

28 October 2013

SEASON 2014 KEY DATES

The VAFA have announced key dates for the upcoming season. Season 2014 will kick off for Division 2 on Saturday 5 April. There will be a break over Easter (19 April), on the Queen's Birthday weekend (7 June) and a Bye on the weekend of 12 July, with finals to be played over three weeks, 30/31 August, 6/7 September and 13/14 September (Grand Final). So now you have plenty of time to plan your holidays around these dates, no excuses for mid-season get aways! For more details about key season dates visit the [VAFA website](#). Bring on Season 2014!

26 October 2013

AGM

The Annual General Meeting was held on October 16. The evening went well and we have a few changes to the committee. It is fantastic to see some new faces joining the committee including Jane Homewood, Paul Robinson, John Kingsford and Tony Mulchay. Outgoing committee members include Adam Wright, Steve McCrystal and Ross Toogood. Grant Mackenzie is again the President for Season 2014, supported by Vice President David Neilson, Secretary Howard Neilson, Treasurer Ben Joyce and the General committee members Bill Emerson, Kate McKendrick, Rob Pearce, Luke Blackwood, Jane Homewood, Paul Robinson, John Kingsford and Tony Mulchay. Well done to all and let's make it a successful 2014!

15 October 2013

MOOSE BECOMES THE 56TH HOER TO DON THE BIG V By Phil Skeggs

When Ash 'Moose' Close ran out for the Victorian Amateur team in Ireland this month, he became the 56th Ivanhoe player to wear the Big V since 1935. It's been 12 years since anyone from this club has had the honour of representing the VAFA. And in the absence of a club honour board recognising our state representatives, very few would be aware of our proud history of representative football.

In only our second season in the amateurs in 1935, two of our finest were selected to play against interstaters. They were full-forward Ron Smith, who kicked 134 goals in C grade that year, and midfielder Ron Dowling, who was recruited to Collingwood in 1936 and played 72 games for the Magpies in four seasons, including two VFL grand finals. According to local press reports, Dowling played on the wing against the South Australian team and was one of the best players. Smith copped a kick in the face during a match between the A-B grade rep side and C-D side and didn't have much influence on the game against SA.



1935 VFA rep side. Ron Dowling, 2nd row, 4th from the right. Source: *For The Love Of The Game*, by Joseph Johnson

Apparently no one was available for selection the following year because of work commitments, including Alan Killigrew who later played VFL for St Kilda and coached Victoria. Club captain Hec Rutherford, whom the club's senior best and fairest medal is named after, made himself available to play against the South Australians in 1937 along with full-back Ron Baker.

VFA records provide scant information about those early rep teams. Annual reports only note scores and perhaps names of the coach, captain and best player. It's rare to see the players' clubs also mentioned until the 1950s. Photos of state teams and All-Australian sides grace the walls of VFA headquarters at Elsternwick Park, but only date back to post-World War II. And, as I've since discovered, sometimes team photos weren't taken.

In our club's first printed history, *50 Years 1934-1984*, compiled by John Miles, there are 23 representative players listed. This record remains an invaluable resource, but even back in 1984 John acknowledged that "unfortunately there are no records of the Ivanhoe players that represented Victoria in interstate and carnival games". "Some can be remembered and apologies to those that have been left off the list".



Three of Ivanhoe's finest and toughest helped the VFA to a historic win over Vic Country in 1984. Pictured are: Peter Gittos (front row, 3rd from right), Michael McDonald (2nd row, 3rd from right) and Tony Balcolme (back row, 3rd from left). John Miles (2nd row on right) was the VFA's chairman of selectors from 1981 to 1985.

In 1987, the VAFA launched their Big V club, which was open to former interstate carnival and representative players, umpires and officials. The first bloke to join from Ivanhoe was club legend Harry Thomas, who is fondly remembered as our Team of the Century president. Harry was also a state team official from 1984-86. John Miles, who has the rare distinction of being a VAFA life member, was chairman of selectors for the VAFA from 1981-85. Former club president Rob Pearce was a VAFA selector in 1994 when a former Ivanhoe player and coach John Simpson was the Victorian coach. The VAFA is still trying to compile a definitive list of Big V players, which by their own admission is a massive undertaking.

For the statistic lovers, of Ivanhoe's 55 Victorian rep players, nine played in under 18/19s rep teams. Of those nine, four later played senior rep footy (John Newnham, Peter Flynn, Garry Kennedy, and Jack Healy after he switched to Old Trinity). Ivanhoe has at least six All-Australians – Kevin Clarke, Russell Burt, Neil Lewthwaite, John Rojo, Andrew Ireland, and Peter Adams.



1974 All-Australian team. Andrew Ireland standing 3rd from left in back row, was recruited to Collingwood the following season. As the Sydney Swans CEO, Ireland has been back in the news after pulling off a major recruiting coup in signing Hawthorn's Lance Franklin to a \$9 million, 10-year deal.

In compiling this list, every effort was made to cross-reference a variety of sources, including local press reports, past players' recollections, annual reports, photos, footy records, and a terrific book titled *For The Love Of The Game*, by Joseph Johnson. I'm especially thankful to John Miles, Don Blackwood, Russell Knight, John Rojo, Robin Hick, Tim Robinson, Garry Kennedy, Peter Flynn, Colin McDonald, Chris Taylor and Michael Sloan for help rendered in recent weeks. If any rep players names have been missed, my apologies.

There are a few choice anecdotes that came to light that I'd like to share.

Few players get the chance to don the Big V, whether it be because of availability through work or study commitments, injury, team balance considerations, or in Reg 'Mulga' Miles's case, misbehaviour. Reg was one of the most feared ruckmen of his time and was selected to play against South Australia in Adelaide in 1955. John Miles recalls that Reg, who loved a beer, got off the overnight train when it pulled in to Ballarat. He went straight to the nearest pub and bought a dozen large bottles of beer, which he drank over the course of the train trip that night. This didn't amuse the VAFA coach, who didn't give him a run in the game against SA. The Vics lost by three points and Reg had a sheepish grin when the team photo was taken. It still hangs on the wall at VAFA headquarters.

When Melbourne hosted the Olympic Games in 1956, Reg was overlooked for rep selection in favour of another star of Ivanhoe's A grade premiership team, centre-half-back Lloyd Williams. The VAFA

was given the honour of playing an exhibition match on the MCG against a combined VFL-VFA team of amateur players - in keeping with the Olympic ethos of amateur athletes. According to the VAFA annual report, this was the “absolute highlight of Australian Football since its inception”. The ground was not a full grass surface because they had to play over cinder running tracks as well as other uneven parts of the arena necessary for Olympic field events. On December 7, the teams ran out in front of a big crowd including thousands of overseas visitors who had never seen a game of Aussie rules. The VAFA team wore the colours of the Australian Amateur Football Council – white guernseys with green collars, cuffs and numbers plus the Olympic rings emblazoned across their chests. “These teams would be the best and most colourful uniformed teams ever to have taken the field in an Australian Football game,” the VAFA report stated. The game successfully demonstrated the finer points of Australian Football such as “high marking, long kicking and speed”. The VAFA’s victory was described as “rather incidental but nevertheless a wonderful effort as it was truly a team win, every player giving of his best”.



1956 Olympic team. Lloyd Williams 5th left, 3rd row

And that’s what it’s all about – doing the best you can when given the chance to play for your state.

Some past players I’ve spoken to have been reluctant to talk much about their time in the Big V. Others happily recalled the efforts of Ivanhoe teammates.

Robin Hick, who first pulled on the Big V in 1969, was one of three Hoes to make the 1970 Victorian team that played in the Perth carnival. He recalled that teammates Billy McWhinnie and David McMahon “both went well”. “I had no idea, but worked it out by the time I finished playing at 41,” he wrote.

Peter Flynn, who like Lloyd Williams was honoured as a Team of the Century player, is believed to have been the only VAFA player to have played rep footy in under 19s, the A-B team and also C-F team. But 18 years down the track, it was the omission of his Ivanhoe teammate Travis O’Neil that still rankled. “Trav missed the C-F side, was the last cut - and should have played - was easily the best full-back in the league at the time. I had an argument with the coaches and selectors about it.”



Rohan Armstrong (left) and Peter Flynn (right) in the 1995 state team.

Another Team of the Century member, the late Mick Callinan, was named alongside his good mates Andrew Ireland and John Rojo in 1973. It wasn't until I contacted Mick's brother Peter in Ottawa that I learnt that Mick also represented Tasmania when he was playing at Clarence in the TFL. "He was unlucky not to have made the All- Australian team from two states" wrote Peter.

Garry Kennedy found it a bitter-sweet experience wearing the Big V. Playing for the VAFA under 18s against the VFA under 18s in 1985, Kennedy was awarded a trophy for the best VAFA player in a 29-point loss. Among his opponents that day was a future Ivanhoe playing coach Doni Valkanis, who captained the VFA side while at Preston. Starting on the bench in a game against Vic Country at Lavington in 1987, Kennedy watched helplessly as Country banged on the first 11 goals. When coach Bernie Sheehy finally unleashed Kennedy, he scored the VAFA's only goal of the half during time-on in the second quarter. It was a more even second half, but Country won comfortably by 64 points. Sadly, several players failed to turn up for the team photo during the week, so it was never taken.

It was a fairytale season in 1986 for Peter Adams, who went from playing D grade at Banyule to playing for Collingwood in the space of 12 months. Club legend Timmy Robinson, who recruited Adams to play A grade for Ivanhoe in 1986, wrote: "When he (Adams) came I contacted John Fisher, the Vic Amo's coach to have a look at him for the Victorian side. He made the team and played in the carnival in Perth and from there was selected in the All-Australian team. This brought him to the notice of VFL scouts and he ended up playing the last four games for Collingwood's first side. Not a bad year D grade to A grade to Victorian Amos to Australian Amos to VFL."

All at 'Hoe Park are very proud of our gun forward Ash Close for being chosen to play for the Big V in Ireland. It also proves that no matter where the club is in the grades or on the ladder, if a player is good enough, he'll get noticed by the selectors.

We have created a new page in our History section that has the full list of players who played for the Big V whilst being an Ivanhoe player, take a look by clicking [here](#).

2013 HARRY WINNERS

The Black & Whites held their annual 'Harry' Dinner last week at Va Tutto's restaurant in Ivanhoe. The special guest speaker for the evening was former North Melbourne Premiership player Ross Henshaw. Ross played for the Kangaroos from 1971 until 1983 and was part of the 1975 and 1977 Premiership teams. He spoke of his relationship with Ron Barassi and playing alongside some superstars of the time like David Dench and Barry Cable. He reminisced about the North Melbourne team spending time at the home of Ivanhoe's Flynnns in 1975.



At this dinner the Black & Whites present their 'Harry' Award to someone who has made a significant positive contribution to our great club. This year they awarded two 'Harry' awards, the first going to Colin 'Village' McDonald. Over many years Colin has been a player, a committee member, Reserves coach and over the last 7 years has spent his Saturday afternoons watching our opponents for the following week, before driving to our match to watch the second half. He has done this at his own expense, without question, helping Doni Valkanis (who was on hand to talk about Colin) and Leigh Cole best prepare for the upcoming game. A well deserved winner!



The second 'Harry' winner was shocked, with one of the organisers of the Black & Whites, Ron Tucker sneakily organising an award for Rob Pearce. Like Colin, Rob has done many roles at the club over many years, Reserves coach, Committee member, President and Team manager to name a few and his ongoing work wherever the club needs him cannot be underestimated.



Congratulations to both guys on being awarded a 'Harry'.



The 'Harry' winners

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A quick reminder that the AGM will be held this Wednesday at 7pm at the clubrooms. All players and members are welcome to attend.

3 October 2013

CSC LAUNCH NEW WEBSITE

Ongoing club sponsor CSC Civil Constructions have just launched their new website. With IAFC Life Member James 'Rowdy' Scoble one of the Directors, CSC have supported the club over many seasons. So if you are involved in the civil construction world or know someone who is, take a look at the website (just click on the logo below). They specialise in medium density/unit development, retirement villages, residential & commercial subdivisions, car parks, road widening & slip lanes, pavement & footpath construction, bulk earthworks & building excavations, trenching & conduit laying, drainage projects & wetlands and surveying.



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