

Western Bulldogs Past Players



January 2024 Newsletter

PAST PLAYERS 2024 RECRUITS DINNER

When: Tuesday 13th February
Where: Yarraville Club 135 Stephen St Yarraville
Time: 6pm for 6:30pm start till 9:30pm
MC: Kevin Hillier

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Ameet Bains
Lachie Bramble, Nick Coffield,
Jordan Croft, Joel Freijah, James
Harmes, Aiden O'Driscoll, Ryley
Sanders and Lachlan Smith

Brian Cordy who will be presented
with his Recognition Jumper by Steve
Wallis



HOW TO PAY

By EFT to: Footscray Western Bulldogs Past Players
BSB 633 000
Account 199 932 344

Please use your surname as payment identification.

By credit card: Contact Treasurer Andrew Howlett on
0418 510 635

Cost: \$65 per person – includes two course dinner with
drinks at bar prices.

RSVP: By Monday 5th February to Owen Madigan 0408 105 151 or
belpas1@bigpond.com

Season 2024

- We are very pleased to announce that we will use of the **Danvers Room on level 2** for home games at Marvel Stadium and 150 reserved seats in front of the room. (Enter via Gate 6)
- Make sure you pay your Past Players Membership (see below) so that your ticket barcode is upgraded to allow entry to level 2 and the use of the reserved seats.
- We will share the room with players who are not playing, families of players and Western Bulldog staff.
- Kevin Hillier will host the pre-match functions which will feature interviews with former players and presentations of Recognition Jumpers.

2024 Membership

- Former Player or Official \$50
- Partner \$50

Please forward any changes to your address, mobile or email to Owen Madigan **0408 105 151** or belplas1@bigpond.com

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2023 End of Year Lunch

The highlight of the End of Year Lunch at Altona Bowls in November was the presentation of John Schultz with his recognition jumper.



Other highlights were:

- Daniel Cross making a special presentation to Frank Dimasi for his 21 years of service as a trainer.
- Kevin Hillier's interviews of Doug Hawkins, Ian Morrison and Steve Kretiuk

Photos:

A: Ray Baxter, John Schultz & Ray Walker

B: Daniel Cross, Gary McGorlick & Steve Kretiuk



Website

Our website includes:

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

The address is:

www.westernbulldogs.com.au/pastplayers.



Sam's seen both sides of the draft

Ross Brundrett

Identifying and recruiting the best young footballers in the land has become an exhaustive and thorough process, but it was a different story a few decades ago, as Bulldogs recruiting boss Sam Power knows too well from his own footy journey.

After a junior career at Trinity Grammar and Oakleigh Chargers, Power attracted plenty of attention before the 2001 AFL National draft. "I had interviews with several clubs including Geelong and St Kilda and I remember West Coast were pretty keen at one stage," recalled Sam. So he was mildly surprised when he was chosen at no.10 by the Bulldogs, even though they hadn't talked to him at all in the lead-up.

"Obviously that wouldn't happen these days; maybe back then it was a bit more secretive, but nowadays we have the resources to gather a lot more information about the players and we'd definitely have at least a couple of interviews with any prospective draftees," he said.

"And even though I didn't talk to the Bulldogs before my draft, Scott Clayton was at the Dogs then and he'd recruited my brother (3-time Lions premiership player Luke) when he was up at Brisbane so he had that connection with my parents ... I think my parents were just happy that another son wasn't going to move interstate."

It came with a rush for the draftee who finished his year 12 exams on the Friday, was drafted on the Sunday and training with the Bulldogs on the Monday. At 193cm (6ft 3") and weighing a lean 70kg (11 stone) he was ill-equipped physically for the demands of senior footy.

After taking half a season to find his feet in the VFL, Sam ended the season on a high with six straight games in the seniors, with the high point being a rousing 41point win in the final round against Collingwood who went on to play in that year's Grand Final.



"I think the next two years I played 19 and 16 games, so I benefitted from the new coach Peter Rhode who wanted to blood the younger players. And it also helped that senior players like Luke Darcy and Chris Grant were very encouraging and supported the new players a lot."

By his own admission, Sam says he struggled in his fourth season under new coach Rodney Eade although he worked hard on his defensive skills which saw him given some challenging tasks. "I often was given the job on Andrew Embling when we played the Eagles and that was always a challenge and also remember playing on James Hird."



Sam Power at the 2020 Recruits Dinner with Adam Contessa Brian Royal Gary McGorlick and Matt Croft.

Although he played in the Bulldogs' victorious elimination final against Collingwood in 2006, he found himself in and out of the team the following season which culminated with him making the difficult decision to move clubs.

"It was a tough call because I wanted to be a one club player and play 100 games at the club but I felt there would probably be more opportunities elsewhere and North Melbourne had a real interest at the time." At North he quickly established himself as part of the midfield and enjoyed his footy more knowing he had cemented a spot in the side and no longer stressed about holding onto his spot.

But after another successful season at North, a change of coaches saw Power suddenly out of favour after 39 games in two seasons and at the ripe old age of 26, his AFL career was over.

Instead of concentrating on resurrecting his footy career, Power chose to go full-time at university where he finished his commerce law course while playing VFL footy with Coburg.

"Looking back, I wish my AFL career went longer in some ways but it was a pretty easy transition as well." By the time he was 28, he had played his last game of football, and was working for a commercial law firm with an eye to getting back into footy in an administrative role sometime in the future.

That opportunity came quicker than expected when, two years later, Carlton's head of football, Andrew McKay offered him the role of football operations/integrity officer, which over the following five years, drifted more into list management.

He found himself back at Whitten Oval at the start of 2018 in charge of list management, replacing Jason McCartney, and six years later still finds immense satisfaction in dealing with all the challenges of balancing the salary cap and acquiring new players, even though public scrutiny can be harsh.

The hardest task, he says, is delisting players. "Clearly that is never easy, but it's a part of the job ..." More satisfying is identifying talent and introducing new faces into the AFL system which absorbs much of his time. "On average I probably watch at least 4-6 junior games a week plus lots of vision of potential targets... and we have five other employees watching games every week and another seven watching games all across the country."

All of which means a list manager must have an appetite for a very large workload and lots of travel and a very understanding wife. "It is full-on," says Sam. "But I love my job and I work with good people, and I love the work I do so it makes it a bit easier."

The day Footscray Bulldogs 'put the kybosh on end of season trips' on Qantas flight QF17

Neil Cordy

Neil Cordy's article has been reproduced with permission from the Herald Sun and Code Sport.

As AFL players posted their carefully considered pics and videos from Italy and Ibiza on Instagram, memories stirred of a time when end-of-season trips were something entirely different – and, specifically, the flight that changed it all forever.

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, VFL/AFL players would travel in large groups of 20 or 30 to various domestic and overseas locations to let their hair down after the stresses of a long and arduous season.

As cultural attaches go, we did a pretty good impression of Sir Les Patterson.

Players were vaguely aware that they were representing their footy club abroad and were generally well-behaved. However, there were occasional tangles with local police, hotel and airline staff and fellow tourists.

With mobile phones and social media still a long way off, most of these disagreements went unreported by mainstream media.

That all changed in 1985.

A team from Footscray, now Western Bulldogs, were kicked off their Qantas flight to Los Angeles in Hawaii, sparking a media furore back home and debate nationwide.

I was on that trip. This is what unfolded.



Robert Groenewegen will be forever known for the Bulldogs infamous 1985 end-of-season trip.



The 1985 Bulldogs celebrate a win, led by coach Mick Malthouse.

The year 1985 was a breakout one for the Bulldogs who, under Mick Malthouse, had played in their first preliminary final since 1961, losing to Hawthorn by 10 points in a keenly contested game. Brad Hardie made a stunning impact, winning the Brownlow Medal in his first season, and fellow West Australian Simon Beasley won the Coleman Medal with 105 goals. The Bulldogs were wooden spooners three years earlier. General manager Shane O'Sullivan had recruited Malthouse and a host of talented players to contend for the premiership.

We fell short of a flag but there was still plenty to celebrate and, it's fair to say, we did. We were off to Los Angeles, Las Vegas and San Francisco. While the trip fund was more than ample, a touring party of 38 meant we were still forced to do the milk run to LA via Fiji and Hawaii. Most of us hadn't been to any of these places and were very excited when we took off from Melbourne on October 24. Little did we know that our itinerary was due for a major reshuffle.

When we touched down in Hawaii, the captain of QF17 wouldn't let us back on. He'd had enough of footy teams behaving badly and kicked us off the flight in Honolulu. In so doing, he had drawn a line in the sand for all future end-of-season trips.

'CAPTAIN GROENEWEGEN'

Robert Groenewegen, who played 79 games between 1978 and 1986, has become the central figure in this affair over the years. The reason? Because his great mate and club champion Doug Hawkins has put Groenewegen's name at the front of the story every time he steps in front of a microphone.

Hawkins loved handing out nicknames and Groenewegen became "Captain Groenewegen" after he made an ill-advised announcement to his fellow passengers that the plane was "about to go down" en route to Fiji. It's almost 40 years since the metaphorical airline captain made his infamous declaration but Groenewegen's recall of the events is remarkably clear.

"We got to the airport (Melbourne) about three hours before the flight and started drinking," said Groenewegen, who has been ground manager of the University of Tasmania Stadium (York Park, Launceston) since 2000.

"Mick Malthouse could see trouble brewing and told us to ease up, but we didn't. Then there was more free drink on the first leg to Fiji. The flight attendants were kind enough to let us sit where there was more leg room, which gave me access to the phone they used.

"I didn't touch the two-way but that was when I advised passengers, 'We were about to go down'.

"I got another warning from Mick; 'Don't do that again, son'. I listened to him that time. The 'Captain Groenewegen' was something Hawk (Doug Hawkins) added later." Somehow, the Bulldogs big man avoided being charged over the incident. Witnesses are hard to come by. I was on the flight but don't recall hearing the infamous announcement. Beasley could not recall hearing it either.

TONY BUHAGIAR CHARGED

The man who was hit with the most serious repercussions for the team's misconduct on the flight was Tony Buhagiar, who had been recruited from Essendon for the 1985 season.

Twelve months after returning home, he was charged by Australian Federal Police. Buhagiar flew from his home in Perth to Melbourne for the court case. "I remember there was a big media scrum outside and I thought there must be a murder. I asked my barrister who they were here for," Buhagiar said.

"He said, 'They're all here for you and I think you're in a bit of strife'. He also said to me, 'Whatever you do, don't smile'. But I can't help myself, I'm a happy bloke. I was grinning like a Cheshire cat."

The charges related to the use of a wheelchair at Nadi Airport, removal of a Qantas plaque from the back of the plane, not remaining seated during the quarantine process on arrival in Fiji and not wearing a seatbelt. "The court case went for two days," said Buhagiar, who is now a director of the Three Pound Group which owns Perth venues The Camfield, The Revesby, Stables, The Good Company and The Elford.

"The federal sports minister John Brown said he was disgusted by our behaviour and called on the VFL to suspend us. There's no doubt if that happened today it would be far more serious. We wouldn't have been strolling through Honolulu airport, we would have been met by cameras and cops."



Mark Kellett, Danny Corcoran (running coach) and Graeme Cordy at Waikiki.

Before we disembarked the plane at Honolulu, the captain of QF17 kept us on board and gave us a severe dressing down, telling us we were a disgrace to Australia.

He also said we needed to clean up our act before we would be able to take another Qantas flight to Los Angeles in the coming days. Some of the touring party bought flights on other airlines and flew directly to LA. Others, including myself, stayed in Hawaii planning to fly Qantas to LA a couple of days later.

All of us were oblivious to how big the story was becoming in Australia.

MEDIA STORM

“The phone started ringing in our room and then it was on for young and old,” Beasley recalled.

“There were no mobile phones back then so a producer from Derryn Hinch’s radio program on 3AW rang around Waikiki’s hotels till he found ours. That was the start of it.

“After Derryn Hinch I spoke to the Willesee brothers; Mike was with Nine and Terry was with Seven. We were getting hammered from everywhere. That was the beginning of the end.

“It put the kybosh on end of season trips.”

The media storm meant there was an immediate black ban on Bulldogs players and there would be no return flights for players on Qantas. Flight attendants threatened a worldwide strike if we were allowed to board a Qantas flight home.

This left Bulldogs general manager Shane O’Sullivan with the almost impossible task of finding an airline to get us back to Australia.

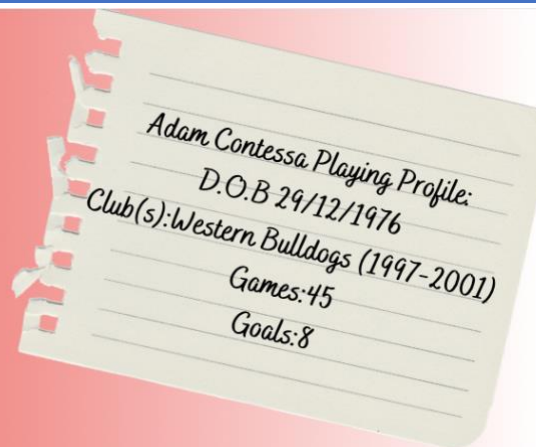
“I wasn’t sure we could find anybody to get us home,” O’Sullivan said.

“Eventually we were able to book a flight with Air New Zealand but it cost us about \$1,500 per head which was a lot back then. There aren’t any of those sorts of trips now. It’s small groups now.

“Imagine if that sort of thing happened now. They’d be in jail.”

Perservice paid off for Adam

By Michael Stevens



Adam Contessa's 45 games with the Bulldogs between earned him a reputation as a tough, uncompromising midfielder, but had it not been for his perseverance and resilience his career might have ended after only five games.

Picked up as a rookie after two years -- and two reserves premierships -- at North Melbourne, Contessa struggled to establish himself at the Whitten Oval, managing only one game in 1997 and four in 1998 before being told his contract would not be renewed.

Devastated, he got in his car and was almost out of the car park when he hit the brakes and decided he wasn't ready to end his AFL dream.

"I came back into the club and went to see Brian Royal to tell him I was still interested in being at the club," Contessa said. "He said the club didn't think I'd want to continue as a rookie, but they were happy to have me."

"In those days you had to wait until someone was injured and put on the long-term injury list to get an opportunity and Scotty Taylor's back injury opened the door for me."

"But if I didn't have the guts to go back I wouldn't have had another three years in the system."

Contessa's opportunity came in round five against Richmond and he went on to play another 11 games in 1999, justifying his decision to not take no for an answer.



Adam Contessa and sons

That same mindset was evident even at the very start of his AFL career, picked for the match of the round clash with St Kilda in round 13, 1997, at the age of 20 years and 181 days.

"I still remember that first game vividly," he said. "The reserves had played two weeks before and there was a State of Origin game before round 13."

"I'd broken my left hand during a skills drill at training, but when 'Plough' (coach Terry Wallace) said I would be playing if my hand was okay, I wasn't going to miss out."

"I wore a guard and a glove, so it wasn't ideal, but it was a top of the table clash at Waverley. I remember Rohan Smith grabbing me by the jumper and telling me to get involved in the pre-game warm-up and then playing on Joel Smith.

"We had a good win, but I came off late in the game with cramp. I hated Waverley, it was too big."

It's fair to say Contessa's best year at the club was in 2000 when he played in 21 games including an elimination final against Brisbane.

That was also the year his number changed from 43 to 19, but on reflection he says that wasn't a good thing because he's always been superstitious and two players before him who also wore no. 19 (Anthony Aloia and Hugh Reimers) only lasted two seasons at the club.

Contessa remembers the elimination final vividly, for various reasons. It was captain Scott Wynd's last game, Brisbane's Alistair Lynch made a disparaging remark to Scott West and Adam's opponent, Luke Power kicked three goals, albeit one from a downfield free kick.

Contessa's career was also plagued with shoulder injuries. He required a full shoulder reconstruction at the end of 1997 and also 1998, after a mishap in an end of season game against St Kilda in London. "That was the only game when I didn't get my shoulder taped," he said ruefully.

After his breakout 2000 season, 2001 yielded only seven games in what was a difficult year for the club.

"We didn't make finals and I could see the writing was on the wall for me, as one of the middle of the road players, who would have to make way for a new wave of younger players even though I was only 24," he said.

In 2002, Contessa played with Glenelg in the SANFL, but he says on reflection that wasn't a great career move and lasted only one season. In 2003, Contessa joined Eltham, where former Bulldogs reserves coach Phil Maylin had taken over as senior coach and former Bulldog Mick Martin had also joined.

That stint lasted until 2008 before he followed Maylin across to Bundoora, where he was part of a premiership side in 2011 before taking on coaching roles.

Contessa admits candidly that he was never an elite, skilful player, but he always had a team-first mentality.

"I was always competitive, never wanting to get beaten, so I guess that's where my hard-nosed approach came from," he said.

Contessa's football career continued as a playing coach at Airport West between 2012-14 and then at Pascoe Vale, where his kids Billy (6) and Sam (4) played juniors, between 2015-18.

Then Covid intervened before he finished at Hoppers Crossing.

Throughout all this, Contessa also played cricket with various clubs, and he recently played with Billy (now 15) and Sam (now 12) and father Leo (74) together in a fourths game for Pascoe Vale – which he rates as one of his favourite sporting experiences.

An active member of the Bulldogs past players committee, Contessa runs a successful traffic management company based in Geelong and says he intends to spend more time with his family after devoting so many years to sport.

The Numbers Game

#22

Each guernsey number has its own unique story, full of stories of past deeds and service. Tim O'Brien wore the 22 number until being delisted and former Melbourne utility James Harmes will now be donning it in the 2024 season.

Club great Wally Donald holds the record for the most games played wearing the number 22, notching up 205 games. One of the club's greatest defenders, Donald, a member of the 1954 premiership team, captained the side for one year and was named on the half back flank in the club's team of the century and inducted into the Bulldog's Hall of Fame several years after his death.

Ted Whitten Jnr played 144 games wearing the number before a knee injury ended his career at the age of 25 after injuring his ACL.

The first Bulldog to wear the number in the VFL, was Ivan McAlpine, a brilliant wingman who won the club's first B&F in the league and went on to win it two more times while also polling in the top 5 in the Brownlow two years in succession. He captained the team in 1933 before ending his career at the club after 112 games to captain coach Hawthorn.

Ron McGowan, a reliable defender in the 1960s and early 70s, was another notable no.22, notching up 92 games, while handy utility Dylan Addison wore the number in 88 games before moving on to Greater Western Sydney in 2014.

2024 Events Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Contact</u>	
Tuesday 13th February	6pm for 6.30pm	Recruits Dinner at the Yarraville Club	Owen Madigan	0408 105 151
Saturday 13th April	10am	AFLCPP Bowls Day at Essendon Bowls Club	Len Cumming	0418 374 079
Friday 19th April	6pm	AFLCPP Golf Day at Settlers Run	Jack Slattery	0425 746 148
Friday 20th September	12pm	AFLCPP Medallist Lunch at Hyatt on the Park	Jack Slattery	0425 746 148
Sunday 17th November	10am	AFLCPP Bowls Day at Essendon Bowls Club	Len Cumming	0418 374 079
Sunday 24th November	11am 12pm	Annual General Meeting venue TBC Annual Lunch following the AGM	Owen Madigan Owen Madigan	0408 105 151 0408 105 151

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

90th Birthday

Peter McPhee #29

D.O.B:

12/01/1934

Club(s) played
for: Footscray
(1954)

Games Played: 4
413th player
listed



90th Birthday

Don Ross #9

D.O.B:

20/02/1934

Club(s) played
for: Footscray
(1952-58)

Games Played:
129

Goals kicked:
20



80th Birthday

Alan Hunter

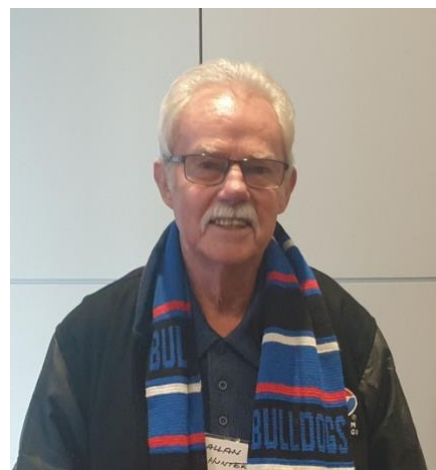
D.O.B:

11/01/1944

Club(s) played
for: Footscray
(1964-67)

Games Played:
15

Goals: 8
524th player
listed



80th Birthday

Kevin Stevens

D.O.B:

15/02/1944

Club(s) played
for: Footscray
(1965-68)

Games Played:
43

Goals: 30

529th player



70th Birthday

Greg Towns #17

D.O.B: 10/01/54

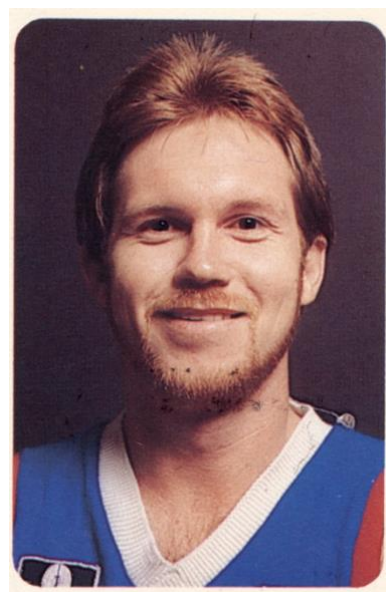
Club(s) played
for:

Carlton (1974-
79), Footscray
(1980-82)

Games Played:
89

Goals: 30

640th player



70th Birthday

Alan Lynch #6

D.O.B: 22/01/54

Club(s) played
for:

Richmond
(1976),
Footscray
(1976)

Games Played: 7

Goals: 2

640th player



70th Birthday

Ian Morrison #8

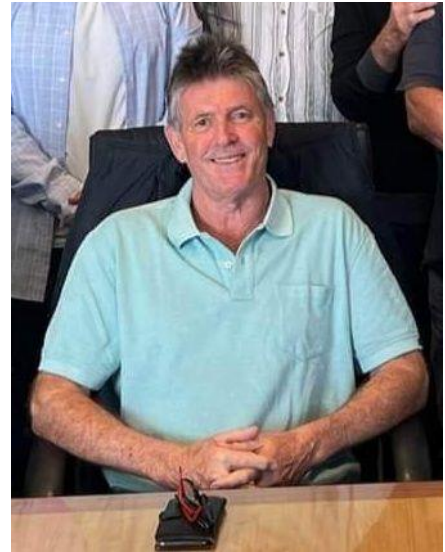
D.O.B: 29/01/54

Club(s) played for:
Footscray (1973-80),
Essendon (1981)
Sandringham (1983-86)

Games Played: 166

Goals: 367

624th player listed



70th Birthday

Ian Low #28

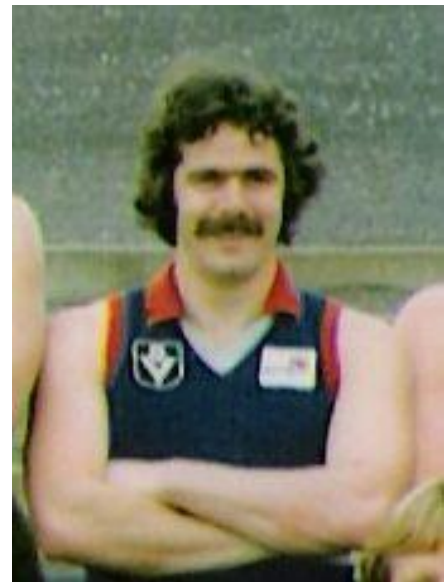
D.O.B: 17/03/54

Club(s) played for:
Footscray (1975-79)
Collingwood (1980)

Games Played: 78

Goals: 79

642nd player listed



60th Birthday

Mark P. Williams #28

D.O.B: 18/03/64

Club(s) played for:
Footscray (1989-1990)

Games Played: 14

Goals: 13v

803rd player listed



50th Birthday

James Cook #12

D.O.B: 7/01/74

Club(s) played for:
Carlton (1994-95),
Western Bulldogs (96-99)

Melbourne (2000)

Games Played: 77

Goals: 139

861st player listed



40th Birthday

Tim Callan #33

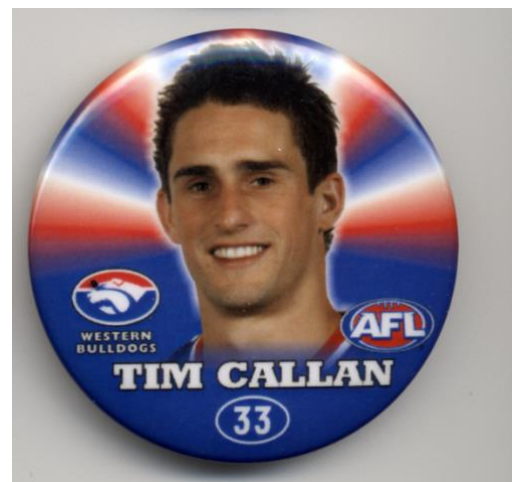
D.O.B: 6/01/84

Club(s) played for:
Geelong (2003-06),
Western Bulldogs (08-10)

Games Played: 34

Goals: 4

933rd player listed



40th Birthday

Brett Goodes #44

D.O.B: 17/02/84

Club(s) played for:
Western Bulldogs
(2013-15)

Games Played: 22

Goals: 4

968th player listed





Vale



Robert Schultz

Robert died on the 29th October aged 79. He played two games for the Bulldogs in 1963 as a nineteen-year-old. He was the brother of John Schultz.

Ron Stockman



Ron died on 29th December aged 89. He played 73 games for the Bulldogs from 1953-58. He was a member of the 1954 Premiership team and a Life Member of the Western Bulldogs Football Club and The Western Bulldogs Past Players & Officials Association.



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. To order - send the following information to westernbulldogspastplayers@gmail.com or 0418510635

Name
Postal address
Mobile
Shirt size - M L XL XXL XXXL



Adam Contessa photographed wearing the 2024 polo.

How to Pay:

By EFT to: Footscray Western Bulldogs Past Players **BSB:** 633 000 **Account:** 199 932 344

Please use your surname as payment identification.

By credit card: Contact Treasurer Andrew Howlett on 0418 510 635

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.

2024 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
	Nicole Callinan	Nicole.Callinan @westernbulldogs.com.au
	Adam Contessa	0416 081 259
	Graeme Joslin	0412 771 235
	Gary McGorlick	0409 804 057
AFLCPP Delegate	Len Cumming	0418 374 079
	Jack Slattery	0425 746 148



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PFG Australia is a family owned, fully independent group of companies who have a three-generation history of serving the New Zealand and Australia tractor and machinery markets. Justin Whitford is the Chief Executive Officer.



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)



Tosca 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.