

**2008
STEVE HAMILL
HITS
THE HEADLINES
(Ref: 2018 /23)**



**KEN PIESSE
'SUNDAY HERALD SUN'
AUGUST 24, 2008**

INTRODUCTION

When Dromana fought its way through to the Grand Final against Sorrento in 2008, it was big news in local football; and the following article, written by well-known sports journalist **Ken Piesse**, was published in the '**Sunday Herald Sun**' Newspaper on August 24th 2008. The article is an important record in the club's history as it focuses on the-then **Senior Coach of DFNC Steve Hamill** and mentions other well-known club personalities and players of that era.

Ken Piesse has kindly permitted DFNC to re-publish this article on the club's website History Page. The story headline was entitled: 'HAMILL FLAGS A TIME TO QUIT'.

THE 'SUNDAY HERALD-SUN' ARTICLE

'HAMILL FLAGS A TIME TO QUIT'

**Written by
Ken Piesse in 2008.**

LAST time Dromana won a premiership, football legend **John Coleman** ran the local hotel. It has been 37 years since Dromana's footy team was the champion of the Peninsula and current captain-coach **Steve Hamill** is doing everything in his power to end the drought.

Win, lose or draw, Hamill, 40, says season 2008 will be his last as a player. He intends to take a break from coaching, too, to spend at least some of his Saturdays with his children, **Meg, 9, Will, 8, and Lucy, 6.**

"I've told the club this is my last year," he said. "I've had a good run. I'm walking away. No matter what happens in this last fortnight I'm hoping I'm leaving the place better than I found it and that there is a structure there so the club can continue to blossom."

The extra professionalism Hamill and fellow veteran **Simon Goosey** have injected has made Dromana one of the toughest teams to beat after years of bottom-four finishes. Hamill says his Dromana unit may not be the most skilled in the Nepean league, but it is a goer, as demonstrated by the relentless effort against finals regular **Frankston** last weekend, when it slowly clawed to the front, having trailed at every change.

"We were nine points behind at quarter-time, five at half-time, two at three-quarter time and ended up winning by four points," said Dromana's administration director, **Graham Stelling.**

"Had **Lou Richards** been there he would have called it an old-fashioned thriller-diller. It wasn't too good for the old heart!"

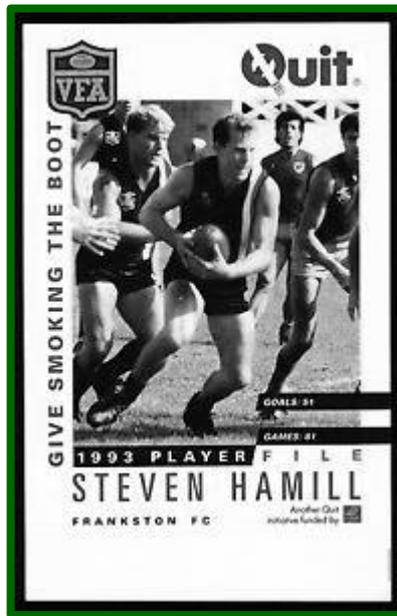
Teenage ruckman **Andrew Burns** was one of the driving forces in that titanic finish, which put Dromana one win away from a place in this year's Nepean League Grand Final.

For Hamill, who missed the match through injury, Australia's Olympic heroics were an inspiration for him and his team.

"You draw on current things, like **Emma Snowsill** in the women's triathlon, and the girls with all their gold medals in the pool. There were quite a few boilovers at the Games. So many favourites were beaten," he said.

"As a footy coach, it's hard to put a finger on what is the winning formula. You need to have the right balance, work on your relationships and find one or two triggers to help you get over the line. It comes down to the day and about the way you prepare. We needed to win that final last Saturday. It was so important for us to get over that first one."

Hamill collected a flag in his first year at **Hastings** in 1995 after a noteworthy 122-game VFA career at **Frankston**, which included two years of finals under **Robert Mace** and then **Josh Kendall.**



Source: Quit Smoking Campaign card series
Steve Hamill: Captain of Frankston FC in 1992-93-94.

"We didn't make a grand final but we still had some good years," he said. "A lot of the ex-St Kilda boys were there, too, like **John Favier**, **Geoff Amore** and **Simon Meehan**."

Hamill captained the club before leaving, aged 28, to be playing-coach at **Hastings**. Originally from **Mulgrave**, he played with St Kilda's under-19s and reserves in 1984-85 at a time when big names-to-be in **Stewart Loewe**, **Mick Dwyer**, **Kane Taylor** and **David Grant** were all emerging.

He said **Mornington Peninsula** football was strong and competitive, and he loved the mentoring and everyday involvement.

At Hastings, he played alongside his younger brother, **Tony**, and another of his old VFA mates in **John Gahan**, whose father, **Graham**, had been at **Richmond** years earlier.

"In that first year we defeated **Pines** in the grand final, despite being six or seven goals down at quarter-time," he said.

"**Edithvale-Aspendale** had won 16 games that year but went out in straight sets. Pines had come through from fourth and had a very experienced team.

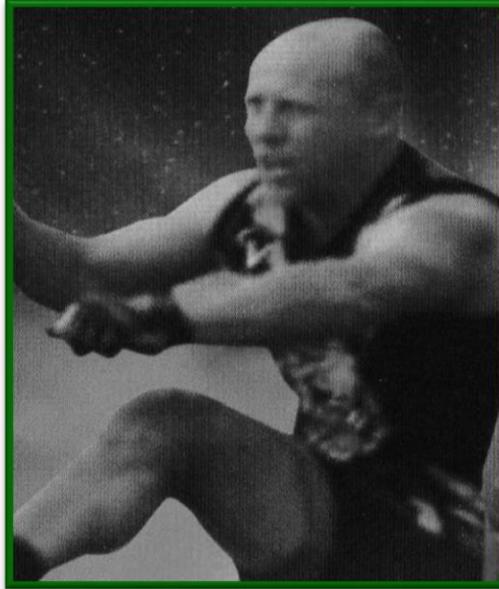
"We had faith in our ability to run out games though, and that year had six or eight on-ball types who all contributed. It turned out to be one of those fairy-tale games for us."

One of those integral in that unexpected victory, Hamill said was fitness coach **Bruce Mesley**, who is alongside him in a similar role at Dromana.

"He has a fitness-specific background. It's good to have another coach with a different background to your own," he said.

"I have several very valuable right-hand men. Bruce is one. So is 'Goose' (**Simon Goosey**) and **Stephen Downes**, who we got from Rye this year as a hardline centreman and assistant coach.

"We had a terrific pre-season, running up Arthurs Seat and so on. It really helped give us a fitness base, which has benefited us all year. Our preparation has been one of our real strengths."



Steve Hamill in action and wearing the DFNC guernsey in 2008.

Before joining Dromana, Hamill also had a stint at **Tooradin**, both as assistant and head coach, and said it had been a valuable grounding for helping to lift **Dromana** after years of being 'easybeats.'

"When we made the finals in my first year (2006) it was the first time Dromana had been in the finals since 1980. Goose and I were the only ones in that team who had previously played in finals," he said. "It helps to have the experience of being there previously. Last year we missed the finals by one goal on overall percentage. It has made this year's achievements so far all the more satisfying."

Goosey has been one of the standouts for Dromana again this season, having kicked more than 80 goals after kicking a ton in 2006 and 75 last year. Running defender **Adam Hunter** made the All-Australian country side and, according to Hamill, is guaranteed to take one or two speckie marks every week. Other youngsters, like promising ruckman Burns, have made giant steps, too, lifting Dromana's stocks.

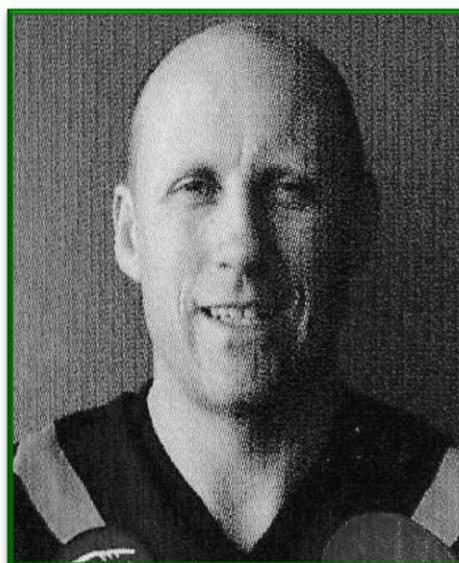
Hamill says he will miss the involvement of leading a young club, but he believes he needs to step back a little, catch his breath and then work out his future.

"Footy is such an important social avenue in developing networks," Hamill said.

"You feel a sense of belonging and engagement with the local community. We are semi-bush down here but the same rules apply. It's important for young men to be attached to something and work towards a common goal."

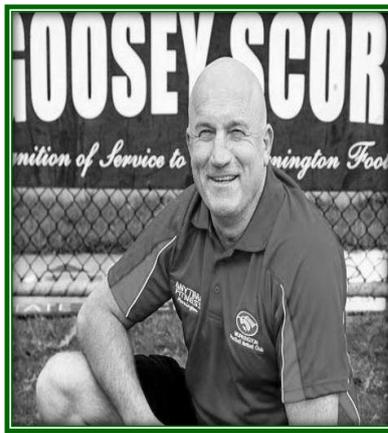
BRIEF FOOTNOTES TO KEN PIESSE'S ARTICLE

1. As history shows, **Sorrento** won that Grand Final. The scores that day were: Sorrento 13.8 (86) defeated Dromana 9.8 (62). It was the club's first appearance in a Grand Final for 37 years; and the team performed creditably against a strong Sorrento combination.
2. One of the highlights of the day was the vast number of Dromana supporters who attended the match; and the outer of the **Frankston Park** was awash in a 'sea of green and yellow'
3. A story with details of the **2008 Grand Final** will be posted on this website in the near future.
4. The Reserves team, coached by **Brian Collery** , won the premiership that day and an article regarding that victory will be also posted on this website soon.
5. **Steve Hamill** stepped down from coaching Dromana at the end of 2008 but his three years he had been highly productive; and he had provided the impetus for the club to go forward in future years. Steve's career as player and coach was imposing and he had won the respect of all during his time at Pier Street.



Steve Hamill- An Inspirational leader of DFNC 2006-08.

6. After leaving Dromana FC, **Simon Goosey** spent time as a skills coach at AFL and VFL levels and later was appointed as senior coach at the **Frankston Dolphin's (VFL)** for three seasons. Following a period at **Cranbourne**, Simon returned to coach **Mornington Bulldogs**.
In his three seasons with Dromana, Simon kicked 256 goals at an average of 5.22 goals per game. He was named at full forward in the **DFNC Team of the Era (1946-2015)**. **Note:** A story regarding Simon (reference: 2018 /21) can be found on this website.



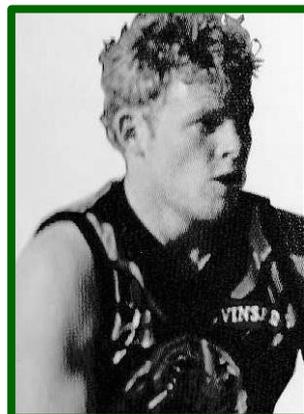
Source: Mornington FC website
Simon Goosey back at Mornington -2018

7. **Bruce Mesley** has an extensive background in football, athletics and cricket. He is the current **Principal of Dromana Primary School** and takes an active interest in the fortunes of the football club. Bruce appreciates the importance of outdoor activities in building young lives and fosters the development of sport in the school.



Source: Dromana Primary School website
Bruce Mesley

8. **Andrew Burns** graduated from the Dromana Juniors; and was regarded as a promising footballer. Although touted as a ruckman, Andrew gave several standout performances at centre-half back during his time with DFNC. After 51 senior games for Dromana, Andrew departed company with the club in 2013.



Andrew Burns

9. **Graham Stelling**, mentioned in the above article, is still serving on the DFNC Board of Management. Graham's family members have all played a role in the life of the football club; and both **Graham** and **Theresa** are **Life Members**. Graham's daughter **Erin** is the past treasurer of the **DJFNC** and was granted **Life Membership** of the DFJNC in 2017. Graham's Grandson (**Zac**) plays football with Dromana and is an emerging talent in local junior football.



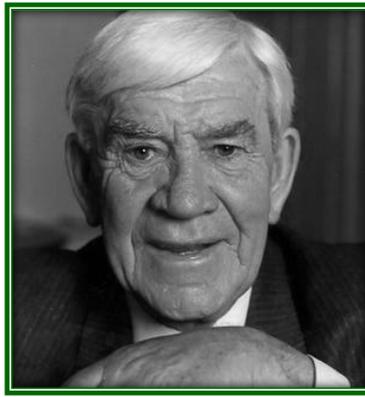
Graham Stelling

10. **Graham Gahan** played with **Richmond** in the period 1959-66; and, in total, played 88 senior games and kicked seven goals. Following his years in the VFL, Graham coached **Scottsdale** and **Glenorchy** (Tasmania); and later took charge at **Warragul**, **Yallourn**, **Drouin** and **Yarragon**. Graham died earlier this year at the age of 76 years.



Source: Richmond FC website
Graham Gahan

11. For younger readers, **Lou Richards** was an iconic figure in Australian football. He played 250 games with **Collingwood**, kicked 423 goals and was the skipper of the **1953 Magpie** premiership team. Lou was a tough, bold and chirpy rover who represented **Victoria** in 1947 and 1948. In later years, he became a celebrity in the media. Lewis Thomas Charles Richards MBE died in May 2017 and was given a State Funeral Service at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne.



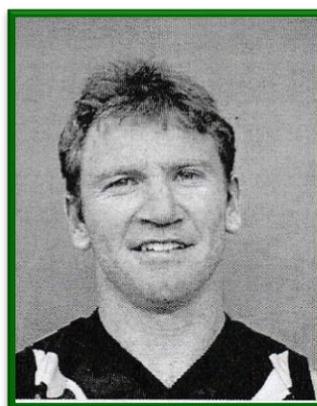
Source: Wikipedia
Lou Richards

12. **John Coleman** was a super star for **Essendon FC**; and was viewed, by most commentators, as the greatest full-forward in the post war era. John was the **Licensee of the Dromana Hotel** at the time of his death in 1973. During his years at Dromana, John was an enthusiastic sponsor of the Dromana Football Club and the club's **Best and Fairest trophy** was, at one time, named in his honour.



Source: Essendon FC archives
John Coleman

13. **Stephen Downes** has since retired from local football. Unfortunately, he played just twenty games in three seasons with Dromana. Persistent injury plagued Stephen to the point of denying local supporters the opportunity of seeing him perform at his very best.



Stephen Downes

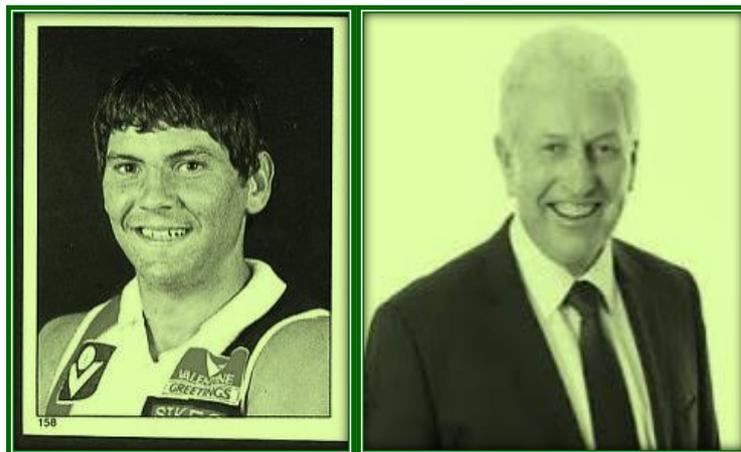
14. **Adam Hunter** retired from **MPNFL Senior Grade** football at the end of 2017 after a magnificent career at **VFL** and **MPNFL** level. Adam, the recipient of

numerous prestigious awards, is a **Life Member** of the club and is one of the greatest players to have ever donned the DFNC guernsey. Adam is well known and respected throughout country Victoria because of his brilliant performances for the MPNFL and AFLVic Country(in National championships). Adam returned to football in 2018 and now has a key leadership role with the **DFNC Reserves XVIII**.



Adam Hunter

15. The name 'Mace' is well-known in Frankston football. **Robert Mace** played with Frankston YCW, Frankston (VFA) and also played AFL football with **three** clubs (Hawthorn-7 games, St Kilda 72 games and Brisbane Bears-one game). Robert also coached **Frankston Dolphins** with some success in later years.
16. **Graham 'Josh' Kendall** built a handsome reputation in country football (e.g. Goulbourn Valley FL) and is one of the most successful coaches in the history of **Mornington Peninsula** football. In the period 1984-86, he coached **Frankston Dolphins**; and the club participated in finals football twice in those three seasons. Josh later coached **Frankston YCW** to four premierships 1991-92-93 and 97.



Source: St Kilda FC archives
Robert Mace

Original source: Unknown
Josh Kendall

17. **Will Hamill**, as mentioned above, often attended games when his Father was coaching in 2006-08. Will made his **Senior XVIII** debut with **Dromana** against **Red Hill** at Pier Street in **Round: 9** in **2017**. On that day, Dromana won by 61 points; and Will gave a sparkling display in defence for the Tigers.

He also played with the Dandenong Stingrays in 2017 and performed in promising fashion...

“Will Hamill (top-age Balnarring junior, 20 games in 2017): Will came into our program as a bit of an unknown factor last year but played every game as a defender on opposition smalls and talls. We’ve rolled him through the midfield in trial games and he seems more suited there. He’s impressed us on the track and he’s a great leader off it.” Source: ‘TAC CUP Round-up Preview’ as published in 2018.

18. Currently, **Will Hamill** is the nominated vice-captain of the **Stingray’s** squad; and everyone at DFNC wishes him well in the next stage of his ‘football journey.’ Will has an impressive background in track and field athletics; and several years ago competed in the State and National Titles in long jump and triple jump. He has been forced to put his promising career in athletics ‘on hold’ while playing football with the Stingrays.



Source: Dandenong Stingrays Website

Will Hamill

19. Steve’s daughter **Meg** (now 19 years of age) is an enthusiastic ‘A’ Grade netballer with **Red Hill FNC**. His other daughter, Lucy (15), is also enjoying netball in the Under: 17 and ‘B’ Grade competitions.

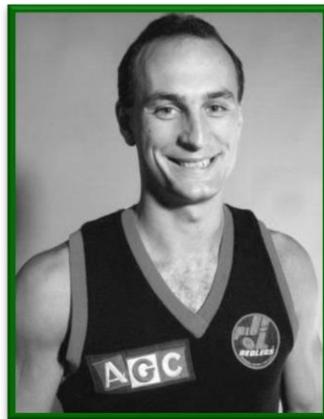
20. Players and officials will remember young Lucy sitting quietly amid the Dromana players while Steve delivered a pre-match or half -time address. Lucy appeared to be ‘part of the team’ and often heard some forceful and adult oratory for one so young. Perhaps Lucy will become a netball coach somewhere ‘down the track’. Time will tell.



Lucy Hamill- RHFNC

21. **Karen** (Steve’s wife) was also a proficient netballer who starred for **Tooradin** in numerous ‘A’ Grade premiership victories in earlier times.

22. Karen's sister, **Jacky**, made a 'name for herself' in athletics (e.g. 400m events) and, as a junior, represented Victoria in athletics meetings.
23. **Karen Hamill** comes from a very sporting background as her brother **Peter Vandermeer** (formerly of **Tooradin- Dalmore FC**) played with Frankston (with Steve) as a key defender and midfielder. Peter was drafted to **Melbourne FC** in 1989; and, following his stint at Frankston VFA, he returned to Tooradin-Dalmore (known as the Seagulls) and amassed 199 senior games.
24. Karen Hamill's older brother, **John**, also played with the Frankston **Dolphins** before crossing to the **SANFL** where he notched up 24 games with **Norwood FC** (1988-89) and booted 24 goals. John later played with Tooradin-Dalmore FC; and it is documented that he won both league and club best and fairest awards in that competition.



John Vandermeer- Norwood FC in 1988-89.

THANK YOU- KEN PIESSE

DFNC would like to sincerely thank football and cricket historian, **Ken Piesse** , for allowing his article, regarding Steve Hamill, to be replicated on the DFNC's website History Page.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:

Sources: DFNC Records –Tiger Talk- DFNC Handbook-Personal files- Frankston FC archives, VFL & MPNFL historical documents –SAFNL Archives- Tooradin-Dalmore website-Dandenong Stingrays Website –'Sunday Herald Sun' August 24th 2008.

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