



WESTERN BULLDOGS PAST PLAYERS

Newsletter August 2022

Redeem reserved seats for the Fremantle game on Saturday 6th August NOW

- To obtain a free ticket and reserved seat click on the link below and fill out the form.
<https://forms.office.com/r/CtqrmaN9xs>
- **Use this link for ALL** home games in Melbourne. You will be able to book the remaining home games six days prior to the games.
- Tickets will be emailed by the club by the close of business two days before the game. One free ticket per paid-up member of the Past Players and WBFC. When filling out the form, remember to include your WBFC membership number which is on your plastic membership card.
- The reserved seats are near the Victory Room, which is the Past Players Room, on level one on the harbour side wing. Enter via Gate 7.
- 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

Pre-match Functions



R15 v Hawthorn

Robert Groenewegen was presented with his Recognition Jumper by his great mate Doug Hawkins. Zeno Tzatzaris was interviewed by Kevin Hillier and he was also presented with his Recognition Jumper.



Geoff Jennings, Lee Perussich & Wayne Foreman

R16 v Brisbane

Geoff Jennings hosted the Pre-match near the Gabba. It was a terrific success. Neil Cordy interviewed Ameet Bains. Laurie Sandilands interviewed Dale Morris. Geoff Jennings presented Neil Cordy with his Recognition Jumper. Others in attendance included Barry Round, Kevin Delmenico, Bob Barr, Graeme Chalmers, Terry O'Brien, Walter Vecchiet, Lee Perussich, Ross Abbey, Wayne Foreman, Paul O'Connor, Clint McRae, Gary Walpole, Andrew Howlett, Russell Shields, Mark West, Scott West and Jason Akermanis.



Neil Cordy & Ameet Bains

R18 v St Kilda

The Pre-match saw a reunion of many key players and officials from the 1980s. Simon Beasley presented Mark Kellett with his Recognition Jumper and Kevin Hillier interviewed Michael Ford and Shane O'Sullivan. In the photo (left to right) are Rick Kennedy, Garry O'Sullivan, Michael Ford, Brian Royal, Kevin Hillier, Stephen Smith, Shane O'Sullivan, Simon Beasley, Mark Kellett, Wayne Walsh, Steve Wallis and Steve MacPherson.



Remaining Home Games

The Victory Room will be open 90 minutes before the first bounce. Former players will be interviewed and there will be a Recognition Jumper presentation. There will also be time to socialise with mates.



The Two Dogs Podcast

Episode 20: Ilija Grgic and Paul Dimattina

<https://omny.fm/shows/the-two-dogs-podcast/twodogs-ep305>

Website

Our website includes:

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

The address is: www.westernbulldogs.com.au/pastplayers



Darren Baxter

129 Games (1984-92); 28 Goals; guernsey number 35. Also 27 Games for Hawthorn 1993-94

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.

Fair to say that Darren Baxter was always destined to make a name for himself in footy, and not just because he was the son of a gun Bulldogs in Ray Baxter, who played 80 games at the club as a ruckman and key position player from 1958 to 1964.

"That was just part of it," says Darren. "On mum's side, my grandfather Col Williamson played for and later coached St Kilda and she also had an uncle, Graeme Johnston, who was a dual premierships player for Essendon," he said.

That's a few clubs to have family ties to and just to complicate things further, Baxter was raised in Glen Waverley which back then was zoned to the Sydney Swans.

But in the end there was only one choice for the tussle-haired Baxter who arrived at the club just as things were starting to happen at Western Oval, as it was known then.

"It was an exciting time to be there, with this wave of talented players from Western Australia pouring in" he said

"I started in the under 19s but soon made my way to the reserves under Don McKenzie for the second half of the season, playing on the wing and half back and did a good pre-season and halfway through the next season found myself in the seniors in Mick Malthouse's first year of coaching."

He remembers his first game well. "We were playing Geelong at our home ground and I started on Mick Turner and later found myself playing on Gary Ablett snr," he said.

He must have done alright because he played the last 11 games of the season only to struggle over the next two years as young players often do, playing just a handful of games and sitting out the Bulldogs' gallant preliminary final loss in '85 as the emergency.

But in 1987 he found his feet as a midfielder/tagger using his running ability to keep a tight reign on Brownlow medallists like Gerard Healy and John Platten.

Back then it was a more brutal time in footy though and taggers were often subjected to some rough justice off the ball. "Cameras didn't catch much back then and there were three or four times where I got laid out but there were no protocols back then regarding concussion. I remember a couple of times at training days after still suffering from headaches but I've not suffered any long-term affects thank goodness."

Over the next five years Baxter established himself as one of the club's most dependable on-ballers as a defensive midfielder who also won plenty of the ball himself, culminating in winning selection in the state squad in 1992 and playing in all 25 games that season.

Imagine his surprise then, after arriving at Melbourne airport after an end-of-season trip, to be told that the club was keen to trade him to Hawthorn.



“After the season I had I couldn’t understand it. I had a chat with (coach) Terry Wheeler and he told me he was keen to play the young fellas like Leon Cameron and so that was that, but yes, I was very disappointed,” he said.



Ilija Grgic and Darren Baxter bat the 2019 End of Season Function

In his first year at the Hawks he played 19 games and finished sixth in the club’s best and fairest but injuries slowed his progress the following season and at 29 Darren decided to call an end to his AFL career.

“I always fancied a crack at the Australian triathlon so I competed in one and completed the course but that was enough for me,” he laughed.

Later he joined some of his former Hawk teammates at VFA club Sandringham where they won the 1997 premiership and he did a stint as fitness adviser when Libba coached Box Hill

but that’s where his footy journey ended and he devoted himself to his next career.

After several years at PwC and then Holden, Baxter is now tax manager at the Just Jeans group of companies and gets his sporting kicks watching the exploits of his children, although his eldest son Harry had to give up his amateur footy career after suffering a heavy knock in a tackle which caused a brain bleed.

“Tom still plays and my daughter Ella is contemplating her future after a couple of years playing footy with Williamstown,” he said.

Matt Sucking

76 Games (2016-2020); 34 Goals; guernsey number 1.

Also 102 Games for Hawthorn 2007-15

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.

Matt Suckling’s arrival to the AFL started in the most bizarre circumstances at the 2009 Rookie Draft. It also involved a fair bit of heartache with AFL dreams on the line.

Hawthorn had told him they would re-draft him but when it came to their pick they read out the number for Matthew Suckling from the Sandringham Dragons not the Matt Suckling from Wagga Wagga.

"I wasn't following live but then I started to get some bad luck messages and started to wonder what was going on," Suckling said.

"There was another Matt Suckling and it caused a bit of confusion but it was sorted out in a few hours thank god. It was terrible for Matt and his family who were obviously celebrating. It must have been so disappointing for them. We played on each other one day at Port Melbourne when I was playing for Box Hill.

We spoke briefly and had a bit of a laugh about it but it wasn't really funny for him."

If there was some anxiety at the Rookie Draft there was even more when he was picked for his first game, round one 2009, the re-match of the 2008 grand final at the MCG.

"It was a ridiculously crazy game to debut in," Suckling said.

"It was Friday night at the G in front of 80,000. The last time the teams had met was in the grand final and we were back at the same venue. It was the start of the Kennett curse when we lost 12 in a row."

It was the only senior game Suckling played that year. He picked up an injury in the match and then struggled to force his way back into the team.

At the end of the 2010 season the raking left footer had another sliding door moment when Sam Mitchell took him aside at the start of pre-season.

"Sam grabbed me and said you're running with me every session," Suckling said.

"Until then I'd played off natural talent so I didn't know how to train.

He dragged me along and I played every game that year and we got as far as the Preliminary final when we were beaten by Collingwood."

He played every game in 2012 as well when the Hawks went into the grand final as favourites against Sydney but lost in a thriller.

An ACL injury the following year cost him the entire season and a premiership but he was back for the next two and was a key element in one of the best teams of the modern era.

"It was ridiculous looking back at the time and I didn't fully appreciate it but I do now," Suckling said. Moving to the Bulldogs in 2016 from a team which had just completed a three-peat may seem a strange move but Suckling said it made sense at the time.

"Luke Beveridge and I had a great relationship when he was at Hawthorn," Suckling said.

"I was in my late 20s so I didn't want to leave any move too late."

The move looked like a stroke of genius when the Bulldogs beat the Hawks in the semi-final at the MCG. It was the first time Hawthorn had been beaten in 10 finals at the venue but unfortunately Matt was suffering with an ongoing Achilles problem and the semi-final was his last game for the year. "The grand final was a hard game to watch," Suckling said.

"But it was a special time for the club and the Western Suburbs."



Suckling went on to play another four seasons at the Whitten Oval before retiring in 2020.

"I loved my time at the Bulldogs," Suckling said.

"It was a risk but if I didn't do it I wouldn't have reaped the rewards. I look back very fondly at my time there.

"I made a lot of really good friends. It's one of the good things about changing clubs you get to meet new people and have lasting friendships. It was also good for me personally."

Suckling has recently joined the influx of former Bulldogs moving to South East Queensland.

He is living in Brisbane with his partner Kirby and working for Bee Dee Bags in the packaging industry.

He also continues to unleash his lethal left foot kicks playing football for Coorparoo.

Bob Barr – Seven of the Best

7 Games (1964-65) guernsey number 35

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.

Bob Barr started and finished his seven-game career with the Bulldogs at the age of 19.

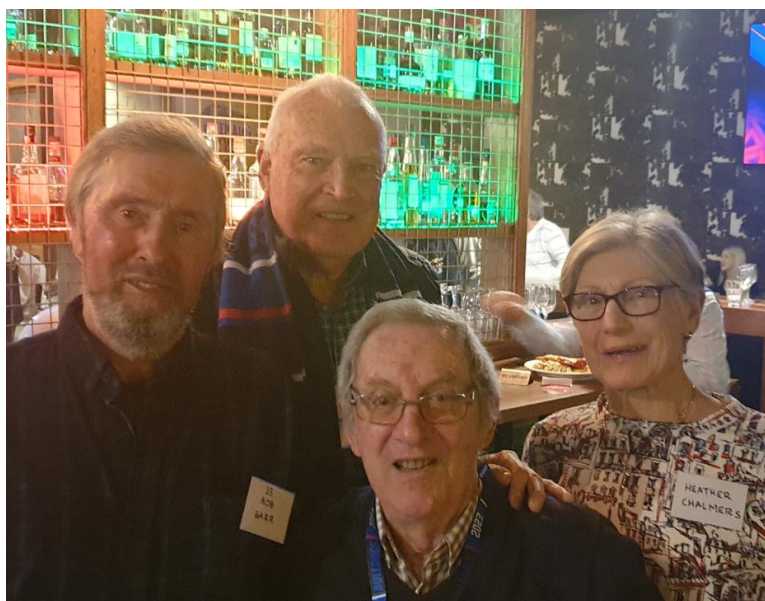
He made his VFL debut at the age of 19 years 23 days in round 15, 1964, against Carlton, and played his last game at the age of 19 years, 303 days, in round four, 1965, against St Kilda.

Barr's seven game tally included the 1964 night premiership, when he came on as a reserve in the last quarter as the Bulldogs prevailed 11.12 (78) to St Kilda's 11.7 (73) to become only the second team since South Melbourne (1956-57) to win consecutive night premierships.

Listed as the best players in that Grand Final were Merv Hobbs, Ted Whitten, Bob Gray, Don McKenzie, John Schults and Ian Bryant, so Barr was in illustrious company.

Barr's recollection of that match includes Hobbs being flattened by Saints' hard man Alan Morrow, and Hobbs spending the night in hospital.

And his career also included one match, his second, where he scored two votes behind Ted Whitten's three in the Footscray Mail -- and he has the photo to prove it, proudly displayed at his Gold Coast home.



Bob Barr at the R16 Pre-match near the Gabba with Kevin Delmenico, Graeme Chalmers & Heather Chalmers

Barr, now 76, speaks fondly of his career at the Whitten Oval, which started after he captained Parkside under 16s in the FDL Grand Final - a game which they lost.

He says he was set to move up into the Under 18s when he received a letter asking him to join the Bulldogs, where he played in the Under 19s under coach Norm Gardiner.

In 1963, Barr was picked in the Under 19s state squad, along with teammate Gary Peters, to play in the curtain-raiser to the Victoria-Adelaide game at the MCG.

From then, it was onwards and upwards into the reserves and then the seniors, although at 179cm and 70kg, and a self-

professed poor right-foot kick, it's fair to say Barr's career as a wingman didn't really take off.

Barr's four games in 1964 included a win against eventual premier Melbourne and he remembers the great Ron Barassi saying the Demons weren't going to try so as to save themselves for the finals - a comment which earned the wrath of then coach Norm Smith.

Ironically, his last game, against St Kilda probably was one of his best, statistically anyway, because he had 17 kicks, three marks and four handballs, but a hip injury conspired to end his career.

"I was jogging around the boundary line with a limp and EJ (Whitten) came up to me and asked what was wrong," Barr said. "When I told him I had a bruised hip, he said 'Oh shit' and jogged off.

"I thought I would just have a week off and be back in the seniors the following week, but I didn't get back and then I lost all confidence.

"My mind wasn't in the right condition to keep going."

Barr said he played with the reserves in the finals, but knew absolutely his time at the club was up when he was caught smoking a pipe before the Grand Final.

His footy career continued at Daylesford for a year, before a three-year stint at Yarraville in the VFA and then a similar period at Avenel.

One of the other pleasing aspects of Barr's VFL career was that he met his wife of 52 years, Denise, on an end-of-season trip to the Gold Coast.

They lived in Melbourne and had three daughters - Deanne, Janelle and Natalie - until 1994 when he was transferred back to the Gold Coast in his job selling industrial fans, in which he was involved for the best part of 43 years.

Nowadays, apart from watching the Bulldogs when they journey to the Gold Coast, Barr plays golf most days, and also spends a lot of time teaching his 10-year-old grandson Jacob how to kick properly - something he says he was never taught.

Ian Morrison – From Sale to Southern France

110 Games (1973-80) 101 Goals; guernsey number 8. Also 3 games with Essendon in 1981

This article is courtesy of Doug Pell, Gippsland Lifestyle Winter 2022. Words by Chris West.

Former VFL footballer Ian Morrison has had an interesting journey in life so far, but it is in Sale where his story begins sixty-eight years ago.

Ian was born at Gippsland Base Hospital in January 1954. Like most regional babies in that era, he was delivered by local Sale GP, Dr Joe Crosbie, who was a good friend of the Morrison family. Both of Ian's parents – his father Ron and mother Dorothy - were Life Members of the Sale and District Agricultural Society. Ron Morrison hailed from Scotland but came to Sale with his parents James and Mary shortly after emigrating to Australia when he was three years of age, whilst Dorothy was a nurse originally from Melbourne.

Home was the large rural property Woodburn, located on the Princes Highway about 5 kilometres out of Sale heading towards Stratford, on which stood three separate houses occupied by three branches of the Morrison family tree.

Ian looks back on his childhood memories in Sale with great fondness.

"I was the second eldest of four children, preceded by older sister Anne and followed by younger brother James and sister Pam," he says.

"We lived in the old farmhouse on Woodburn. The next house belonged to our pop James, and the third one was home to my Uncle John and Auntie Margaret and their five children – Allan, Peter, John, Gill and Chris. We played with our cousins and would often stay at each other's homes, so it was like having one big family of nine kids on the property."

At nearly 800 acres, the farm's vast size provided all the freedom and space any child could possibly dream of.

"The property was predominantly a sheep farm, but we also kept some beef cattle and grew occasional crops," Ian remembers.

"Woodburn was first occupied by Morrisons as far back as the mid- 1930s. The property was leased initially before coming into our family's ownership in the early 1950s until it was eventually sold a few years after my dad passed away in 1994."



Sport was the dominant force in Ian's early life and that of his siblings and cousins.

"We lived and breathed sport. Academically, we weren't too bad, but sport was number one by a long way," he states.

"It was cricket in summer and football in winter, along with a bit of tennis and golf. My older sister Anne loved horses and did pony club, and younger sister Pam played a bit of netball. We made our own cricket pitches and footy fields in the paddocks, and there was a grass tennis court on the property."

Sporting talent runs deep in the Morrison blood.

"My uncle John was a very good cricketer and dad was pretty handy at it as well," Ian says.

Amongst my siblings, James ended up playing over fifty games for Sale before moving to Canberra where he continued playing there. Anne maintained her involvement with horses and has been an internationally accredited equestrian judge since 2001, which has taken her to many places around the world."

The Morrison clan gained their education locally in Sale, firstly at St. Mary's Primary before progressing to St. Patrick's College.

In terms of on-field performance, Ian rates the 1979 season as having been his best with the Bulldogs, finishing fifth in the club's Best & Fairest award.

Ian felt disillusioned in his final year at Footscray in 1980 and stood out of football for several rounds while seeking to join Richmond.

"I was committed to the Tigers, and they were very good to me, but Footscray wouldn't agree to a clearance, so a deal was unable to be done," he reflects.

Ian instead found his way across to Essendon, the club he had supported as a child. He played three games for the Bombers in 1981 but did not add to that tally in his final year at the top level in the 1982 season.

"It was clear I wasn't really in coach Kevin Sheedy's plans at Essendon," he comments.

"One thing I can say about my time at Essendon is that I might have only played three senior games, but they were all wins."

After leaving Essendon, Ian joined Sandringham in the former VFA competition where he achieved both of his previously unfulfilled footballing ambitions which were to be part of a winning senior premiership and kick 100 goals in a season at senior level.

Sandringham defeated Williamstown by six points in the 1985 VFA Grand Final and Ian finished the season with 108 goals.



Round 2 2022 Ted Whitten with the Morrisons, Angus, Ian, Maddie and Shelley

"Above anything I achieved at Footscray or Essendon, that premiership with Sandringham is my absolute highlight in football. It's daylight to second," he states.

Ian's kicking boots were unusually inaccurate in the winning grand final

"I booted one goal six in the second half but have always joked that those six points amounted to the six points we won by," he laughs.

Throughout his time playing football in Melbourne, Ian was also busy establishing his career as a Physical Education teacher at primary school level.

"I never really went to Melbourne for football. I came to be a teacher," he notes.

Ian's first posting was to

Hyde Street Primary in Footscray, where he was based for three years. He then spent periods at Waverley Park Primary and Auburn South Primary, and lastly at Geelong Road Primary in Footscray. "My teaching career went the full circle, beginning in Footscray in 1977 and ending in Footscray in 1988," he observes.

In the same year Ian finished teaching, he married wife Shelley and the newlyweds enjoyed travelling the world together for five months. The couple first met when studying at Toorak Teacher's College in 1985 and had dated for about two years before tying the knot.

Belying the saying that you can't teach an old dog new tricks, following their return from overseas Ian then stepped successfully into a new career focused mainly in sales at Pioneer Concrete, a

business which later was rebranded as Hanson Australia following a takeover. He spent 25 years at the company, including a stint in Adelaide, before retiring after reaching the age of 60 in 2014. "I felt I still needed to do something with myself, so I started my own little part-time business in Melbourne called Morrisonic Maintenance doing gardening and cleaning," he reveals. "I work about fifteen to twenty hours a week which is enough for me, and I really enjoy it."

2022 Events Calendar

Saturday 6 August	3:30pm	Guard of Honour prior to the R21 Fremantle game for 30 sons and daughters of players aged 8 15 years Register with Adam Contessa 0416081259
Thursday 25 August	7:30am	Bulldogs Breakfast at Barkers Café Whitten Oval Redevelopment Presentation by Ameet Bains Register with Ross Abbey 0412073092
Sunday 6 November	11:00am	AGM venue Altona Bowls Club
	12:00noon	End of Year Lunch Altona Bowls Club
Sunday 20 November	9:30am	AFLCPP Bowls Day at venue TBC (Contact Len Cumming: 0418 374 079)

Congratulations!



Terry Wallace (left) and Rodney Eade on being inducted into the Hawthorn Hall of Fame in July 2022

80th birthday

John Charles

WB #522

17 games, 1964-66

60th birthday

Michael Rolfe

WB #764

2 games, 1986

50th birthday

Leon Cameron (right)

WB #811

172 games, 1990-99

Charles Sutton Medallist 1993

Played 84 games for Richmond 2000-03

Coached GWS 2014-22



40th birthday

Matthew Boyd

WB #904

292 games, 86 goals,
2003-17

AFL Premiership 2016

Captain 2011-13

Charles Sutton Medal
2009 2011 2012

All-Australian: 2009
2011 2016



Polo Shirts

Western Bulldogs Polo shirts are available for \$65 (including GST, postage and handling). Shirts for former senior players will include their player number on the shirt at no extra charge
Photo: Shannon Corcoran

To order, [Click here to download the Polo Shirt Order Form](#)



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@aflplayers.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.

2022 Committee

President	Ross Abbey	0412 073 092
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	Graeme Joslin	0412 771 235
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	Ilija Grgic	0413 677 736
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Midway Concrete and Garden and Building Supplies services the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne with centres at Melton, South Marang, Laverton North and Craigieburn. It is a family-owned business run by Dave Boxshall. It was established in 1984.



Flash Fabrications specialise in customised architectural metal fabrication in the construction industry. It is a family-owned business run by Dave Marsh. It was established in 2004 and is in Hoppers Crossing. (Dave is the son of Ivan Marsh who represented the Bulldogs with distinction in 77 games between 1963-67)



Australian Luggage Company have a wide range of products including hard and soft sided trolley cases, suitcases, wheels bags, cooler bags, wallets, backpacks, business bags, accessories and much more. It is a family-owned business run by Noel Pearce and his sons. It was established in 1996 and has a factory outlet in East Keilor.