

40 YEARS AGO
1979
VICTORY OVER LANGWARRIN
&
A TRIBUTE TO
DICK IVEY
(Reference: 2019/16)

In 1979 Dromana Football Club, then known as the 'Grasshoppers' , was a member of the Nepean Football League. The twelve affiliates of the NFL that season were: Bonbeach, Crib Point, Karingal, Langwarrin, Pearcedale, Pines, Red Hill, Rosebud, Somerville, Tyabb, Frankston YCW and Dromana.

The Dromana FC Club President was Eric Oates; the Secretary was John McCormick and the Treasurer's role was shared by Mrs. Betty Burdon and Rob Sund.



Eric Oakes

Note: Mrs Burdon was the mother of local players Daryl and Shane. Shane Burdon played 73 senior games with DFC between 1976-81; and was selected in the DFC Team of the Decade (1976-1985) on the half-forward flank.

The two nominated delegates, to represent DFC at meetings of the NFL in 1979 were: Colin Matthews and John McCormick.

The coaches of the various Nepean FL clubs that season included: Bonbeach (Gary McKay), Crib Point (Kevin Healey), Langwarrin (Dennis Ryan), Pearcedale (Jamie Scoble), Pines (Stephen Clarke), Red Hill (Pat Rogan), Rosebud (Col McCrae & Nicky Sayle), Somerville (Mal Allen), Frankston YCW (Barry Moore), Tyabb (Brendan Nolan) and **Dick Ivey** was the coach of Dromana FC.



One of Dromana's finest players of that era.

Mick Berwick

Mick Berwick, who had coached the club in 1977-78, stepped aside and the DFC Committee appointed former North Melbourne utility player, Dick Ivey, to the position. Colin Matthews was the Reserves coach in 1979.

THE 1979 PLAYING LIST

The senior playing list in 1979, as published in 'The Record', was as shown below. **Note:** Several initials of first names may be inaccurate and any corrections by readers will be welcomed.

**1.G. Hitchener 2. M. McCrindle 3. K. Shakespeare 4. M. Prunty
5. C. Matthews 6. J. Hunter 7. J. McCormick 8. R. Ivey
9. R. Fyson 10. R. Thompson 11. B. Cairns 12. J. McCrindle
13. G. Birch 14. L. Edgerton 15. S. Matthews 16. M. Berwick
17. G. Hunter 18. S. Burdon 19. P. Ryan 20. G. Ferguson
21. S. Wallace 22. J. Egglestone 23. S. Guest 24. D. Williams
25. R. Kerr 26. A. Trigg 27. P. Devine 28. N. Thompson
29. I. Kerr 30. E. Poole 31. P. Ashton 32. J. Woods
33. A. Guest 34. G. McGaffin 35. W. Palmer 36. C. Reynolds
37. D. Johnson 38. P. McIntosh 39. K. Faulkner
40. S. McPherson 41. D. Moule 42. C. Chirgwin 43. P. Van Wees
44. N. Welch 45. A. D. Robson 46. J. Pollard 47. G. McDermott
48. A. Grasso 50. A. Van Garde**

John McCormick (Number :7 in the above list), was the secretary in that season, was also a prominent player for the club in that era. John had previously played at Heyfield (LVFL) and had arrived at DFNC in 1976. John must have 'burnt the candle at both ends' in 1979 as he also played 18 senior games that season. Australian Rules football is difficult enough without having to worry about a plethora of league and club administration duties.

In all, John played 77 Senior games prior to retiring in 1984.

John was granted Life Membership in 1996 and was member of the DFNC Centenary Committee. John was selected in the 'Team of the Decade' (1976-85).



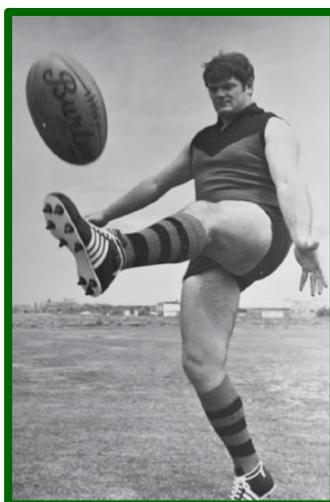
John McCormick

John played an active role in the reformation of the Third XVIII in 1995 after the team had been in recess for two seasons (1993 and 94). Readers will be interested to know that John McCormick volunteered, when asked by the Committee of that time, to shoulder the position of Reserves Coach when Gary Fowler was forced to step down (due to personal reasons) in 1997.

Note: When researching DFNC history, confusion often arises between John McCormick and Brian McCormack. They are not related but Brian was a teammate of John but retired in 1977 after 148 senior games. Brian, was also a popular and highly respected member of DFNC; and was selected in the Team of the Era 1946-2015.

Lindsay Edgerton was a personality in local football; and his vast experience at WAFL, Services Football (Navy), VFL and VFA level was invaluable to Dromana. Lindsay first played at Dromana in 1977 and had been a consistent performer with the Grasshoppers in his first two seasons.

Lindsay played 76 games with DFNC and he coached the club in 1981-82.



Lindsay Edgerton- Starred for DFNC in 1978 and 79.

As the record books show, Lindsay won the Club's Best and Fairest award in 1978.

Stephen Matthews (number : 15 in the above list) played his first senior game for DFNC in 1979 and, went onto become one of the all-time champions of the club.

Stephen was selected in the ruck in the DFNC Team Of the Era 1946- 2015 and among his awards was the club's Best & Fairest award in 1984. His athleticism, deft ruck work and high marking were imposing.

Note: A story regarding Stephen's impressive career in local and WAFL football will be published on this website in the future.

An emerging young star for Dromana in that era was **Grant Hitchiner**. Grant played his first senior game for DFNC in 1978; and his straight-through and non-compromising style, in a contest, grabbed the attention of onlookers.

Grant was skilled, tough and his closing speed in a 'chase-down' of an opponent was akin to 'greased lightning'. Although a 'youngster' in 1979, Grant played like a 'seasoned veteran.' He became a pivotal player at Pier Street in later seasons, played 98 Senior XVIII games, and coached the Reserves in 1993 and 1994.



'Tough as teak' - Grant Hitchener

Dave Williams was one of the veterans of the team that year. He had commenced his career the club in the late 1960's and by 1979 had notched up 101 senior games. Dave was one of the fastest and most forceful midfielders in local football. He was a member of the 1971 Premiership team. He retired from senior football in 1981 but, even today, people pass comment about his scintillating brand of running football.

Dave played 115 senior games and was chosen on the wing in the 'DFNC Team of the Decade' (1966-75). The Williams family has a long association with Dromana; and Dave's son (Tony- 105 games) and grandsons (Jae, Cade, Kyle and Kai) play/ played with the club at various times.

Gary Ferguson was also a key player for Dromana in that era. Gary played his first senior game, as a teenager in 1974. Mainly used in the role of a defender Gary would, if required, play a role in attack. A feature of Gary's football was his long, powerful and accurate kicking.

Gary's contribution to DFNC has been previously stated on this website. He played 127 senior games between 1972-86 and later coached the Reserves and Third XVIII teams. A little known fact about Gary is that he won three Reserves Best & Fairest awards (1981-83-85).

He was selected in the Team of the Decade (1976-85) and is a Life Member of DFNC. He was also a long-serving Medical Officer for the club and still assists in training duties whenever and wherever possible.

DROMANA V LANGWARRIN 1979

After defeating Ballarat in a pre-season match, things were off to a promising start; and with a strong list, Dromana went into the early rounds of 1979 with a degree of optimism. The local newspaper described the team as 'talented'.

In any new football season, the chatter 'around the traps' is usually buoyant and expectations under the leadership of Dick Ivey in early 1979 were high; and the early season hype was put to a rigorous test in the clash against Langwarrin at Pier Street in Round: 2

Although the published review, of the game against Langwarrin, was short on detail, it is a valuable item in the club's history because it mentioned some loyal and trusted servants of DFNC.

Note: 'Time dims all memories' and one of the aims of this website History Page is to record and acknowledge the part that former members played in building the DFNC. Names such as Steve Wallace, Rob Thompson, Rob and Ian Kerr are part of a long list of players whose contribution to the club has been, sadly, neglected or overlooked with the passage of time.

The match started in ideal conditions and, with former club coach Mick Berwick 'firing on all cylinders' up forward, Dromana skipped away to lead by 33 points at half time. The Langwarrin coach Denis Ryan (ex-Frankston Rovers) was 'searching for answers' as the Dromana forwards cut a swathe through the Kangaroos defence.

By half time, the Grasshoppers had established a four goal 'buffer' and were looking dangerous. Rain greeted the players after the break and the match quickly degenerated into a 'slogging affair.' Dromana was clearly better suited to the wet and slippery conditions and piled on nine goals while the Kangaroos could manage just two in the second half; and Dromana ran out comfortable winners by 12 goals.

Mick Berwick and Ian Kerr both kicked 'bags of five goals' while Dick Ivey gave a sound display and led his team from the front. Dick, probably better known as a defender in his early years, was a versatile footballer who could go forward and be effective. Steve Wallace and the Rod Kerr were steady across four quarters and Matthew Woods came under notice with his unique style and determined endeavor.

Ross Thompson, who kicked one goal in that decisive victory, played with Dromana for only one season but etched his name into club history when he

won the club's main award, the John Coleman Medal, for the Best and Fairest Senior XVIII Player that season . Ross (known to some as Rob) Thompson. Ross, an adept midfielder, was recruited from the OCS Portsea (i.e. Army Base).

Final score: Dromana 19.14.128 defeated Langwarrin 8.8.56.

Goalkickers: Mick Berwick 5 Ian Kerr 5 Paul Palmer 2 Rod Kerr 2 Dick Ivey 2 Ross Thompson 1 Ray Fyson 1 and Steve Wallace 1

Best players: Ivey I. Kerr Hitchener S. Wallace Berwick M. Woods and R. Kerr.

Despite the talented combination and some encouraging early wins, Dromana missed the finals in 1979; and was forced to wait patiently for another chance at the NFL flag. (See a brief summary of the 1979 season below).

It is surprising that the above team did not experience greater success. Regardless of the obvious talent and the hard work of coaches, the club would have to wait another thirty-four years to win a premiership.

The following quotation, attributed to Elon Musk, seems to best describe the DFNC in the intervening years...

“Patience is a virtue, and I'm learning patience. It's a tough lesson.”

The Reserves XVIII also won well against a gritty Langwarrin team. Details are sketchy but the he final scores were:

Dromana: 14.1. (97) defeated Langwarrin 9.8 (62).

Best players for Dromana: A. Guest (5 goals) Welch S. Guest T. Poole and McPherson.

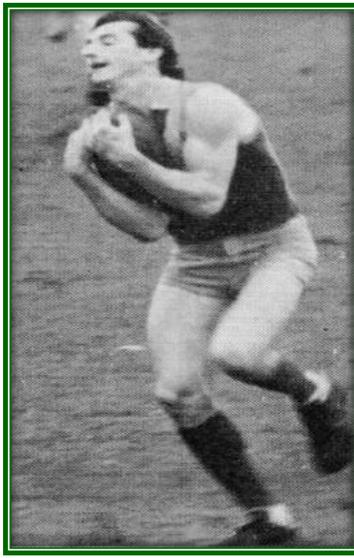
That weekend of football just couldn't get any better for the Grasshoppers as Thirds defeated Langwarrin by more than eleven goals. David Cairns starred with five goals while Mark Rendall kicked three.

Young players to come under notice against the Kangaroos that day were: Greg Hilton and Michael James. The final scores, as published, were:

Dromana Thirds: 16.10 (106) defeated Langwarrin 5.3 (33).



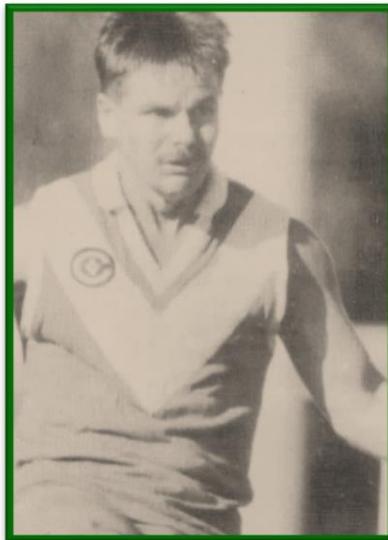
Mick James – A prominent youngster in 1979



Mick Rendall – A reliable forward in local football.

David Cairns was one of a handful of very talented junior footballers at the club in that period. Unfortunately, David played only 38 senior games with DFC before serious injury forced him into premature retirement from the game he loved.

Mick James and Greg Hilton went onto to become stars in local football. Both won club Best & Fairest awards and captained Dromana FC in later years. Mick (201 games) and Greg (146 games) were named in the DFNC Team of the Era (1945-2015).



Greg Hilton – an emerging star in 1979

1979- THE NFL IN SUMMARY

While that day against Langwarrin was a most successful round of football for the club, the seniors lost several vital games during the season and finished in sixth position on the NFL Ladder with 10 wins. The team had a percentage of 113% which indicated that it was competitive against the stronger Northern clubs (YCW, Langwarrin, Pines and Bonbeach).

Bonbeach, YCW, Pines and Somerville were the NFL finalists in 1979. Bonbeach won the flag that season in the Seniors, Pines took out the Reserves flag; and YCW won its fourth consecutive premiership in the Third XVIII competition.

Note: In the period 1970-79, the Pines and YCW dominated Third XVIII Grade football on the Mornington Peninsula. Pines FC won four flags in the NFL Thirds competition (1970-71-72-75); and YCW won four premierships (1976-77-78-79). See the footnote below regarding Pines FC and Dromana FC. The Dromana Reserves finished on the seventh rung of the ladder with eight wins while the Thirds finished a most creditable fifth on the table (11 wins).

Note: The list of award winners for 1979 season has been recently researched and published on this website (Reference: **2019/15**).

A TRIBUTE TO DICK IVEY 1947-2014.



Dick Ivey (born:1947) coached Dromana in 1979 and 1980. Dick attended Coburg West Primary School and Strathmore High School before training to become a primary teacher at Coburg Teachers' College; and it was at that time that he played with Essendon thirds.

Dick won the Best & Fairest for Essendon Third XVIII and was a member of the Essendon Thirds premiership team in 1966. He also played with the EFC Reserves; and was a member of Reserve XVIII premiership in 1968 before crossing to North Melbourne FC in 1969.

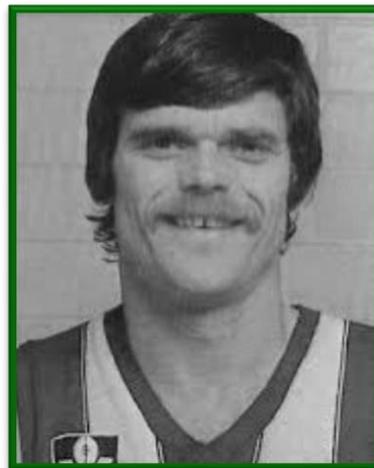
He played his one and only senior VFL match for North Melbourne against Fitzroy at Princes Park in Round: 15 in 1969. The NMFC team had several champions in that line-up such as John Dugdale, Laurie Dwyer, Bernie McCarthy.

Fitzroy dominated affairs from the first bounce; and John Murphy and Daryl Peoples each kicked five goals. Fitzroy won by five goals; and although his match statistics were satisfactory, Dick was omitted from the team for the following match.



**Essendon FC Reserves premiers team in 1968.
 Dick Ivey is in the back row, fourth from the left.**

Note: On that same day a teenager named, David Dench, made his VFL debut. David went onto play 275 games for the Kangaroos.



Dick Ivey made his VFL debut with David Dench in 1969

Following his VFL career, Dick played with Waverly (VFA); and in 1979 was appointed as the coach of Dromana. At that time, Dick was teaching at Tootgarook P.S.

Following his stint at DFC, he coached Sorrento FC; and according to available records, Dick coached Yea FC to two premierships; and in 1982 he won the Wandin Medal for the League Best and Fairest Division:2 of YVMDFL. Dick kicked 126 goals for Yea in the 1986 season.

Research into VCA records indicate that he was also an excellent cricketer and had played VCA cricket for Essendon.

Sadly, Richard Paul Ivey passed away in November 2014 aged 67 years.

**** Historical footnote (see above).** This season (2019), Dromana played against the Pines in Rounds: 7 and won by 38 points.

It was an historic victory because the last time that Dromana defeated Pines FC was in **Round: 13 - 1972** (47 years ago).

On that day, Dromana 14.3 (87) defeated Pines 10.13 (73). Major goal- kickers were: Greg James 4 and Ray Fyson and Stephen Jolley each kicked two goals. Best players were not listed in the match report.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:

Sources: DFNC Records –Tiger Talk- DFNC Handbook-Yea FC website - AFL archives.

Article reference: 40 years ago & A Tribute to Dick Ivey (2019/16).

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