

HEARTBEAT



A newsletter for past players and officials
of the West Perth Football Club

The final Heartbeat of 2017



Welcome to the third edition of HeartBeat, a newsletter for past players and officials of the West Perth Football Club.

In this edition, we catch up with 1980s fan favourite Phil Bradmore, 2003 premiership hero Brent LeCras, and 1979 Breckler medallist Ross Prunster.

We also take a look at this year's Breckler medal count and our soon-to-be-opened

club facilities at Arena Joondalup.

It's also the time of year when we invite you to renew your club membership, or join up with family and friends for the 2018 WAFL season.

We look forward to continuing to bring you the news from the club, while also looking back at our proud history.

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Does your heart beat true?

My first game – Ross Prunster remembers 1973

I had been playing in the reserves and wasn't making any progress in breaking into the league side, and I was often warming the bench in the reserves, and at times not being selected in the team line-up. I later became a water boy for the league side, and during the 1971 grand final against East Perth I ran onto the ground to take some water to Alan Watling. I asked him "what's it like out here?", and Alan said "this is the best feeling you will ever feel in your life. If you knuckle down you could have it too". I haven't forgotten those words.



In 1972 I was still struggling to get some ground time in the reserves. There were no rotations off the bench back then, and if you were assigned to the bench at the start of the game that's where you stayed unless someone got injured or the coach decided to replace a player who wasn't performing well. Most of the time I got a run for five minutes in the last quarter if the game was beyond losing or winning. I assumed the situation wasn't going to change, so I went back and played with Mount Hawthorn Amateurs.

During 1972 I trained with Alan Watling and Stephen Smeath. They had a miniature football and the three of us would go to Leederville Oval where Watto and Smeathy would practice kicking goals from impossible angles by curling and dribbling the ball. What those two could do with that ball was quite amazing, and it taught me the finer skills of ball handling and kicking.

I wanted to have another crack at playing for West Perth and I knew I had to get myself to peak fitness to have any chance of making league, so I set myself a hard pre-season program that included running in the mornings, lunchtimes and at night.

In 1973 Dennis Jones was appointed coach of West Perth, and he phoned and asked me to come down for pre-season training. I said I would, but only if he could guarantee that I would play in one intra-club scratch match, he agreed, so I turned up for training, but it seemed I wasn't going to get my scratch match after all when Dennis Jones told me they were going to stick with the proposed league side. As fortune would have it, Chris Walker, an interstate recruit didn't play, and I took his place.

I did well in the pre-season and was included in the league side for the season opener against East Perth at Perth Oval on 7th April 1973. It was an unbelievable feeling to run onto the ground for my first league game in front of 11,000 people. I was playing on the ball and changing with Bill Valli in the forward pocket, and it was a tight game which unfortunately we lost by 10 points. It was such a different tempo than the reserves and you had to keep your wits about you.

To run onto the ground for the 1973 grand final against Subiaco was

initially a thrill but turned to disappointment after losing.

We were unfortunate to lose full forward Phil “Skippy” Smith through an injury received in the previous game. He was the leading goal kicker that year with 84 goals, and a huge loss to the team structure.

The 1975 grand final was a fantastic achievement by the team to set the record for a winning margin and a record crowd. For some reason I didn’t feel the emotion at the end of the game and thought “is that all there is to it”? It took me two days to realise the enormity of the occasion.

When it looked like we would make the finals I used to go to Bill Dempsey’s place at 5.30 in the morning and tap on his bedroom window much to his annoyance. I always copped some verbal abuse but he would come out in his gear and we would go for a 10km run. He played such a tremendous game in the grand final, and I told him it was all due to those early morning runs.

I was fortunate to have missed only one game through injury out of 159 games with West Perth. I did get injuries during games, including a couple of nasty ones, but I played through them, and like for many players, the thought of losing your place in the side was worse than the injury, and I’d had enough of sitting on the sidelines.

It was an honour to have played 159 games with West Perth and be selected to represent WA on 4 occasions, and to have received the Breckler Medal in 1979.

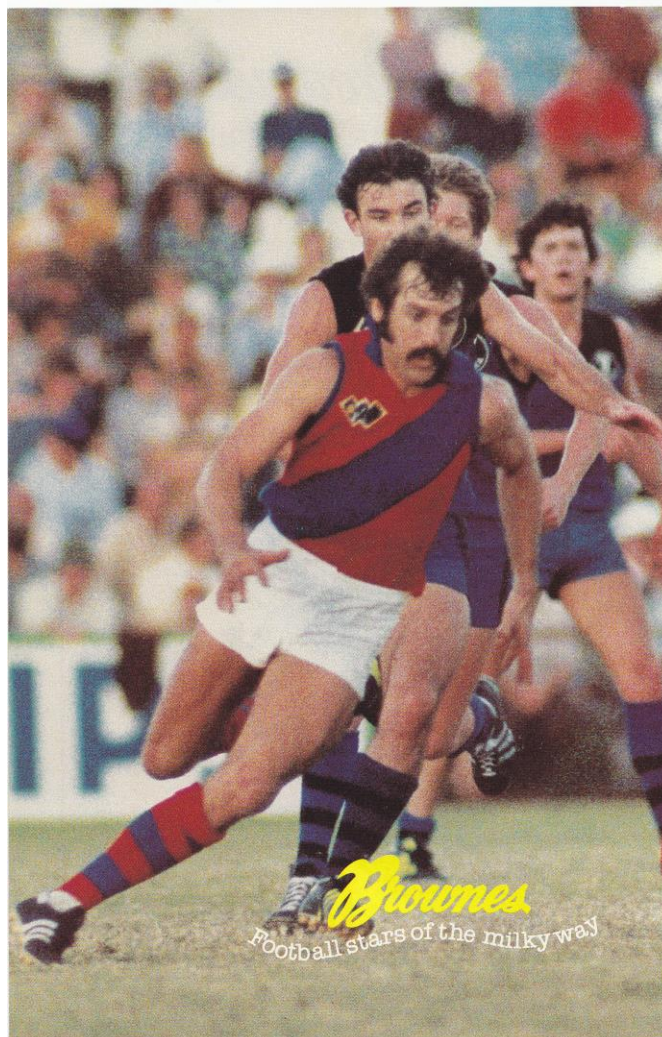
- with Bill Spittles

It’s easy to get on board with the Falcons in 2018

In 2018, the club will move into its new home and we want you to enjoy the benefits.

A new membership category has been introduced to assist all of our past players and officials to register and engage with the club.

For just \$20, you will be listed on the club’s database and receive benefits including an invitation to a president’s lunch, to an annual dinner for past



and officials, and to club business lunches.

You will receive additional home game benefits when upgrading your membership to Falcon Fanatic, Platinum Falcon or Millennium Falcon.

For further information, please go to: www.westperthfc.com.au and click on the “membership” tab. Your support is warmly encouraged.

Shane Nelson carries off his third Breckler Medal

Shane Nelson celebrated a stellar season by winning the Breckler medal on Friday 13th October in a ceremony at Joondalup Resort.

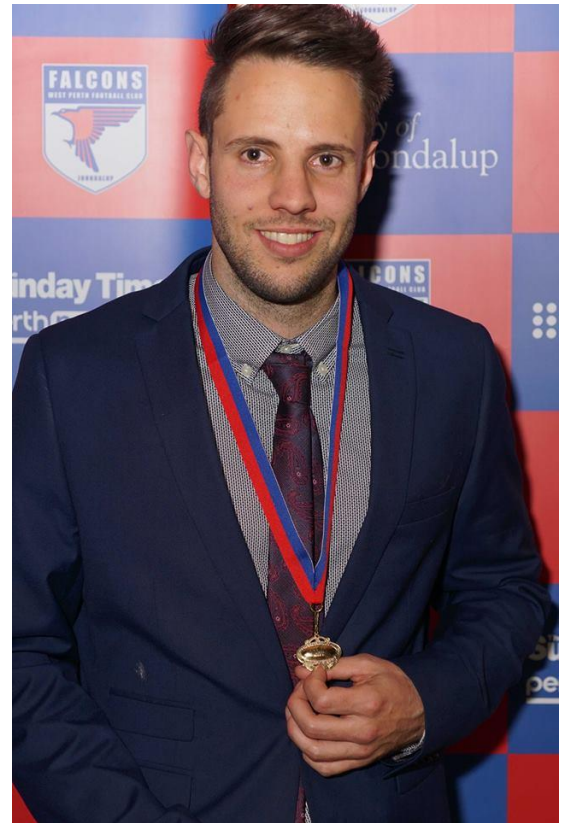
In winning his third Breckler medal, Shane joins exalted company in Checker O'Keefe, Ray Schofield, Bill Valli, Peter Menaglio, Steve Trehwella, Kim Rigoll and Mel Whinnen as the only men to have won three or more.

Mel Whinnen's record nine Breckler medals will take some catching, but Shane, 24, has time on his side.

Congratulations too, to Aaron Black, Luke Meadows and Kody Manning for finishing in the top four of the 2017 count. Scott Nelson won the rising star award, while Tyler Keitel was the club's leading goalkicker.

For the reserves, Conal Lynch took out the fairest & best award, while the colts' best was Dylan Yem.

Finally, Laura Pugh won the award for the women's league team, Ruby Cunningham for the reserves team and Dana Mullumby for the colts.



Where are they now? – 2003 hero Brent LeCras

You played your last game for the club in 2012, what have you been doing since then, career-wise and in football?

Since football finished, I have moved back to my home town of Cervantes full time. I work in the family crayfishing business, skippering my dad's boat. I played for the local side for four years, retiring for good at the end of the 2016 season. We were lucky enough to win a few flags in that time, with some old West Perth mates coming up and playing too. Clayton Lasscock, Callum Chambers, Josh Pearce, Dan Hunt, Steve Morgan, Lewy Harvey and Tom Parker all played with us in Cervantes. I have two sons, Koby,

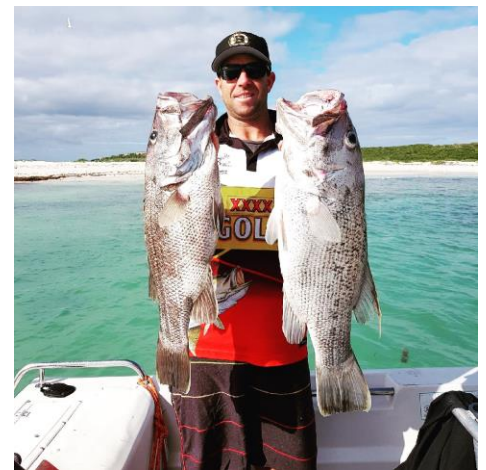
who is nine, and Max is four. I coached Koby's team this year.

Do you remain in touch with many of your former teammates?

It's a bit hard living out of Perth and still keeping in touch with all of the guys, but there is probably a group of 15 or so who I try to catch up with once or twice a year to have a beer. I remain close to the guys who came and played footy with me here.

Do you manage to get to many West Perth games these days?

I really haven't seen many games since I finished up. I keep an eye on the scores and the guys I played with who are left.



Hopefully over the next couple of years I'll get down to a few more games with my kids and catch up with some familiar faces.

Which current West Perth players do you enjoy watching most?

I still speak to Jay Van Berlo and Matt Guadagnin, so I like to see how they're going. I always liked playing next to Andrew Strijk and generally keep an eye on guys I know a bit, and I really like to see Luke Meadows, Shane Nelson, Aaron Black and Nic Rodda going well.

Has the game evolved much in the five years since you played your last game for the club?

It's hard for me to say too much since I'm not directly involved, but I think teams are probably putting a lot more emphasis on structures and rotations these days. We were allowed to go out and just play. It's probably the same story, though, that teams do well when they buy in and play for each other.

Who were your football heroes growing up?

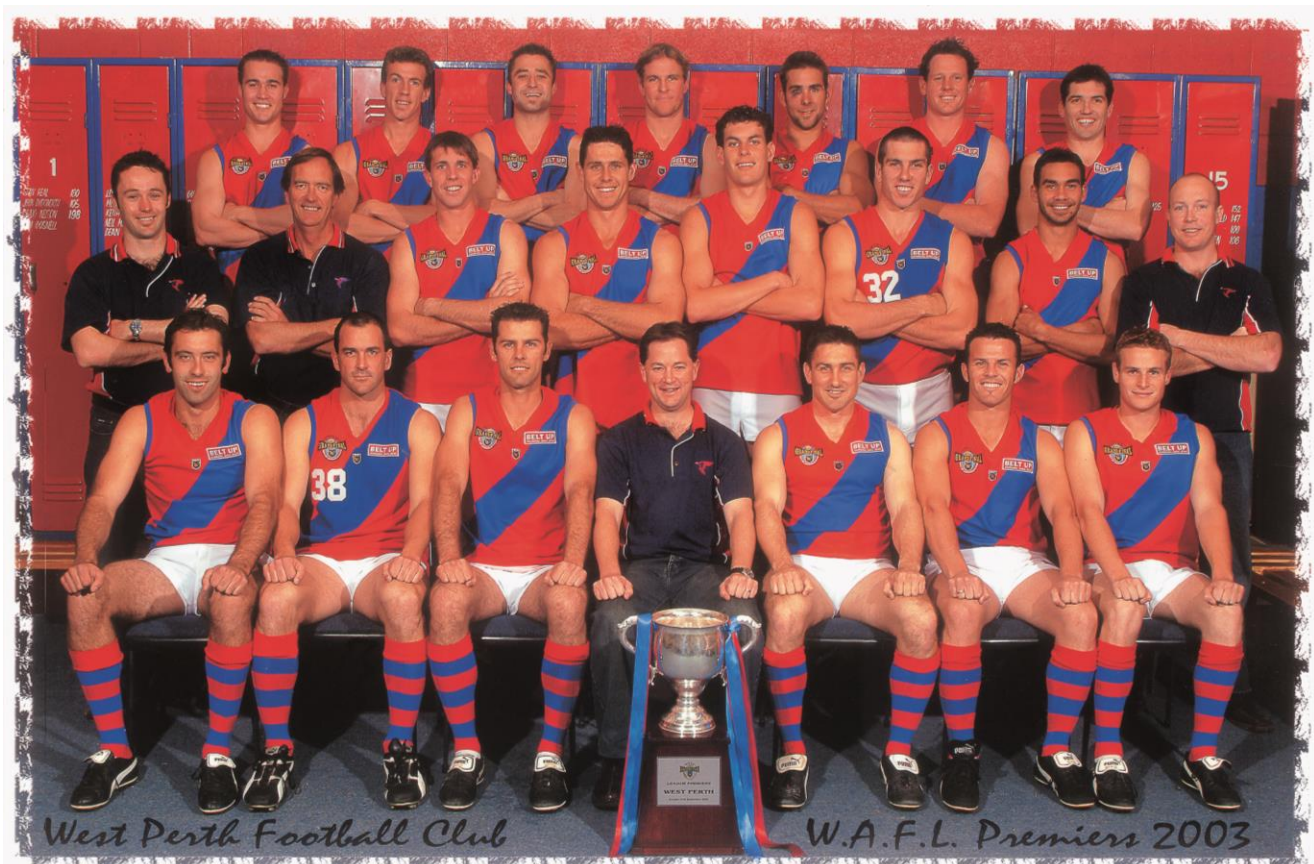
My old man, Peter, played at East Fremantle and so I loved them growing up. My favourite player was Chris Mainwaring.

Can you share with us a few of your favourite football memories at West Perth?

My best football memories from West Perth are mainly the people I met and playing in winning sides. I met a lot of good people in my time and I guess footy is a lot more fun when you win. We had some good wins in finals early in my career and some memories of winning big derbies were always good.

A final question (and this one's from Rob Hunt)... what's it like being a premiership player and dual Simpson medallist, and still be regarded as the worst footballer in your family?

Standard Rob remark that... I'm pretty happy to be Mark Waugh. We actually had a few beers and watched a replay of the 2003 grand final together recently and to have a bit of fun with it, we decided to drink when the other one got a kick! Rob passed out in the 3rd quarter and I drove home!



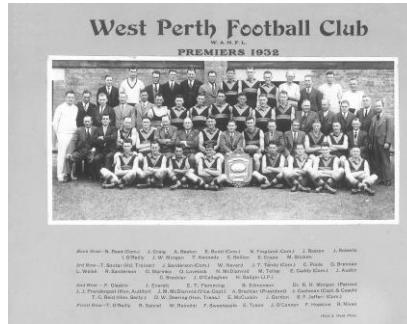
Can you help make our new rooms feel like home?

Our new facility at Joondalup will house and display an extensive collection of West Perth Football Club memorabilia, along with film and audio, and will represent the history of our club since its origins in 1885.

Any club memorabilia, film, video or audio you would like to donate or lend for inclusion within the display would be gratefully received.

Please contact the club on 9300 3611 or email heritage@falconsfc.com.au should you wish to assist us to make our new clubrooms look and feel as they should.

The club's Heritage Committee



has devoted a good number of hours into making our new facility feel like home, however, there still remains much to do.

Framed pictures dating back as far as the 1890s, boots worn in the 1950s and a few old jumpers have all been dusted down as we ready a wide range of memorabilia for display.

Work is also being undertaken in regard to naming rooms to reflect our long and proud history, and hundreds of photos have been scanned and set aside for display.

We're sure our collection of memorabilia, photos and films will make you proud to be a part of our club's history.

We need your help to re-connect with our past



Does your heart beat true?

The hearts of those in the Cardies Coffee Club certainly do.

Know something we don't about a past West Perth player or official? Why not let us know by calling the club on 9300 3611 or sending an email to heritage@falconsfc.com.au

We are keen to build strong links between the club and those who made it what it is today, but we can only do this with your help.

Please let us know about any noteworthy achievements, serious illnesses or the passing of past players and officials.

We're also looking to keep our database up to date, so make sure you let us know if you move house or change your phone number or email address.

Team photo flashback – 1947 colts



Back row: L-R: A. Moebius, T George, R Branche, R Bonser, N Garland, K Haley, K Bracken;
3rd row: L-R: C Schofield, R Harrison, E Travis, A Davies (property), D Marinko (committee), R Dalziell (committee), C Hicks, W Boylan, J McMahon;
2nd row: L-R: B Power (committee), W Luckman, D Williams, RW Hill (treasurer), R Standing (secretary), F Hughes (head trainer), JW Bryant (committee), A Falconer, V Haley, J Weaver (committee);
Front row: L-R: W Lewis, W Jackson, F Buttsworth (manager), F Harman (captain), RP Fletcher (president), W Gregory (vice-captain), J Brooker (coach), P Lynch, A McMahon;
Absent: M Walker, P McDonald (trainer), A Watterson (time keeper).

It was 1947 and West Perth's league team was in the midst of a golden era that saw it make nine second semi finals in a row, from 1946-1954.

But a top league team needs top reserves players to fill the gaps created by injury and poor form. It also needs to develop those players into regular league players for the years ahead.

Imagine, then, having this reserves team (called "colts" in 1947). Players like Bill Boylan, Kevin Bracken, Charlie Hicks, Alan Falconer, Vern Haley, Billy Lewis and Patrick Lynch all made contributions to the league team, while Neil Garland and Frank Harman were strong performers at the top level.

Little wonder, then, that the Cardies won the reserves flag that season, defeating East Perth in the grand final 6.3 (39) to 5.6 (36).

Upcoming Events

4 November: The official opening of the HBF Arena Redevelopment. 10am.

12 December: Annual General Meeting at HBF Arena. 6.30pm.



Interested in volunteering?

The West Perth Football Club enjoys terrific support from a loyal band of volunteers.

But we are always keen to have more volunteers join us and we'd welcome you aboard in any capacity in which you would like to contribute your skills and time.

For further information, or to register an interest, please contact Peter Cutler on 0447 771 585.

Heading West: Phil Bradmore 1981-1988

Tell us about your football career in the VFL with Footscray?

My career with Footscray Football Club was from 1979 until June 1981. At the time, Footscray was going through a terrible period. There were three changes of coach (Goggin, McKenzie and Hart), we sat close to the bottom of the ladder and were often well and truly beaten. It was not the ideal place for me as a young full forward, not yet 21. I would be promoted one week and, after another big loss, would be back playing reserves. I played 15 senior games in those four years and kicked 17 goals. I played alongside some great players (Dempsey and Templeton), however, I often felt not good enough, not fit enough and had to grow and become stronger if I was to become a consistent senior player.

What was behind your decision to join West Perth?

Just before the June clearance deadline of 1981, the general manager for West Perth, Graham Pleydell, came over to Victoria and met with me one cold afternoon at the back of the Whitten Oval grandstand. My dad often tells me of his friendship with Ron Bewick (Corry and Darren's Dad) and how they once met at a national work conference. Perhaps that is how West Perth had heard of me?

Anyway, I was feeling like my time with the Bulldogs was almost up (I had heard whispers of a clearance), I was unemployed and I was excited that another club, West Perth, was interested in me. With a chance to start afresh at a new club,

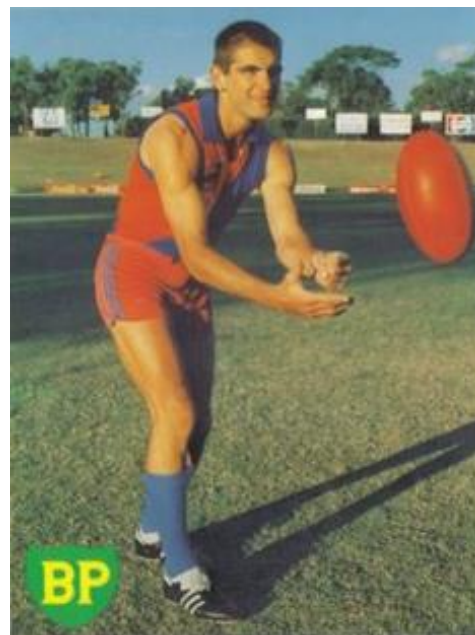
and without knowing a single soul, I accepted the challenge I would end up never regretting.

You immediately became a bit of a cult figure with West Perth fans. What was behind that?

I left Melbourne with a short haircut (to get the most bang for my buck) and arrived in the west. The big open dry spaces of Leederville Oval, the staff at the club, the strong ties with the community and the acceptance of me by the players had an immediate impact. It is now a bit of a blur, but I arrived on the eve of a game between East Fremantle and West Perth. I learnt the names of the players from a team photo handed to me that night by Clinton Farmer. Graham Campbell was the coach that day. I remember he used every available centimetre on his blackboard to get his messages through. That day was a dream.

The team just gelled as one. For the first time I believed I was in the 'zone'. I kicked eight goals and hit the post twice. West Perth kicked 37 goals for the match. With each goal I kicked, the more excited I became. With the chants from the enthusiastic crowd in the grandstand urging me on, by the time I kicked the last goal I was doing handstands.

Living in Perth during the 80s was special. Songs from bands from England like The Clash, The Specials and Madness were also starting to get airplay. Like any other young boy, I got swept up into the fad. I bought braces and wore tartan pants, kept my hair short and bought pointy shoes.



I was a bit different, played with my heart on my sleeve and, I suppose, being at full forward and close to the spectators, I tried to keep them involved with antics probably not accepted today.

1985 is regarded your best season in WA. Why do you think that is?

After four seasons with the club, it was time to take a more senior role. Blokes like Brian Adamson, Ben Jager, Ross Gibbs, John Duckworth, Laurie Heal, Geoff Hendriks and Alan Watling had retired or left, so I guess I grew up a bit. I had a great pre-season under new coach John Wynne. My mates were now all starting to get married (I think Ray Holden and Dan Foley were married) while others like Les Fong had young families to look after. There were not as many times I would hang out at the Underground Nightclub. I settled down and started going out with Jedda. I trained harder,

set goals and became fitter. I tried to run and run and run on the field, hoping to wear out my opponents. I was now playing centre half forward and remember players like Jon Dorotich, Geoff Miles, and John O'Sullivan giving me tough battles. I guess by this stage I had played over 100 senior games and was getting used to the pace of the game. John Wynne was very helpful to me. He completely changed the rules. He had plays that I see on TV today that, at the time, were not accepted. He had all the forwards up the ground and we turned and ran blindly, knowing the ball would be kicked over my head as I ran on to it. John certainly thought outside the box!

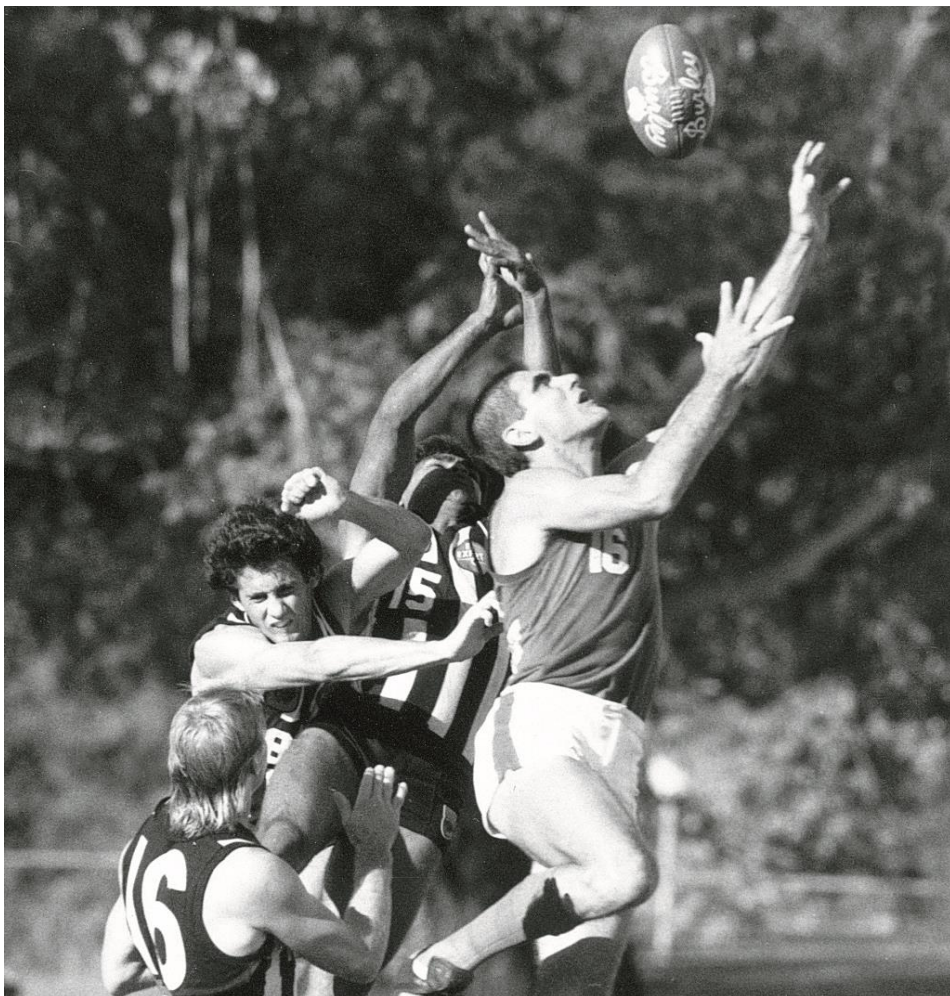
Can you share with us some of your best memories of your time with West Perth?

I cannot express how fortunate I was to play under Dennis Cometti. His professional approach to football, the way he prepared his speeches, and his knowledge still stand out. The thing that stands out, though, was the day he threw his watch (at least I think it was his) against the wall, smashing it to pieces. "Time stands still for no man" still rings in my head. I played alongside some terrific people, had great administrators in Rod Brown and Brian Atkinson, and played against tough players who would later go on to play for the Eagles. Dean Laidley, Corry

and Darren Bewick, John Gastev, Sean King and Paul Mifka were all fine players and I cannot forget George Michalczyk and Noel Mugavin though I could go on listing life-long mates (hello Gordon Polson). Craig Starcevich, Nicky Winmar, Mark Bairstow, Chris Mainwaring, Steve Malaxos, Dwayne Lamb and Michael Christian come to my immediate mind when I think of players I played against. The standard of footy was very high. I learnt many lifelong lessons about resilience, humility, confidence and mixing with all people, whatever their background or beliefs. Team sport certainly teaches us about life.

What have you been doing since you left West Perth?

When I was overlooked for the Eagles squad in 1989, and after getting married, I looked for the next chapter in life. Noel Mugavin rang from country Victoria and asked me to play for his team, South Warrnambool. I did not like leaving the Falcons, however, times were changing. I could not see myself as a postman forever. Noel convinced me to take the family back east, where I learnt at the age of 30 to become a primary school teacher. Twenty-five years later I am still with the Department of Education, NSW, and a principal (I know, I can't believe it either) at a school with 130 beautiful students at Iluka, NSW. (Iluka is 90 minutes south of Byron Bay). My three children have grown up and left home and they live on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane. I have been married twice and am currently living happily alone. Sometimes, I look



back and can't believe all these things I've done. I would like to sincerely thank West Perth for taking a chance on me. I hope I was able to somehow repay your faith in me. As Dennis Cometti once quoted Kennedy to me "Think not what the club can do for you, but what you can do for the club". I have tried to instil that in every student I have taught. I now play tennis, having retired from the Grafton Tigers two years ago. I see AFL games when I can. It's men like Rohan Bewick I admire now.

When do you expect to visit Perth and can you promise you'll find time to get to a West Perth game?

My brother, Steve, lives near Mandurah. It is my turn to catch up with him and I will do so next year. I shall attend my first game at Joondalup. It would be great to see the Falcons flying high again and catch up with old players and supporters. I promise I will not wear braces and pointy shoes!!

Steve also played for West Perth and had a blinder in the drawn 1989 first semi-final. What is he doing now?

He is married to Naomi and has two teenage girls, Talia and Liana. He works hard and I admire the determination he shows in business and the time and balance he is able to provide to his family.

We're about to move into our new facilities

Our new home continues to track to schedule with the club to be handed the keys on November 3.

Now the hard work begins as we try to ensure the facility really feels like home for players, coaches, members, sponsors and supporters.

This work will continue over the summer and we'll look forward to welcoming you to the new facility in early 2018.

The AFL has now scheduled a JLT pre-season fixture for Joondalup on Sunday March 11, so mark this date into your calendar as a great opportunity to get along to check out our new home.



The milestone men – Jay Van Berlo, Andrew Strijk and Aaron Black

Three players, including captain Jay Van Berlo, notched up important milestones for the club in 2017. Congratulations to Jay (150 games), Andrew Strijk (200 games) and Aaron Black (150 games) for their on-field achievements and for their outstanding service to the club. We took the opportunity to ask them about their season and career highlights:

Andrew Strijk

My favourite career memory would definitely be the 2013 premiership. To be able to share that moment with that group of blokes was unbelievable. Being a part of the WA state team this year that beat Victoria in Melbourne for the first time was a highlight, made all the more special by the strong representation of West Perth teammates in that WA side. I have also enjoyed seeing the development of some of our younger players into really good league footballers. Players of the ilk of Corey Chalmers, Tyler Keitel, Aiden Lynch and Luke Meadows will serve the club well for a long time to come.

Jay Van Berlo

My greatest memory over my 150 games has been the 2013 grand final win. The satisfaction I felt when that final siren went is like nothing I've felt before on a footy field. I remember the siren sounding and just screaming out with joy as I embraced Mark Hutchings and Matt Guadagnin, shortly before being mobbed by teammates. It was pure elation and something that will stick with me forever.

I'm still so proud of the way that particular group of players came together in 2013 and played such team orientated and selfless football, particularly in the two finals. This year has been a challenging year for West Perth, however one game that probably stands out for me is the Peel Thunder game down in Mandurah. We had been comprehensively belted the week before by 100 points to South Fremantle, and had rightfully copped a fair bit of stick from everyone that week. We needed to respond against a formidable opponent, and to the boys' credit they stood tall that day against a talented Peel outfit and fought out a solid victory. While we still had a long way to go to earn back the respect we lost the week before, I was proud of the group's response.

Aaron Black

My favourite memory is definitely winning a premiership in 2013. I think everyone who plays football would agree with me because that's what you play for. Team success is the ultimate goal. You start training in November

finish at the end of September. It's a long year and it's a huge rollercoaster, so to be rewarded at the end by being the best side in the competition and getting to celebrate that with your football family is something really special.

My season highlight would be playing my 150th game and becoming a life member. I have put a lot of hard work into making myself the best footballer I can be and I am rewarded by playing week-in, week-out. I've been pretty lucky to this point in my career, but I am so grateful for the opportunity and couldn't be prouder of what I have achieved.

Past players and officials of the West Perth Football Club would also like to congratulate Luke Meadows and Shane Nelson for bringing up their 100-game milestones with the club.

Contributions

If you have any suggestions, facts or photos for inclusion in future editions of HeartBeat, please contact the Heritage Committee at heritage@falconsfc.com.au

