking drills –the idea was for me to go a little easy and give Shane some confidence ... anyway I landed bad and did the knee.

"That changed things a bit for me. I was never fast but I just couldn't spring off that leg for a long time, so I had work around that."

Starting his VFL career in the back pocket, Rob struggled to make an impression in his first couple of years, playing just a dozen games, but found a regular spot in 1980 when the club hit rock bottom with new coach Royce Hart.

"I remember I played at centre half back on Peter Knights and did alright, but then there was the day I stood Malcolm Blight and he might have ended with 10 goals including one snap that might have won the ABC TV goal of the year," he recalled.

Later, under the coaching of, first Bluey Hampshire, and then Mick Malthouse, Groenewegen became a valuable contributor to the new, improved Bulldogs, used mostly as a defensive forward whose job was to bring the ball to ground for Lellie Bamblett, Brian Royal, Jim Edmond, Tony Buhiagiar and Stephen MacPherson to feast on.

It was exciting times for a club starved of any finals success for a quarter of a century, finishing the home and away season in second place before bowing out in the preliminary final by 10 points to Hawthorn.

But ask Rob whether that season was the most exciting time of his life and he will flatly reply in the negative. "The final series of 2016, that was the best month of my life," he declares.

"I missed that first final in Perth ... but I was at the MCG for the Hawks match and was also in the stands for the GWS win – what an experience that was – and of course I was there for that amazing premiership win (Rob has only missed one AFL grand final in the last 20 years and that was the 2010 replay between Collingwood and St Kilda).

"It was like a dream, the way it panned out, there were times in some of those matches when things went against the boys but they had this momentum and self belief that was amazing," he said.

Groenewegen's own AFL career ended in 1987 -- "when you are made captain of the reserves team it's always a bit of a sign" – and he headed off to Tasmania where he captain-coached Glenorchy to the grand final before coming back to Melbourne to complete his town planning degree and play for Williamstown in the VFA.

But he realised that his future lay back in Tassie, working at local government level and playing for North Launceston.

He finally hung up the boots in his mid 30s, but not before winning a premiership with North Launceston in 1995.

For the past two decades he has been ground manager of Aurora Stadium, or UTAS (University of Tasmania) Oval as it is known now. For his services both on and off the field (he also was a member of the AFL Tasmania Board and a media commentator) he was made a member of the Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame.

"I just love Tassie," he said.

He still manages to get to five or six Bulldog games a year. "It helps that I've got a daughter in Queensland and a son in the army in Sydney (his youngest daughter Celia is still at home); we're all Bulldog fans and often I'll catch up with them when the Bulldogs play interstate," he says.

But despite his family drifting to all parts, Rob has his roots deep in Tasmania. "I've been here almost 30 years, which is half of my lifetime .... which means I'm almost a local now," said the affable Groenewegen, who still gets the occasional reminder of his past.

"Every so often someone will call me the Captain," he laughs, a reference to his infamous stunt on a Bulldogs end-of-season flight to Hawaii when he got hold of the plane's PA and announced himself as "Captain Groenewegen" before asking passengers to prepare for an emergency landing....

Gosh, and we almost made it to the end of the article without making mention of it. Sorry Rob.

*Robert will be flying from Tasmania for the 1985 List Reunion*



## **TEAM OF THE CENTURY: HERB HENDERSON**

Herb joined Footscray in 1950 and was at the club for 8 years playing in 5 finals and in the first premiership won in 1954.

He was a country boy, not tall 187cm by today's standard, born in 1930 in Merbein, a farming town of about 2000 km between the Murray and Mildura, part of a family involved in local football.

His father played for South Merbein for 9 years and topped the goal kicking each year. Herb carried on the involvement in football playing for the Mildura Imperials premiership side in 1949 when 19 years old.

Footscray had had a lean time since joining the VFL after being premiers of the VFA and started a drive to lift the club's performance leading up to 1950.

Herb Henderson was invited to Footscray by the secretary Roy Russell, who arranged a \$200 fee for expenses, support to continue his trade and a boarding arrangement with the McKenry family who lived



next door to a lifelong Bulldog supporter Alan Jackson a well known hairdresser in Barkly St. a short walk to the then Western Oval.

Some very good players were recruited in early 1950 and a strong team was built which went on to win finals. semi-finals and eventually the Grand final.

The back line of which Herb was a key part as the statistics show played a significant part in restricting the scoring by the opposition allowing Herb to have the remarkable success of averaging 2.05 goals kicked against him in his 134 games. In 1953 Geelong the top side had 120 goals more kicked against them than Footscray had.

There have been some very fine players who have played for the Footscray (Western Bulldogs) Club as full back over the years since the club joined the VFL in 1925 but the 2.05 goals scored by opponents against Herb was outstanding.



Amongst some very fine full forwards he played against was the great John Coleman, probably the best full forward of his era, who scored 3, 2, 2, 1 in first few games and never more than 4 when pitted against him.

In his personal story the former champion wingman and President of the club Jim Miller nominated four of the 1954 team in his top Footscray team.

Herb Henderson, Jim Gallagher, Dave Bryden and Wally Donald.

In 1953 Herb married Ruth Hills, a staunch Footscray supporter from West Footscray they have 4 children.

Herb comments in his story that the winning of the grand final will never be forgotten but we did not go on to further glory as did Melbourne who we defeated in that grand final.

After the grand final was won the celebration was less than ideal with a buffet tea at a hotel and on to the Footscray Town hall to be introduced to the huge crowd that had assembled there.

The public and players expected more but were disappointed.

Herb commented "for all that it was the greatest experience in my life playing with a great bunch of blokes and a coach we would have gone through a brick wall for".

After leaving Footscray Herb received a very good offer from a country town Millicent in South Australia, 470 km west of Footscray, to coach for 3 years, it included rent free housing and \$1700/annum for the 3 years far in excess of the amount which had been paid at Footscray.

It enabled purchase of land and car and a business. During his time at Millicent he played 115 games and receiving a life membership. Won two association best and fairest medals. Chosen for full back for the team of the century.

The long version of Herb Henderson's story can be found in "**The Bulldog Heritage**" **Volume 1** by past players of the Footscray / Western Bulldogs Football Club. The book was inspired by John Schultz and is available at the Bulldogs Shop.

## MATCH DAY ROOM

In 2020 members of the Western Bulldogs Past Players will again have exclusive use of the Danvers Room on Level 2 and is accessed via Gate 6. There are 150 reserved seats in the stands in front of the room.

Pay your membership of the Western Bulldogs Past Players **NOW** to make full use of the facilities and the organised functions scheduled for this year.

[Click here to download membership form](#)



## 2020 EVENTS CALENDAR

(The list includes Home Games in Melbourne & functions)

Day and Date	Time	Match	Event
Tuesday Feb 11	6.30 pm		2020 Recruits Dinner at Barkers Café
Sunday March 15	9.30 am		AFLCPP Bowls Day at Altona Bowls Club
<b>Friday March 20</b>	<b>6.00 pm</b>	<b>v Collingwood</b>	<b>Season Launch Dinner including 1985 List Reunion</b>
Friday April 17	8.15 am		AFLCPP Golf Day at Settlers Run Golf Course
Saturday April 18	7.25 pm	v Brisbane	Guests: Fitzroy/Brisbane Ex-Players
Saturday April 25	<b>tba</b>	v Port Adelaide	Pre-Game Function in <b>Adelaide</b> Contact <b>Darren Grant 0431679596</b>
Saturday May 2	7.25 pm	v Hawthorn	Appreciation Round for Past Players & Life Members
Sunday May 17	<b>tba</b>	v Fremantle	Pre-Game Function in <b>Perth</b>
Saturday May 30	7.25 pm	v Carlton	
Saturday June 13	7.25 pm	v GWS	
Friday June 26	7.50 pm	v Essendon	
Saturday July 11	7.25 pm	v Fremantle	
Sunday August 9	3.20 pm	v North Melb	
Round 23	<b>tba</b>	v West Coast	
<b>Sunday Nov 8</b>	<b>11.00 am</b>		<b>AGM at Barkers Café followed by ...</b>
	<b>12.00 pm</b>		<b>Western Bulldogs Past Players End of Year Lunch</b>
Sunday Nov 15	9.30 am		AFLCPP Bowls Day at Altona Bowls Club

## 2020 COMMITTEE

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	Adam Contessa	0416 081 259
	Graeme Joslin	0412 771 235
	Matthew Mansfield	0439 336 939
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