



# WESTERN BULLDOGS PAST PLAYERS

Newsletter March/April 2022

## Tickets for Round 2 v Carlton

- Due to the Marvel Stadium Redevelopment the Past Players have relocated to the Victory Room on level one. Enter via Gate 8. Our reserved seats will be in Rows A – G of level 1 Aisle 16.
- To obtain a free ticket / reserved seat click on the link below and fill out the form  
<https://forms.office.com/r/CtqrmaN9xs>
- Tickets will be emailed by the club on the Tuesday before the game. One free ticket per membership. You must be a paid-up member of the football club and the Past Players.
- Tickets can be displayed on your smart phone to gain entry to the Stadium and the Victory Room.
- Guest tickets will cost \$45 per adult and \$25 per junior (15 or under) and the members will be called to take payment prior to the tickets being sent.
- Any questions, please email [linda.west@westernbulldogs.com.au](mailto:linda.west@westernbulldogs.com.au)
- Memberships: If you haven't already paid your membership, please support us by paying promptly. [Click here to download the Membership Form.](#)

# Kevin Hillier's Pre-match Function

- The Victory Room will be open 90 minutes before the first bounce. Kevin will interview former players and there will be a Recognition Jumper presentation. There will also be time to socialise with mates. Food available: Chef served Hot Roast Beef with salad or on crusty roll with coleslaw and gravy. Vegetable pasties.
- The Victory Room is on the wing on the Harbour Esplanade side of the ground.



## The Two Dogs Podcast

**Episode 17:** Scott Wynd & Glenn Coleman.

When the podcast is available it will be uploaded onto the website and a link will be put on Facebook.

## Website

Our website includes:

- previous editions of the newsletter
- podcasts
- match day information

The address is:

[www.westernbulldogs.com.au/pastplayers](http://www.westernbulldogs.com.au/pastplayers).



# Kennel Departures

By ROSS BRUNDRETT



*As a kid growing up in Footscray, Ross Brundrett wore Dave Darcy's no. 15 on the back of his Bulldog jumper and his main claim to footballing fame was being in the same year at Kingsville Primary School as Ted Whitten jnr. His first job as a journalist was at the Footscray Mail where he covered Bulldog games for eight years, and for a further three years at the Western Times. He later wrote for the Sunday Press before spending the last 24 years of his career as a senior feature writer and columnist for the Herald Sun.*

With the dawn of each fresh footy season comes the feverish anticipation of greater glories ahead and new faces to applaud, but there's also the inherent sadness that comes from the knowledge that such progress can only be made by losing some comrades along the way.

Most notable among the departing is undoubtedly Easton Wood, the high-flying, heroic defender who forever will be known as the Bulldog's premiership captain of 2016. Others who have left the kennel are Lin Jong, Ben Cavarra, Will Hayes, Patrick Lipinski and Lewis Young.



*Easton Wood*

Lipinski (Collingwood) and Young (Carlton) made the difficult choice to switch to other AFL clubs to continue their AFL journey, while Cavarra and Hayes got the news no footballer likes to hear at their exit meetings last year. Just as jarring was the concession from Wood and Jong that their bodies no longer would hold up to the rigours of the modern game.

While his ongoing battle with soft tissue injuries (most notably his hamstrings) forced Easton Wood's hand, he admits that the last two years of Covid and all the time away from home also contributed to his decision to pull the pin.

"My wife (Tiffany) has had to deal with so much at home with a one year old and a two year old so that's also been very difficult to deal with," he said.

"By about the middle of last year I was thinking about it (retiring) and I said to myself that if I did another hammy that would probably be it, plus I felt that I was losing a bit of my athletic ability, dropping off in pace, so in the end the time was right I think."

And right now, he has no regrets, not with the players going through the rigours of pre-season training, although he realises there will be times during the season when he might suffer from FOMO. "But I'm thinking that will probably happen for many years ... I'm expecting I will probably still feel that way when I'm 50!"

As for the next chapter of his life, Easton is giving himself a gap year to contemplate things. "I started at the Bulldogs two weeks after leaving high school so this has been my life for the last 14 years," he said.

“So this year we will be doing a bit of travelling (first stop Bali) and I will be catching up with my family and my kids, in particular allowing my wife to get back to her marketing consultancy business.”



*Lin Jong*

Wood, 32, who has a sports science degree to his name, hasn't ruled out returning to football at some time "but not necessarily AFL footy".

What he can guarantee is that he will get back to the Bulldogs this year, albeit on the other side of the fence. "Oh yeah. No doubt. They are my friends. They are my family," he said.

For Jong, the realisation that his AFL career was over came halfway through the 2021 season. "To be truthful, I think I probably knew a couple of years ago," he laughed. "I guess I have some regrets about how my career panned out, and I might have missed out on some more money by not going to another club when I had the chance, but when I reflect I am super-grateful to have stayed on at the Bulldogs," he said.

Originally he had planned a career as a teacher after footy but after doing some work experience at a school last year that quickly changed. "I'm lucky enough now to have obtained a position at Beyond Blue in support services so I am looking forward to that immensely, particularly after my own battle with mental issues," he said.

Jong fielded many offers from junior footy teams before accepting an offer to join Montmorency in the Northern Football League but also hopes to drop in on his old Bulldog mates. "I'm looking forward to getting back there to accept my life membership (for 10 years' service), that's something I'm tremendously proud of."



*Will Hayes*

While Will Hayes has gone from the footy field to the racetrack, taking over as manager of the famous Hayes family's Flemington stables, his former teammate Ben Cavarra has gone back to the VFL ranks, joining some old mates at the Box Hill club. He admits he was disappointed to walk out of



*Ben Cavarra*

his exit meeting a delisted player carrying the firm belief that he was good enough to play many more than his four AFL games. "I just thought that if I had been able to string a few games together, things might have worked out better, but it was a difficult time during Covid when you couldn't even press for selection by doing well in the VFL team."

A slight tear to his ACL post season didn't help his chances of getting on the list of another AFL club either, but he hasn't given up hope of forcing his way back to the big dance. "I'm only 26, so the way I see it I still have 10 years of footy in front of me."



In the meantime, he will coach the under 16 Eastern Ranges team for the next few months and he has also taken on a teaching role at St Peters College which he described as “awesome”.  
“It’s actually the school where Luke Beveridge’s boys were taught, I must get on the phone and tell him that!”

## Ian Rickman

**11 Games (1982-84); guernsey number 37**

By **NEIL CORDY**



*Neil Cordy played 235 VFL/AFL games with Footscray and the Sydney Swans. After his AFL career Neil coached and played for East Sydney. He worked for Network Ten for 15 years as a reporter/presenter and on their AFL coverage. He was the AFL Editor for the Daily Telegraph from 2011 to 2018 and is currently a member of ABC Grandstand's AFL broadcast team.*

Ian ‘Chops’ Rickman inherited his nickname from his dad Robert.  
Chops senior had picked it up from one of his 11 siblings (7 Boys and 5 girls) but he can’t remember which one gave him the moniker.

Whoever it was, came up with a good one, it’s lasted almost two lifetimes.

“He was Big Chops and I was little Chops and now he’s Big Chops and I’m Bigger Chops,” Rickman joked.

“There’s people who’ve known him for 50-60 years and don’t know his real name. He’s in his eighties and had his health issues but is still chugging along.”

As well as his dad’s nickname Chops also inherited a love of sport, playing footy, tennis, golf, badminton and squash. Growing up on the beautiful Gippsland Lakes he also squeezed in some fishing and surfing.

Such was his footy talent the Bulldogs picked him up at the tender age of 15.

“Back then it wasn’t uncommon to recruit blokes that young,” Rickman said.

“The one that stands out was Tim Watson and he was 15 when he played senior football in 1977.”

Rickman arrived at the Kennel alongside fellow Gippsland/Latrobe Valley talents Rick Kennedy, Brian Cordy, Shane Loveless and Andrew Pollett.

They were all pretty green but Rickman was as raw as sushi.

“I remember turning up to a practice match in a pair of board shorts, thongs and a flannelette shirt,” Rickman said.

“Don McKenzie took me aside and said when you come to the footy you dress better than that.”

Chops took the feedback on board, lifted his dress standards and got on with the business. He spent his first two years in the under 19s winning the best and fairest in his second year. Surprisingly he wasn’t wanted back for a third season and went to play for Preston in the VFA.

“I played half a season at Preston and then the Bulldogs rang me up and asked me if I wanted to come back? I said of course I do, that’s why I came to Melbourne,” Rickman said.

That year the Bulldogs under 19s made the finals and Rickman kicked eight goals in a losing side against Hawthorn at the MCG. The Hawks team featured Dermot Brereton, Chris Langford and Richard Loveridge.

The following year (1981) Rickman was on the senior list and made his debut in a round 16 win over Geelong at the Whitten Oval. Simon Beasley kicked 12 goals.

He played the next two weeks but senior games were hard to come by with a Bulldogs forward line featuring Beasley, Jim Edmond, Jim Sewell and Brian Royal. The biggest highlight came in round three, 1984 at Arden St where Ian kicked six goals in a big win over North Melbourne.

"When you only play 11 games and kick six in one of them it's easy to remember," Rickman said.

"It was Mick's first year and during the week he put up the scores and we hadn't beaten them in five years and had only beaten them twice in the last 10 years."

Unfortunately, a dispute over match payments led to Rickman's departure from the Bulldogs at the end of the season and his arrival at Williamstown.



Former Bulldog and Swans great Barry Round was there to meet him on his first night at training.

"Wheels (Terry Wheeler) was coach and told me to go with Chops on the 5k run," Round recalls.

"He said it's his first night here so make him welcome. Chops probably thought being a ruckman he'd be able to run along with me. I ran 200 metres and I was almost running backwards to stay with him, he was that slow. He wasn't the best trainer but he saved his best work for the weekends when we played."

It was a sluggish start but the move to Willi turned out to be a life changer for Rickman who etched his name into VFA folklore with a stellar career at Point Gellibrand.

"Williamstown has a great history and had a number of successful eras and I was lucky enough to play in one of them," Rickman said.

"I played there for 9 years and in six grand finals."

A losing grand final in 1985 was followed by a premiership the following year, Barry Round's first at the club.

"1986 was great but the best of them all was 1990 and Chops was enormous," Round said.

"We were 36 points behind Springvale at three quarter time and they kicked the first in the last quarter. Chops got 5 but he kicked one in the last quarter from inside the square at Carlton and that's a pretty big ground. He passed one off to Brett McTaggart and kicked another and Billy Swan who kicked the winning goal.

Chops goals were real team lifters, they were such big kicks and it got us all going. It was bloody amazing."

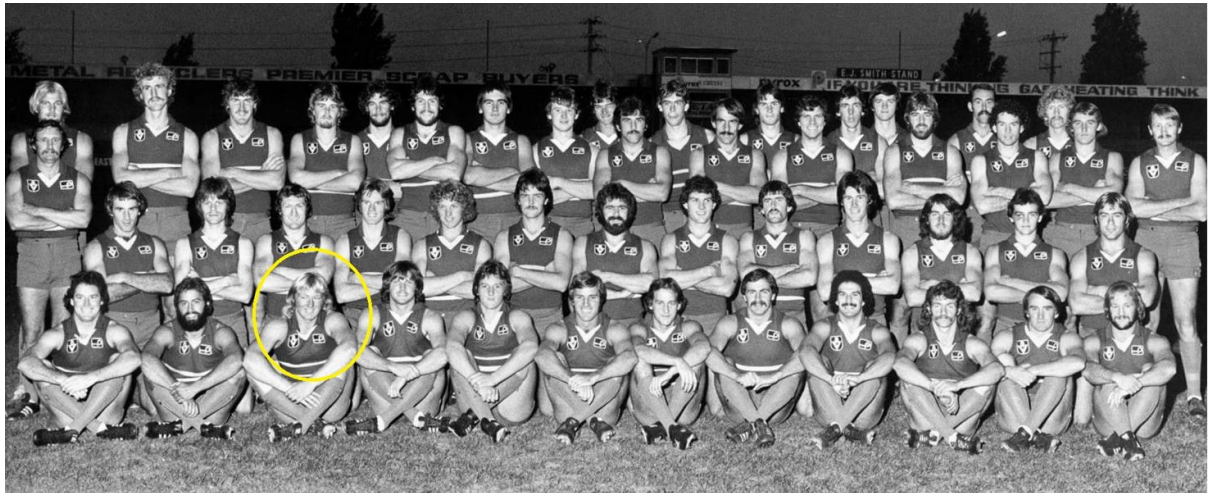
Rickman's amazing career earned him a place in Williamstown's Team of the Century and two VFA Leading Goal Kicker Awards.

Former Bulldog Ian Morrison is also a winner of the same award playing for Sandringham.

“Morro (Ian Morrison) says he’s writing to the VFL to get us retrospective Frosty Miller Medals,” Rickman said.

For a bloke who wasn’t known for his dedication to fitness Rickman had an enormously durable footy career. His six years at the Bulldogs and nine at Williamstown were followed by another two as captain coach of Lara in the Geelong League, where he won a premiership in 1994 and finished runner up in 95’.

He topped all this off by playing 10 years of Super Rules for Footscray District. Now days he’s a dedicated Bowler for Footscray-Yarraville.



1979 Bulldogs Team with Ian Rickman in the front row third from the left

## Ron McGowan - against the odds

92 games (1965–72); guernsey number 22

By MICHAEL STEVENS



*After a short stint playing Under-19s and reserves with Footscray in the 1960s, Michael Stevens completed a cadetship at the Footscray Mail before starting a long career in sports journalism, which ended in 2007 after 27 years at the Herald Sun.*

Ron McGowan earned a reputation as a tough, unrelenting half-back flanker in 92 games with the Bulldogs between 1965 and 1972, but a bout of epilepsy almost curtailed his career before it even started.

After making his debut on the bench against St Kilda in round four in 1965 at the age of 19 years and 159 days, McGowan lined up for the following week against South Melbourne (also on the bench) before being consigned to the reserves for the rest of the season.

And it was after Sunday morning training before the reserves first semi-final that he suffered the epileptic fit, which nearly caused him to be banished from the club.

"My landlord told me I'd had a fit," he recalled over breakfast in Gisborne, where he now lives on a beautiful 10-acre property, which he is in the process of restoring.

"Apparently I had wandered out on to the road and she had to bring me back inside, but that was the last one I ever had after being put on three different types of medications."



*Ron McGowan presenting Bailey Williams with the WBPP 2020 Most Improved Award with Gordon Casey (left) and Graeme Joslin (right)*

However, a high-ranking club official, who shall remain nameless, felt that McGowan might have been too much of a liability to keep playing. Fortunately, the official was persuaded otherwise and the rest is history as they say.

McGowan first earned his football stripes as a 14-year-old playing seniors with Red Hills in Tasmania. In 1961, he changed clubs to Deloraine in a stronger competition and then in 1963 he joined Longford, where St Kilda champion Barry Lawrence also made his debut.

His football prowess stood out to the extent that at 17 he was picked in the Northern side to play against the Tasmanian Football League - the youngest player to achieve this feat for 40 years.

That brought him to the attention of Bulldog legend Ted Whitten, who went to Tasmania and signed the budding champ to a Form 4, which tied him to the Bulldogs for two years.

"I knew nothing about the VFL back then, but I knew who Ted Whitten was and I had no hesitation in signing although I didn't realise it committed me to the club for two years" McGowan said.

That prompted McGowan to stay in Tasmania for the following season when he played for Hobart, playing in a losing preliminary final, before then club president Jim Miller convinced him to move to Victoria for a fee of 500 pounds.

McGowan's career at Whitten Oval included some memorable games, but none more so than in his final season when the Dogs beat Geelong at Kardinia Park and then Collingwood at Victoria Park - for the first time in 15 years.

It was in the last 10 seconds of that game, in round eight, 1972, that McGowan suffered a right knee cartilage injury that would end his career.

"My leg was never the same after that," McGowan said. "Howard Toyne, who was the Australian Olympic team doctor, operated on me before he flew out to the Munich Olympics.



"I tried to come back the following season, but then coach Bob Rose had initiated a weights program at Sunshine, and I lived in Hawthorn, so I thought it was too far to come and decided to do weights at Tooronga, but I guess I missed a few sessions."

McGowan then decided to follow former teammate David Darcy to South Adelaide where he played for two seasons, although his first season was derailed for 10 matches when he broke the scaphoid bone in his right hand in his third game for his new club.



But his time in Adelaide was very fruitful for another reason. It was there he started working for Rokset Industries, where he was to spend the next 20 years of his working life. Eighteen years of those 20 were back in Melbourne, where he set up their new office and warehouse and established their presence in the Victorian market before starting his own business in the paint industry - a business which he still operates today at the ripe old age of 76.

On his return to Melbourne, McGowan's VFL 'career' continued as a member of the Umpires Appointment Board at the behest of then Bulldogs director and soon-to-be president Tony Capes.

After a two-year stint there, he joined the Bulldogs match committee under coaches Don McKenzie and Royce Hart, staying for a four-year term.

McGowan's later years were traumatised when his wife Glenda was diagnosed with bowel cancer and the years of treatment she endured before she succumbed to the disease 14 years ago - ending a 38-year marriage.

Nowadays he takes great delight in daughter Jacquie and grandchildren Heidi and Levi visiting his sprawling Gisborne property, which he has completely transformed.

## Player Welfare

We strongly recommend past players join the AFLPA Alumni.

Benefits include:

- up to \$500 refund on excess payments when in hospital, if you are in a private health fund
- up to \$8000 refund for extra operation charges should you require surgery on body joints, including damaged teeth
- an opportunity to seek funds from the Geoff Pryor Fund or an Injury and Hardship fund in the event of suffering financial hardship.



The one-off joining fee is \$50. To join, contact Chris Smith at AFLPA on 0400 019 391 or [csmith@afplayers.com.au](mailto:csmith@afplayers.com.au).

**Tim Harrington** (WB #805, 1989–90), pictured with Mitch Hannan at the 2021 Recruits Dinner, is the AFL Players' Association Football Operations Manager and Head of Alumni.

## Bulldog Royalty on the Gold Coast



Neil Cordy, Barry Round, Wayne Foreman and Laurie Sandilands catching up at the Aussie Rules lunch which is held on the first Monday of the month at Burleigh Bombers Sports Club. For details contact WBPP Gold Coast coordinator Neil Cordy 0419 116 315.

## 2022 Events Calendar

<b>Friday 29 April</b>		AFLCPP Golf Day at Settlers Run Golf Course (Contact Jack Slattery: 0425 746 148)
<b>Friday 6 May v Port Adelaide</b>		5pm at Strathmore Hotel North Terrace Adelaide (Contact Darren Grant WBPP SA Coordinator 0413 679 596)
<b>Weekend of 27 May v West Coast</b>	TBC	Pre-match Function in Perth
<b>Weekend of 1 July v Brisbane</b>	TBC	Pre-match Function near the Gabba (Contact Geoff Jennings: 0408 770 659 or Neil Cordy 0419 116 315)
<b>Sunday 6 November</b>	<b>11:00am</b>	<b>AGM venue TBC</b>
	<b>12:00noon</b>	<b>End of Year Lunch same venue as the AGM</b>
<b>Sunday 20 November</b>	<b>9:30am</b>	AFLCPP Bowls Day at Altona Bowls Club (Contact Len Cumming: 0418 374 079)

# Congratulations!

## 80th birthday

### Owen Madigan

WB #492

7 games

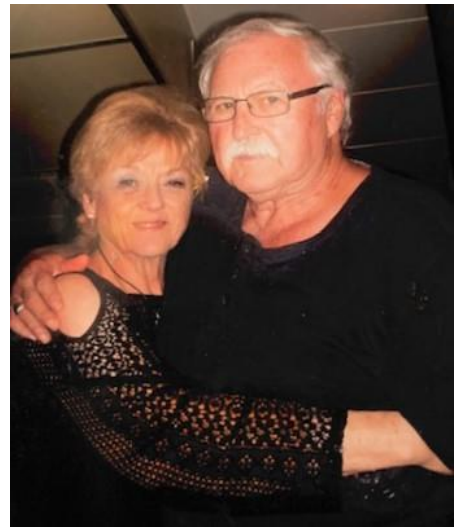
Also played 40 games for Richmond from 1963-66

Western Bulldogs Football Club Life Member

Western Bulldogs Past Players & Officials Life Member

Western Bulldogs Past Players & Officials Secretary since 2002

Pictured with wife Kerri



## 70th birthday

### Ralph Thomas

WB #608

6 games (1972)

## 50th birthday



### Brad Wira

WB #860

61 games (1996-98)

Also played 35 games with Fremantle (1995, 1999-2001)

### Ilija Grgic

WB #831

62 games (1993-96)

Also played 23 games with West Coast and 2 games with Essendon

Pictured with his ruck coach Gary Dempsey





**Anthony Darcy**  
WB #834  
14 games (1993-94)

## 40th birthday

**Daniel Giansiracusa**  
WB #891  
265 games (2001-2014), 331 goals  
Assistant coach 2015-20



## 2022 Committee

President	Ross Abbey	0412 073 092
Vice President	Phil O'Keeffe	0402 007 270
Secretary	Owen Madigan	0408 105 151
Treasurer	Andrew Howlett	0418 510 635
Committee	Les Bartlett	0416 485 652
	Adam Contessa	0416 081 259
	Graeme Joslin	0412 771 235
	Gary McGorlick	0409 804 057
	Ilija Grgic	0413 677 736
AFLCPP Delegate	Jack Slattery	0425 746 148



## Western Bulldogs Past Players on Facebook

We will be using Facebook more to communicate information to former players and officials. It is a closed group. If you are not a member, please go to Western Bulldogs Past Players on Facebook and request to 'Join Group'.

## Western Bulldogs Community Foundation

More than just a football club, the Western Bulldogs have a long and proud history as the community club of the AFL; delivering community programs with real outcomes.

The Community Foundation works closely with the club and utilises the Bulldogs brand as a platform to engage with a wide range of participants, helping them reach their full potential and ensuring they are accepted regardless of their gender, race or faith. The foundation celebrates diversity as an integral part of a united and cohesive community and aims to engage with multicultural, Indigenous and all-abilities communities via innovative programs.

While, like our players, our community can be courageous, strong and resilient, some members of the community do find the need for support to guide them towards finding the strength they need to face life's challenges. The club is proud that the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation is able to offer this support.

Find out more about the Community Foundation at [www.westernbulldogs.com.au/Foundation](http://www.westernbulldogs.com.au/Foundation) or via social media @WBFCFoundation. If you are interested in donating to the Community Foundation please email [fundraising@westernbulldogs.com.au](mailto:fundraising@westernbulldogs.com.au).