

HEARTBEAT



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

The heart still beats true



Welcome to the first edition of HeartBeat for 2019.

Since our last issue, the club has navigated one of the most tumultuous periods in its history.

A special thanks to the many who donated funds to club coffers.

The job, however, is not yet done. The financial sustainability of the West Perth Football Club will continue to rely on membership volumes and

sponsorships, so please visit the club's website should you wish to join as a member, or call the club if you have an interest in becoming a sponsor.

In this bumper edition of HeartBeat, we catch up with former coach Jeff Gieschen, club legend Alan Watling, and current league player, Dean Munns.

We introduce incoming senior coach Geoff Valentine, two new segments in "From the Vault" and "Remember when...", and mark the passing of several past players, including former captain Len Harman.

And if you think you know the name of the player featured in the photo at top left, drop us a line at heritage@falconsfc.com.au

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Does your heart beat true?

Heading West – 1990s coach Jeff Gieschen

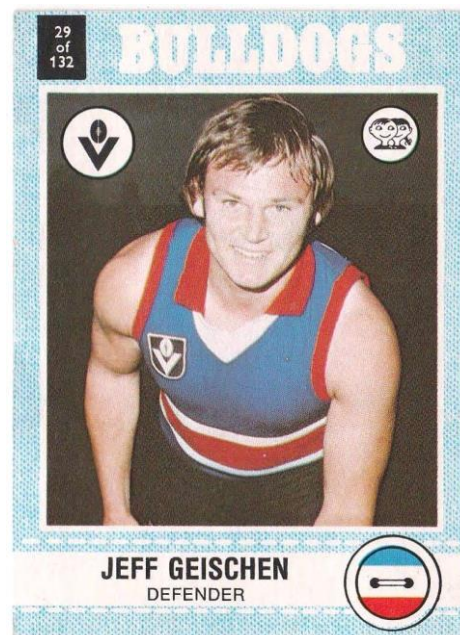
You're best known in WA for having coached West Perth and then Richmond, but can you tell us about your career as a player at Footscray?

I was from a small country town in Victoria called Maffra (a predominantly farming area with a population of around 4000 people.) Maffra played in the Latrobe Valley Football League – one of the strongest country leagues in Victoria at the time. The eastern part of the Latrobe Valley was zoned to Footscray (now Western Bulldogs). After captaining Victoria in the under-15 Australian schoolboy championships and then winning the Maffra senior Best & Fairest at age 15 and 16, I attracted the interest of the Bulldogs and my parents allowed me to go down and play for them when I turned 17. During a practice match period in my first season, I badly broke my ankle and this impacted heavily on my opportunities that year. I managed 24 senior games and captained and won a Best & Fairest at reserves level but never really played to my potential in the five years I had at the club. The Bulldogs were very much a western suburbs, working class club, made up of wonderful people and supporters. There were some outstanding individual players

at the club in my time there (Gary Dempsey, Kelvin Templeton, Barry Round, Bernie Quinlan and Brian Wilson all won Brownlow Medals during their careers) but we could not quite get it right as a team. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Bulldogs and still support them strongly and regularly attend past player gatherings.

You first coached West Perth in 1992, so what did you do between your final days as a player in the VFL in 1978 and your decision to coach in WA?

At the end of 1978, I completed my teaching course and, after another year of being in and out of the Footscray senior side, I was going to be traded to either Melbourne or Essendon. I informed the club of my decision to go back to my home town of Maffra and take up a coaching and teaching position, which I thought would provide me with a more secure future. At age 22, I was the senior captain and coach of my club and was enjoying the challenge of coaching in such a strong league. I played in an inter-league game at Albury against the Ovens & Murray League where I was approached after the game to see if I may be interested in coaching the Wodonga FC the following year. I felt that, at 29, if I was



going to pursue a coaching career, this would be a good opportunity. Maffra had a population of 4000 people and Wodonga had a population of 30,000 people, so clearly it would be a step up re resources, talent pool and challenge. I loved Maffra but if I was serious about my football career this opportunity was too good to refuse. I took up the challenge. I spent six years coaching Wodonga. We managed to have some success re premierships and five times in six seasons won the "Club Championship" award. Some of our players were being drafted to AFL clubs including a courageous, lightning quick and talented onballer, Robbie West. Robbie was drafted to the West Coast Eagles at the end of 1990 after the Wodonga side won the

infamous “Bloodbath” grand final in which no less than eight of our players finished the game with facial fractures (Robbie included - fractured cheekbone). Robbie played for West Perth when he was not selected for the West Coast Eagles. I had kept in touch with Robbie and his family, who still lived in Wodonga.

Out of the blue, in the middle of winter in 1991, I received a call from Steve Woodhouse, then CEO of West Perth, to tell me he would like to come to Wodonga, watch a game, then catch up for a chat. After the game, we met over dinner and he outlined the position of the club, plans for the future and asked if I might be interested in coaching the club if a position became available. Steve kept in touch, then at the end of the season asked if I would be happy to apply for the coaching position that had become vacant.

West Perth finished at the foot of the ladder in 1991. What appealed to you about the challenge offered to you at Leederville?

Just that - the challenge. Clearly the WAFL was a step up on the levels I had been coaching at. When I



researched the coaches in the competition, I found legendary names such as Haydn Bunton Jnr, John Todd, Mal Brown, Ken Judge, Gerard Neesham, Ken Armstrong and Stan Magro. Although it was daunting, I also saw this as a great opportunity to hone my craft against this outstanding array of coaches.

The fact West Perth had finished bottom of the table the previous two seasons was a major driver. I knew West Perth was a proud and successful club and I wanted to help it get back to the status the club deserved. The situation the club was in was going to take me way out of my comfort zone and I felt that if my coaching career was going to develop, this was the ideal scenario. I had been at a club (Wodonga) that had now established a strong culture of winning and I wanted to see if some of the things I had been implementing could be successful at the higher level.

One of the players you blooded in your early days was our club's incoming senior coach, Geoff Valentine. What do you recall about Geoff as a player?

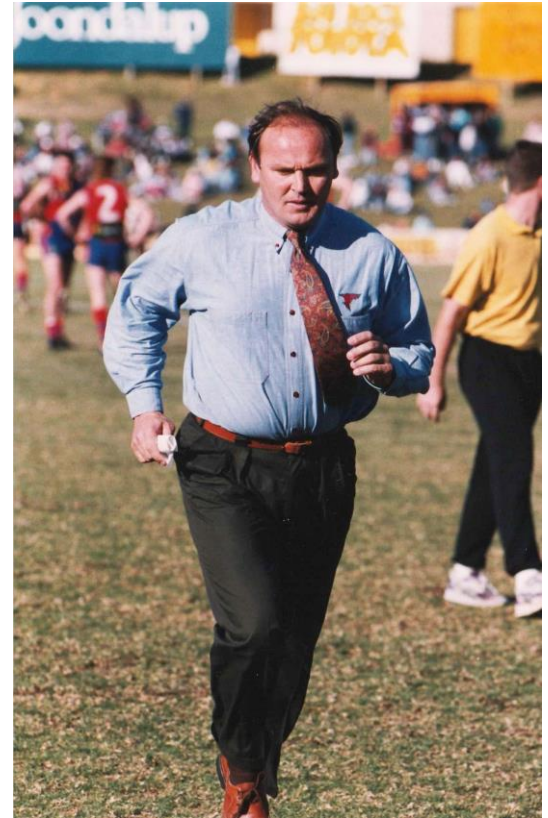
I loved coaching Geoff "Romance" Valentine. He was not one of our gifted, young players with silky skill or great athleticism. He was a great listener. He was courageous. He was a terrier. We had a three point mantra when I coached West Perth. It was simple but effective:

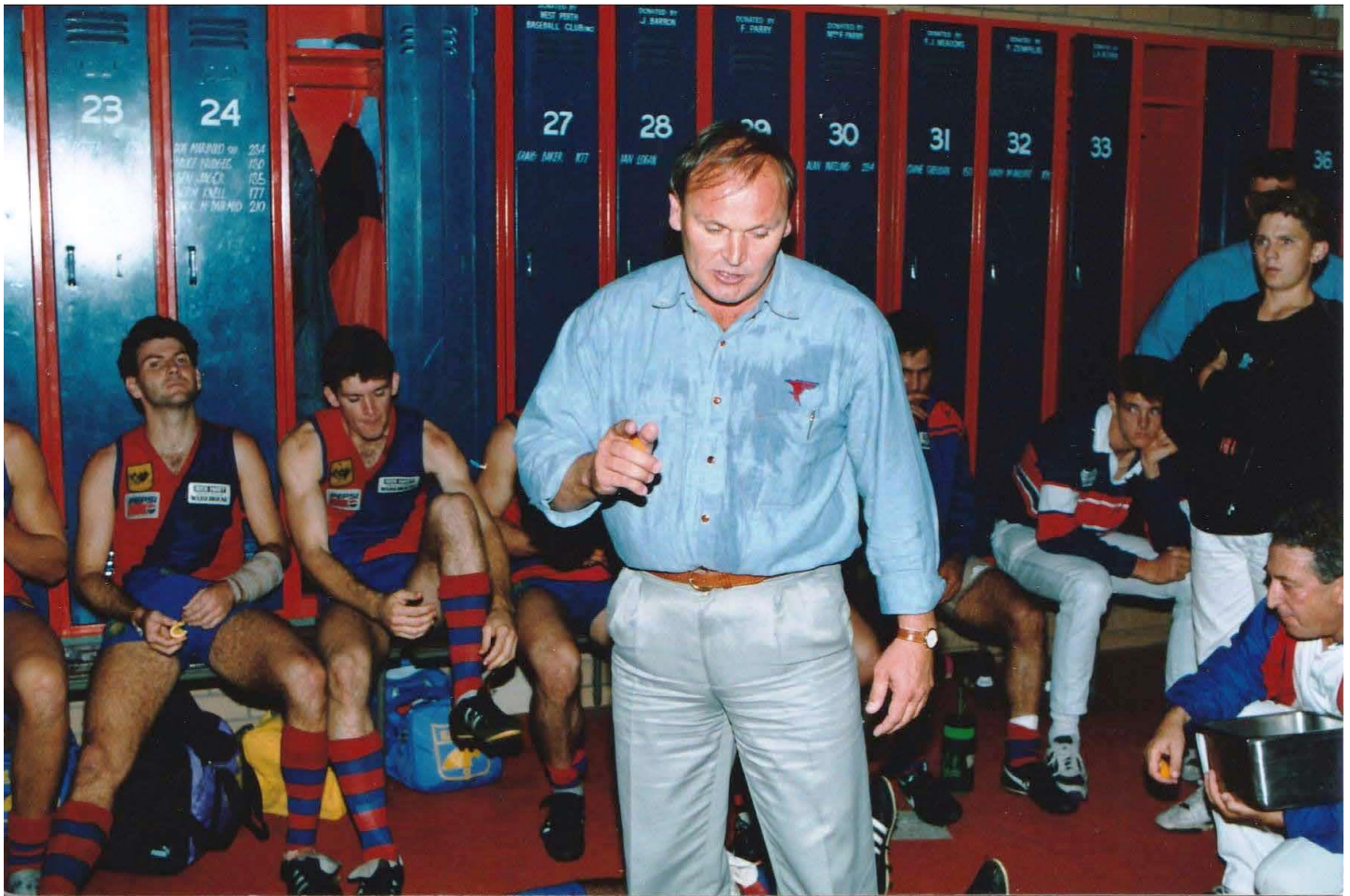
- **Run hard and straight at the ball at all times.** Everyone - no compromise - courageous, relentless.
- **Be into your teammates** - Supportive, inclusive, challenging, tight, enjoy.
- **Be into your club** - Loyal, respectful, appreciative and ruthless.

Geoff epitomised our mantra every time he trained, played or had involvement with the club. He complemented some of our more talented players with his desperation and "never give up" attitude. It did not surprise when he became a successful, popular player for the club. I have great respect for Geoff and fond memories of our relationship as coach and player. The Falcons are in great hands.

The club finished bottom again in 1992 but topped the ladder in 1993. What do you attribute that turnaround to?

The players, the support coaches, myself and the club learned a lot about one other in 1992. I also learned a lot about the competition. When I first arrived, I fell into the mistake of trying to be popular with the players to win them over. They were lacking confidence and I tried to restore that by being ultra-positive and empathetic to their situation. This only gave the players an "out". I soon realised that we needed to lift our standards in all aspects - fitness, skill, mental toughness, teamwork and care for the club. After five or six games we were languishing on the bottom of the ladder.





The club was hurting, my job was on the line and we were going nowhere at that stage. I made a decision to train the players harder than they had ever experienced before. In fact for a two-week period we trained virtually every day - this was radical, as we were still in the first round of the season and if it backfired it could have led to a horrific season. The players responded, they jumped in behind me and my coaching staff and they attacked this period like a team wanting to get better. In the second week of training every day for the designated two-week period, we had to play Claremont at the WACA in a televised game on the Friday night. They had smashed us in the three games they played us the year before by an average of around 100 points per game. To everyone's delight and relief, we beat them by 27 points. We were on our way. The self-belief we gained from hard work, unity and playing as a team resonated in our hearts and minds and from that moment on, this club was on a path towards success. This period for the club was confronting and challenging but warranted. For the remainder of the year we knew what we had to do. We still finished on the bottom with seven wins, but they included wins against grand finalists East Fremantle and South Fremantle at the back end of the season. The foundations had been set and the players now knew there was no substitute for hard work, total team work, resilience and unity. You could see, smell and feel the confidence of the group growing weekly.

Does the 1993 grand final loss still rankle?

Yes it does. We had worked so hard for two years and when we finished on top at the end of the 1993



season, we had given ourselves the best possible chance to win the flag. Unfortunately, we did not play anywhere near our best football on grand final day against Claremont. The Tigers were laden with players with finals experience and Gerard Neesham was a fantastic coach. It was a wonderful experience and clearly gave the players the taste of finals footy and a renewed hunger to attain the ultimate.

That time was somewhat tumultuous for the club given the relocation to Joondalup. What do you recall of the final game at Leederville and the first at Joondalup?

It was not a tumultuous time - it was more of a nostalgic and exciting time. Leederville had been West Perth's home and fortress for a long time. The ground and facilities had great character. Many champion players, administrators and supporters had gone before us and no doubt it produced amazing memories for all concerned. I loved Leederville. The city's lights shining on the tall buildings on training nights reminded me of the high level of the competition and the accountability that goes with coaching a state league side. The club did an amazing job in promoting the last game at Leederville. We were playing a very strong Subiaco side in the last game of the year. It was a picture perfect day. If we won, we went to the top of the ladder. This was almost like a fairy tale after the club had finished as wooden spooners for the previous three seasons. I recall getting to the ground at about midday and there was not a spare seat available in the ground then. It only got bigger from there and when the two teams ran out, the size of the crowd had swelled to dangerous levels and the atmosphere was electric. The fact we won, finished top of the ladder and were a

realistic chance to win a premiership was surreal. The move to Joondalup was exciting. A magnificent, new venue, moving into the heartland of our junior competitions and growing supporter base seemed the logical thing to do. I remember we had no change rooms or facilities when we first moved there, due to lack of completion. The players changed on the bank on the outer side and as the days shortened towards the start of the season, the club had to install portable, generator-driven lighting. Our players were extremely flexible and resilient, however, and we did not miss a beat. We were drawn to play traditional rivals East Perth in the first game at Joondalup and in what was a dour, hard fought game we won and set the pattern for what we hoped was to be a successful existence at our new state of the art environment.

You finished at the club at the end of 1994, leaving to become senior assistant coach at Geelong, and then senior coach of Richmond. Do you ever feel you left one season too soon given the club won a flag the following season?

I left mainly because my parents were getting older and experiencing some health issues. I come from a very close family and my dad had been running the farms by himself. I felt a strong need to go home and be closer to my family and, even though Geelong was still a long way from Maffra, it was easier to get to. It was a gut wrenching decision.



My children were all at school in Perth and my wife was enjoying the lifestyle and involvement with the footy club.

I knew the team was poised. I knew they had completed a solid apprenticeship and the players were now hardened, determined and craved success. I felt mixed emotions when the club broke through and won the flag. It was very much deserved and the people involved did a wonderful job in guiding the club to the premiership. I felt sheer delight, but a touch of sadness I could not witness it or enjoy the afterglow with all the wonderful people who had stuck loyal and worked so hard. I didn't have much time to reflect, however, as Geelong were playing off for the AFL Grand Final against Carlton the following Saturday and we had plenty on our plate.

What are some of your best memories of your time at West Perth?

The win I described earlier in my first year against Claremont. We just had to win that game and we did against all the odds and under a lot of pressure.

The last game win at Leederville and first game win at Joondalup are right up there. The two-week training period when we trained or did activities every day to try and turn around our performances, on reflection, was a most rewarding and inspirational time in my life. The players and the club were magnificent through this period and I think we all grew up and learned a lot about life and sport.

I really enjoyed seeing the ongoing success of our West Perth players and people connected with the club. During a three-or-four-year period, a number of players were drafted (Fewster, Downsborough, Merenda, Curley, West, Symmons, Blurton, Hall, Burns, O'Brien, Turley, Laidley, Smith, Mildenhall, Whitelaw, Merillo, Leckie and Logan. I am sure to have missed some players.) Some of these had already experienced some success before or after I left, but I knew them all and was delighted in watching their careers blossom. Our CEO, Steve Woodhouse, went on to become football manager at the Eagles, Darren Harris became a WAFL premiership coach and AFL assistant coach, Gavin Bell has enjoyed a long and successful career at the Eagles, Phil Cronan became an accomplished senior WAFL coach and now Geoff Valentine has landed the Falcons job. Stevie Trehwella is the current football boss of the club.

Do you often get to Perth, and how frequently would you get to see a West Perth game?

When I was coaching at Richmond and Geelong, I would sometimes get a chance to slip out to watch West Perth when we were over for matches. When my son, Nick, played for the club (14 games in 2005), I think I got over to watch him play in three games. Unfortunately my football commitments often clashed with West Perth matches, but I was the first person each weekend to look up the West Perth results.



Jeff with son Nick at the 2018 AFL preliminary final between Richmond and Collingwood at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Do you manage to keep up with former players and acquaintances from your days at the club? Being so far from Perth makes it difficult. Phil Cronan is one of my closest mates still and I have contact with Basil Zempilas and Tony Fairhead on a regular basis. I catch up with Robbie West whenever we can. Obviously I had a lot to do with Ronnie Burns and Derek Hall when they were with me at Geelong, and Mark Merenda and Ash Blurton when they were with me at the Tigers. I would often see Dennis Cometti when I was at the AFL and he was commentating. He was a wonderful sounding board for me, especially when I was coach of the Falcons. When I do come to Perth, I catch up with my old team manager Terry Hardie (who actually bleeds red and blue). I am planning on coming across in the next few months, so will certainly try to catch up with as many as possible.

What does the West Perth Football Club mean to you?

I have nothing but great memories and to this day feel I owe the West Perth Football Club for the risk it took with me and for the wonderful opportunity it gave my family and me. I have no doubt that had I not coached West Perth I would not have coached at AFL level or been AFL Umpire Manager for 14 years. West Perth, to me, is not so much about the success it has achieved or the wonderful facilities and ground etc, but it was more about the wonderful people and characters I came across and how they shaped and influenced my life. I cannot thank the club enough.



2019 West Perth Football Club fixtures

The WAFL fixtures for 2019 were released prior to Christmas. The first of our 10 home games is against Claremont on April 13, while we have five consecutive in the middle of the season.

Saturday	6 th	April	vs	Peel Thunder (Mandurah)
Saturday	13 th	April	vs	Claremont (Joondalup)
Sunday	21 st	April	vs	South Fremantle (Fremantle Oval)
Saturday	27 th	April	vs	Swan Districts (Joondalup)
Saturday	4 th	May	vs	East Fremantle (East Fremantle Oval)
Saturday	18 th	May	vs	Perth (Lathlain Park)
Saturday	25 th	May	vs	Peel Thunder (Joondalup)
Monday	3 rd	June	vs	East Perth (Leederville Oval)
Sunday	9 th	June	vs	West Coast (Joondalup)
Saturday	22 nd	June	vs	Swan Districts (Steel Blue Oval)
Saturday	29 th	June	vs	Subiaco (Joondalup)
Saturday	6 th	July	vs	Perth (Joondalup)
Saturday	13 th	July	vs	West Coast (Joondalup)
Saturday	20 th	July	vs	East Perth (Joondalup)
Saturday	3 rd	August	vs	East Fremantle (Joondalup)
Saturday	10 th	August	vs	Claremont (Claremont)
Saturday	17 th	August	vs	Subiaco (Leederville Oval)
Saturday	24 th	August	vs	South Fremantle (Joondalup)

Remember when... we drew twice in a row in 1960?

While the Beau-Marks were clapping their hands at the top of the charts in August 1960, nearly 17,000 spectators were doing the same thing at Perth Oval for the Round 19 contest with old rivals and reigning premiers East Perth. Just one game separated first and fourth, and East Perth led by 22 points at the final change. The Cardies kicked 4.2 to 0.4 in the final quarter with Lizard Porter, rucking against Polly Farmer, producing one of his finest efforts. He kicked a goal to tie the scores at 11.11 apiece.

The following week, West Perth travelled to Fremantle to take on South Fremantle, with just one game still separating first from fourth. Amazingly, a draw was again the result, with both teams scoring 16.15. A draw was as good as a win for the visitors, and West Perth finished on top of the ladder, half a game ahead of second and third. All teams to make the four (East Perth, South Fremantle and East Fremantle) won 13 games. West Perth went on to beat the Royals in the second semi-final and won the grand final by 32 points. Brian Foley won the Simpson medal.

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East Perth v West Perth
At PERTH OVAL—2.30 p.m.
Field umpire (see page 6). W. de GRUCHY (Reserve)
Boundary: J. Delling, H. Manley. Goals: E. Crisp, D. Cuming

EAST PERTH			WEST PERTH		
(Royal Blue and Black) Gls.	Kd.		(Cardinal, Blue Sash) Gls.	Kd.	
1 LANGDON, D.	11	11	1 MEDHURST, P.	1	1
2 HALL, R.	1	1	8 McBRIDE, R.	1	1
4 ATWELL, M.	1	1	5 DUFALL, S.	1	1
5 SHEEDY, J. (Capt.)	11	11	6 WYLDE, E. (v-capt.)	1	1
6 GRAHAM, R.	1	1	7 BEWICK, R.	1	1
7 McGILL, K.	1	1	8 MARGARIA, F.	1	1
12 McGREGOR, B.	1	1	9 HEAL, M.	1	1
14 BULL, E.	1	1	10 MARINKO, D.	1	1
15 BELLOS, A.	1	1	11 MARINKO, R.	1	1
16 GIBLETT, R.	1	1	15 DEMPSEY, W.	1	1
18 ROWLES, R.	1	1	16 FANCHI, J.	1	1
19 KENNEDY, L.	1	1	17 EDMONDSON, G.	1	1
21 SEAL, P.	1	1	18 ASHDOWN, K.	1	1
22 CHADWICK, D.	1	1	19 WILLIAMS, D.	1	1
24 KILMURRAY, E.	1	1	20 McNAMARA, L.	1	1
25 FARMER, G. (v-cpt.)	1	1	21 FOLEY, B. (capt.)	1	1
27 HAMMOND, K.	1	1	22 KELLY, R.	1	1
28 WATTS, J.	1	1	23 PORTER, R.	1	1
29 HALEY, K.	1	1	24 TOWNER, R.	1	1
30 JOHN, G.	1	1	25 FRANCE, B.	1	1

1st Qtr. 3 Goals 3 Behinds 1st Qtr. 4 Goals 2 Behinds
2nd Qtr. 9 Goals 3 Behinds 2nd Qtr. 5 Goals 6 Behinds
3rd Qtr. 11 Goals 7 Behinds 3rd Qtr. 7 Goals 9 Behinds

Final Final

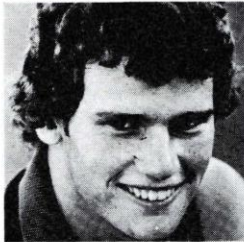
EAST PERTH SUPPORTERS
Who was the Most USEFUL Player To-day? Vote for him at
O'Reilly's Service Station
COR. BEAUFORT and BULWER STREETS
It is Your Vote that will win for him £100

THE FOOTBALL BUDGET Page Eleven

From the vault – Leederville Oval 1981

HeartBeat recently spotted this page in a magazine titled "Leederville Oval 1981". The publication was published ahead of the 1981 season, and the page dedicated to young prospects makes for interesting reading.

YOUNG PROSPECTS!

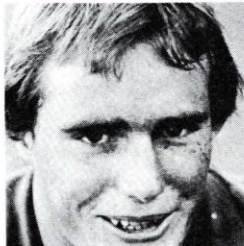


STUART CROLE:

Birthdate: 6.9.1962
 Height: 6.3
 Weight: 13.0
 Occupation: Student W.A.I.T.
 Previous Club: Nukarni

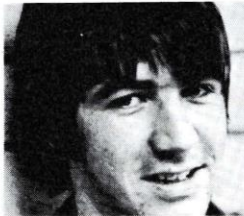
Birthdate: 26.4.1963
 Height: 6.4
 Weight: 13.7
 Occupation: Bank Officer
 Previous Club: Ashfield

CRAIG NELSON:



JOHN HATHAWAY:

Birthdate: 7.5.1961
 Height: 6.3
 Weight: 12.1
 Occupation: Apprentice Chef
 Previous Club: Mirrabooka



ROD CAMPBELL:

Birthdate: 16.8.1962
 Height: 5.9
 Weight: 11.0
 Occupation: Carpenter
 Previous Club: Servite



MALCOLM BENNETT:

Birthdate: 30.1.1962
 Height: 6.4
 Weight: 14.7
 Occupation: Student
 Previous Club: Nungarin

WAYNE DAYMAN:

Birthdate: 10.7.1961
 Height: 5.7
 Weight: 10.10
 Occupation:
 Previous Club: Nungarin

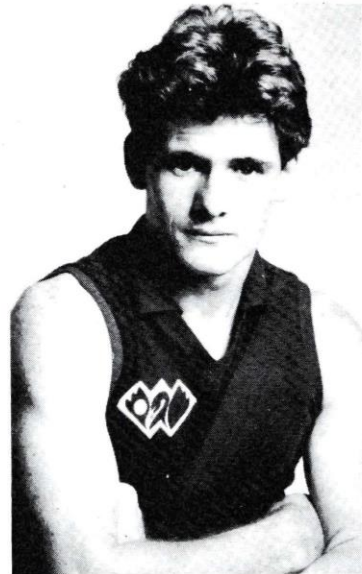
DEAN WARICK:

Birthdate: 18.4.1963
 Height: 5.10
 Weight: 12.0
 Occupation: Drafting Assistant
 Previous Club: Merredin

"TOM WAS VERSATILE"

Tom Soutar began as a player with West Perth becoming Captain in 1921. In 1922 he was captain/coach and again in 1926, whilst in between 1925 Tom was Club Vice Captain. 1927 saw Tom again as coach of West Perth and when he had finished playing he became a trainer with the Club, being head trainer in 1932. But Tom's association didn't end there. In 1940 he became Secretary and held this position for 12 years to 1951 during which time West Perth won 4 Premierships.

44. Paul Ramsay:



Birthdate: 16.11.1960
 Height: 6'2"
 Weight: 12.7
 Occupation: Storeman
 Previous Club: Westminster/Balga

Total W.A.F.L. Games: 3
1980 Fairest & Best Votes: Nil
 With few changes needed to the back line last season, Paul found it difficult to obtain a regular position. He too has trained conscientiously over the summer months in an endeavour to add a few more muscles and an extra metre of pace. Has many years ahead to consolidate a regular position.

"LAWN MOWER FOR CLUB TROPHY!"

Yes it happened back in the thirties, the recipient being former State Captain Max Tetley, who along with full forward Ted Tyson were presented with matching lawn mowers.

Team photo flashback – 1983



It's not a league team, but this edition's team photo flashback of West Perth's development squad from 1983 has some well-known faces in it.

Perhaps the most recognisable is future Eagle Chris Lewis, in the back row, who we lost to Claremont because of his father's history with the Tigers. But there are some other future AFL players amongst this lot.

In the middle of the front row is Dean Laidley, whose playing career at the Eagles and North Melbourne preceded a long coaching career. And Darren Bewick can be found in the back row, second from right, but was playing for Essendon just five years later.

Among the other future WAFL players in this team was defender Peter Cutler (fifth from left in the middle row), who is now a club director, and Heath Soutar (fourth from left in the front row), who racked up 19 league games between 1985 and 1988 and is now a police officer in Collie.

Others of interest include long-time supporter and sponsor Joe Belcastro (front row, third from right), 1982 league player Wayne Foreman (front row, far right), 1983-84 league player Paul Mountain (second row, far left), current Whitfords Amateur Football Club president Kevin Burns (middle row, second from right), and 1985 Teal Cup player Brett Beattie (front row, second from left).

Upcoming Events

4 March: Collingwood Football Club function, prior to JLT Cup game Collingwood v Fremantle. Joondalup. 1.15pm. Tickets from the club.

23 March: West Perth v East Fremantle. East Fremantle Oval. 2.15pm.

30 March: West Perth v East Perth. Joondalup. 2.15pm.

30 March: Corporate Classic and Player Auction. Joondalup. Evening event.



6 April: First WAFL game. Peel Thunder v West Perth. Mandurah. 2.15pm.

13 April: First home game. West Perth v Claremont. Joondalup. 2.15pm.

Future past player – Dean Munns

Dean, you've played 44 games for the Falcons, can you tell us a bit about your junior football and how you found your way to West Perth?

I grew up in the small country town of Beacon, where I played my junior footy until I went to boarding school and played for Mazenod College. I was coached by Dean Warwick for the majority of those years, who I know played for West Perth back in the 1980s. During this time, I was invited to join the Falcons country development program to train and play with the other country guys and then was fortunate enough to be invited down to the under 14s, 15s and 16s development squads, which led to joining the colts and then seniors a couple of years later.



Who have been the greatest influences on your football?

The biggest influence would definitely be my dad, which is a bit of a cliché, but he's always been there - from kicking the footy with me in the backyard growing up, or welding together a few goal posts so I could practice kicking snags out on the farm (which hasn't helped my set shot at all) or even our chats after every game, when we talk about any highlights or what I did well and what I may not have done so well. The support I've had from both my parents is unbelievable, especially growing up on a farm. I think when I was younger I took it for granted just how many hours they spent driving me to training and games and the money they spent on footy boots and registration and everything else. Even to this day, for every game they can, they will drive down from Jurien Bay to watch me touch the ball a couple of times and then drive all the way home the same night. I

definitely wouldn't be where I am without them, so they would be the greatest influence for sure.

Who were your football heroes growing up?

The closest thing I had to a football hero would probably be Chris Judd as I just really loved watching him play and thought he was just pure class. Although I wouldn't say they are my heroes, over the last few years, I have definitely looked up to a few of the guys I play alongside. I consider myself pretty lucky to be able to run out on to the field with and watch the likes of Andrew Strijk, Jay Van Berlo, Aaron Black and Shane Nelson, just to name a few, as they go about their business.

What do you do when you're not playing or training?

I work as a property valuer for LMW, however, outside of work and footy I enjoy getting home to Jurien Bay for a bit of fishing and I am known to be pretty good at beers too.

What are some of your career highlights so far?

Making my league debut was a highlight and although it was also one of the toughest days of my short career, making the grand final last year and the week leading up to it was an experience I won't forget. Also winning a flag with Mazenod College in the under 17s was definitely another highlight.

And challenges you've had to overcome?

I have had a few minor injury setbacks, however, overall I have been pretty lucky and haven't had too many serious injuries or other notable challenges to overcome.

Your Dad, Ross, played 46 games for West Perth in the 1980s. How much has he told you about his playing days?

He has told me a fair bit about his playing days and he's not afraid to pull a few articles or photos out every now and then. To be honest, he doesn't talk himself up too much, he usually just tells me stories about the people he played alongside or against, and I've heard a number of times about how much better the game used to be when he played and how we overcomplicate it these days.

HeartBeat recalls Ross taking one of the marks of the year in 1987. Has Dad told you about that mark and how good it was?

Yes, I have definitely heard about this one a few times and about a few others. Apparently he wasn't bad in the air, which unfortunately hasn't been passed down to me. I have seen a photo of it and I think the bloke he took it on was probably the smallest player on the field but I won't take that away from him. It still looked like a good effort.

News from around the club

Work has been undertaken to ensure the history of the club is better reflected in our new facility at Joondalup. Football operations general manager Steve Trewhella has kicked off two initiatives that will enhance the recognition of

our heritage - a player change room locker door project that will list every player to have represented our club in 100 games or more of senior football, and a mural project depicting our team of the twentieth century for one of the change room walls.

The locker door project has a cost of \$3,000 while the mural carries a cost of \$5,500. If you wish to make a contribution towards the cost, you can contact Steve directly on 9300 3611 for more information.

New life member – property manager Ray Garcia

Congratulations to Ray Garcia on being awarded life membership of the West Perth Football Club.

A lifelong supporter of the West Perth Football Club, Ray Garcia has been a club stalwart since 1990. Fulfilling a good number of roles, he is a favourite among the player group for his work ethic, genuine care for players and his passion for our club's success. Ray epitomises the fabric of the West Perth Football Club.

Ray Garcia has been a lifelong supporter of the club. His official affiliation with the club began in 1990 when the club was still based at Leederville Oval. Ray has given over 25 years of service in a variety of roles. In 2006, Ray missed a season due to illness, but was back on deck in 2007, the moment his health improved.

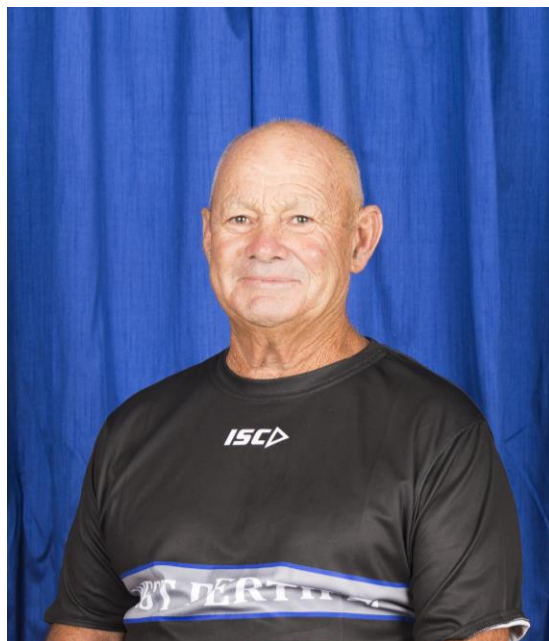
A Mount Hawthorn boy, Ray grew up with the likes of Alan Watling, Stephen Smeath, Ian Logan, and John Wynne and was always hanging around the club with his mates. A bricklayer by trade, Ray was also responsible for making a few improvements to the Leederville Oval grandstand. In 1985 when John Wynne was appointed coach, Windows asked Ray to build some brick barbecues so the players could enjoy their Sunday mornings. Ray was only too happy to volunteer and help out.

In the early 1990s, when he worked with Jim DiCarlo, and the colts, Ray was not only the match-day runner but also the talent scout and he was responsible for bringing many youngsters into the club from junior football. His keen eye for talent, coupled with his passion for the football club, was a key ingredient that would help set the club up for the success that came in the mid-to-late 1990s.

After 20 years of working with the colts and development groups, Ray became the property manager in 2014 and is still in that role today. Ray is at training every night of the week, working across senior and colts programs, attends all pre-season sessions, and is there every game day. Leaving home in the early hours of Saturday mornings, he reliably ensures all the gear is at the ground on time and ready for three games of football.

During the season, Ray is also Mr Thursday Night. He organises some hot food, usually soup or hamburgers, that he takes great pride in cooking up and serving. And the boys love it. It is also appropriate Ray's lovely wife, Kathy, is recognised. Kathy has always been a great supporter of Ray. Together they are always at club functions and are the first to volunteer any help or assistance that may be required.

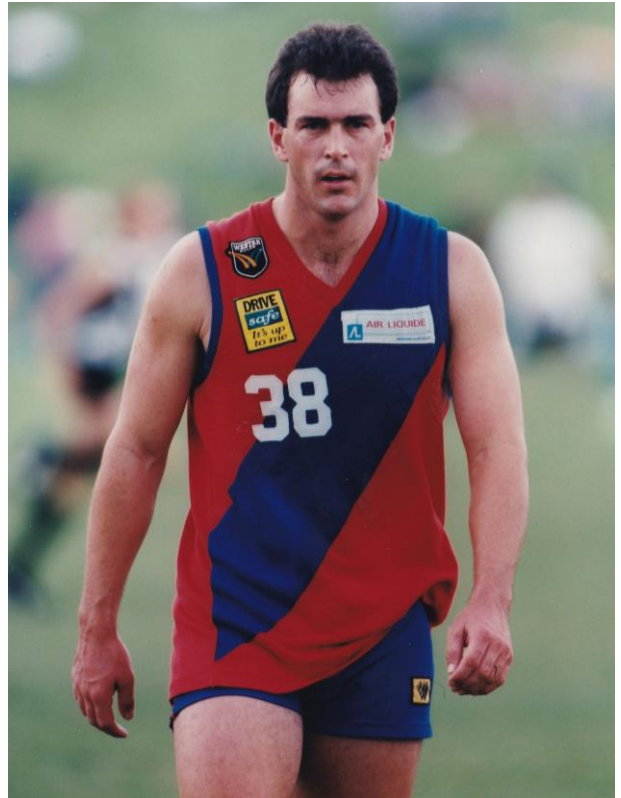
A favourite amongst the playing group for his work ethic, his genuine care for players and his passion for the club to succeed, Ray epitomises the fabric of what the West Perth Football Club is built on, and it is with great pleasure that the club conferred life membership.



New life member – former captain Kim Rigoll

Kim Rigoll played 144 games for our club and another three for Western Australia. A former captain, three-time Breckler Medal winner and dual premiership player (1999 and 2003), in 2012 he was formally recognised as one of the WAFL's best players of the past 25 years (Jason Salecic and Paul Mifka were also included).

Recruited from West Coast Amateurs in 1996, where he played in a premiership under John Dimmer, Kim Rigoll established himself as a genuine star of the WAFL competition in his first year, a mantle he retained for the rest of his career. He is one of the few to have played 100 league games at West Perth but never played reserves, and he was never dropped from the league team. Kim's extraordinary on-field record was achieved at a time when West Perth were perennial finalists, his three Breckler Medals won in seasons when West Perth made grand finals, two of those being premierships. More recently, Kim was recognised as being among the WAFL's best players over the past 25 years.



As a leader, few were better than Kim Rigoll. When he spoke, everyone listened. When he played, his teammates lifted. He made West Perth a team that opposition clubs hated to play, reflecting not only his attacking ball winning skills, but also the way his teammates played for him. Kim would never let the team down or let you down; his teammates responded in kind. A favourite among supporters and also his peers for his work ethic, Kim displayed genuine care for each player at the club, regardless of whether they were player number one or number 50 on the list. When his playing days



were over, Kim conducted leadership sessions within the colts programme.

The names Gieschen, Dimmer and Harris have long been associated with turning the culture of West Perth around from the dark days of the early 1990s to it being one of the most successful clubs of the past 20 years. Kim Rigoll's name can sit comfortably alongside those legends given his contribution to the culture and success of our great club.

(Re) introducing West Perth coach Geoff Valentine

Can you tell us about your early days in football, and the path to West Perth in 1992?

It's fair to say that it took a while to happen and was a fairly inglorious event. After moving to WA with the family in 1984, I played junior football at the Warwick Junior FC – playing alongside graduating colts player Alec Johnson's father and uncle in the same team. My final year in U17's was fairly disappointing and, as a late developer physically, I wasn't that keen to front up for senior footy and took a job at Rottnest Island for the summer. I ended up working on Rottnest for nine months and, in June, I moved up to Port Headland where Mum and Dad were living and made my senior debut with South Headland Swans as an 18-year-old. The travel bug had bitten at that stage, so I headed up to Darwin to play with Waratahs (playing against Michael Long and his six brothers remains a career highlight) before a season with Cairns in the North Queensland FL. When I



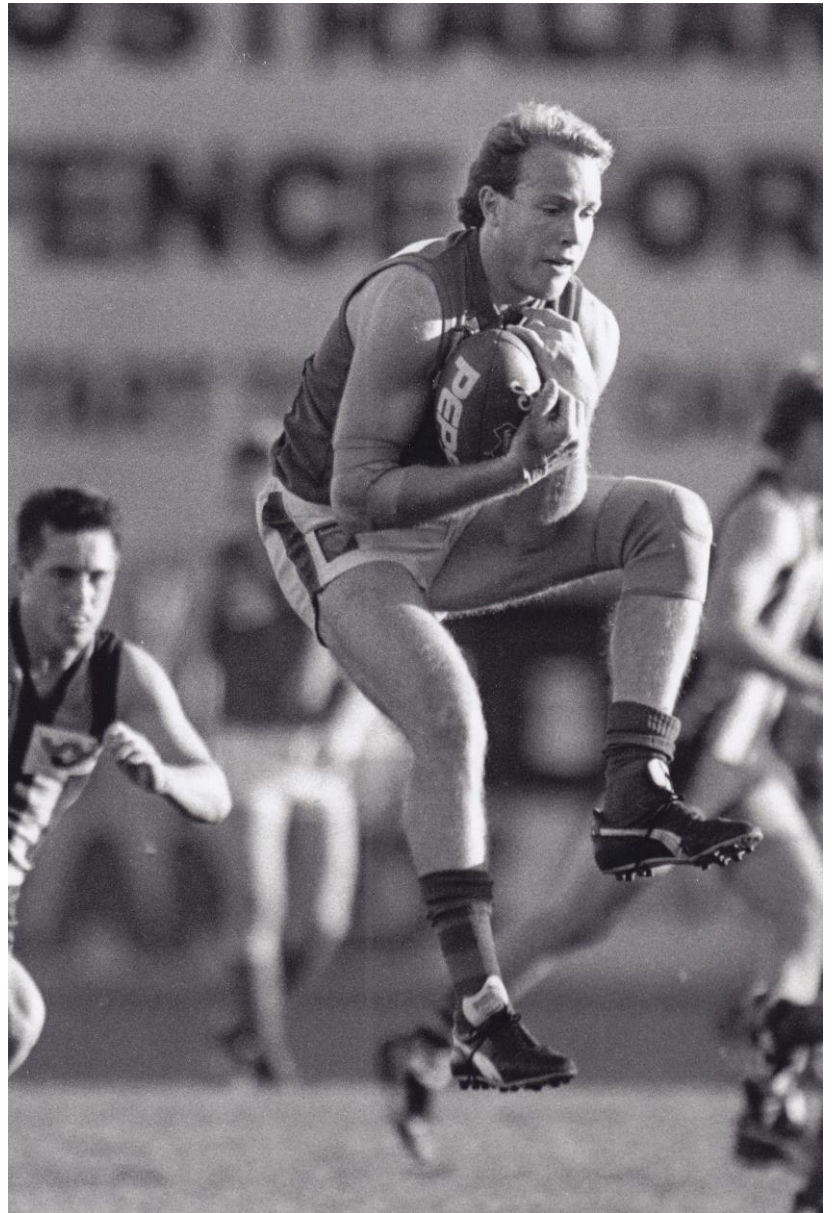
returned in January 1990, a friend (Justin Drifill) suggested I try out at West Perth, so I headed down uninvited to see if I could make the grade. I battled through the post-Christmas part of the pre-season before George Michalczyk cut me from the squad a few weeks out from the season. It's a conversation I remember very clearly with George and I amicably agreeing to disagree on where I was placed relative to the squad. As senior coach, I knew it was his call and I accepted that my time at West Perth was done for the time being. What I didn't know was that this conversation was the foundation of a really positive relationship between George and I.

From there, I went to down to the North Beach amateurs where I was fortunate to slide into a very dominant team that, after winning the flag in 1989, went back to back in 1990 under the guidance of Corry Bewick. I thrived under Corry and, although he didn't continue in 1991, my football continued to improve with Mark Blakely. While we didn't progress deeply into September that year, I was a part of the state amateur team that won the national championships by beating Victoria for the first time in the grand

Final. 1995 WAFL premiership teammate Ben Stewart was also part of that team. With a WAAFL premiership and state amateur selection under my belt, West Perth were happy to have me back down for the 1992 season as part of the rebuild under Jeff Gieschen. I debuted mid-season against South Fremantle and was dropped a week later, but managed five league games and won the reserves Best & Fairest in 1992.

You were part of the 1995 premiership side. What are your memories of grand final day, and what made that team as good as it was?

I clearly remember Darren Harris picking me up from home and making him listen to a song that I was finding particularly inspiring... he was far less into the heavy music than I was, but he was such a great teammate that he listened, smiled and agreed that we wouldn't be scarred again. After being beaten in the 1993 grand final and then blowing a five-goal half-time lead in the 1994 preliminary final, we were desperate for premiership success and, as a group and as individuals, we made sacrifices to ensure we were at our best that September. I'd missed a large chunk of the season with injury and didn't play in the second semi. We beat Subiaco by a point, but went into the grand final as underdogs. Although all 21 from the second semi were fit and available, John Dimmer saw merit in my inclusion and made one change, bringing me into the grand final team.



It had been 20 years since West Perth had won a premiership and there was a massive crowd on a really warm spring day. Jason Heatley had kicked nine or 10 goals against us in the second semi final and JD decided that Paul Mifka was our best match up for him (to illustrate what a champion Paul Mifka was, it should be remembered he was a highly regarded winger for much of his career and had also kicked 10 goals at centre half forward himself that year). Anyway, Mif bumped Heatley on the way to the goal square and, before you knew it, it was on!! A brawl erupted in the goal square around Mifka and Heatley and another erupted at centre half back that centred around Karl Langdon and Todd Curley. I remember standing on the wing, waiting for the first centre bounce, foot pawing at the line and thinking, "I don't care whose body I hit, as long as I run into someone".



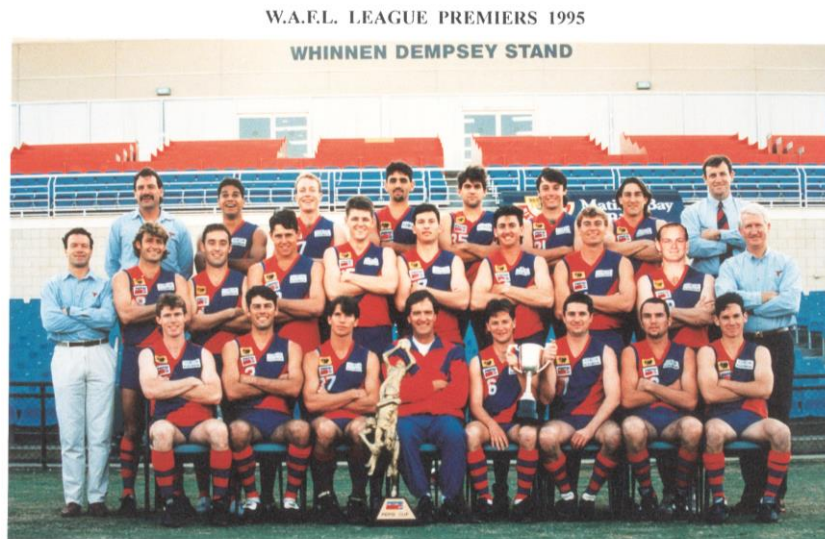
Needless to say, it was a hard fought opening to the game, but we quickly settled into our rhythm. We were in front by a couple of goals at quarter time and continued to build on the lead throughout the day to run out winners by 56 points. There are many facets to a premiership team and we had them all in spades. Firstly, we had belief in our game plan and what JD was telling us. This didn't happen overnight (keep in mind JD didn't start coaching that season until January after Jeff Gieshen was poached by Geelong), and we lost three games in a row mid-season by 10 goals. It was a big shift from Giesh's autocratic style (West Perth really needed this when he came to the club) to JD's empowerment model, but when we pushed Subiaco very late in the season, we knew we had the game plan to win a flag. We also had an extremely talented and diverse playing group that was very tight and there were no weaknesses in our line-up, especially with Mif shoring up the full back position. We also had great leaders within the team; Darren Harris was outstanding, especially on grand final day when he had 40 possessions and kicked four goals, Craig Turley was inspiring, while Darren O'Brien and Brendan Barrows were also great, just to name a few.

You played your last game for West Perth in 1996, returning a few years later as assistant senior coach, and you coached the reserves to a grand final in 2005. You've also been an assistant senior coach at Swan Districts and Claremont. What is it about coaching that appeals to you?

There are a number of aspects to coaching that keep drawing me in. I feel most comfortable and am at my best in a club/team environment. The relationships forged at a football club are life-long. I'm a goal-task oriented type person and football typically gives you that on a week-to-week, season-to-season basis. This is especially satisfying when working with young men to help them achieve their goals.

Who are the coaches you've played under or coached alongside who have influenced you the most?

I've been fortunate to have played under some great coaches, all shaping me in some way. But the greatest football influence on me is Darren Harris. We've known each other most of our adult lives and have spent much of this time talking football. We have similar views on most aspects of the game, but the strength of our relationship means that we can vigorously debate things without ever taking offence. Coaching against each other in Round 2 will be an interesting experience (for both our families as well) as we've never done that before.



Back Row: R Prunster (Assistant Coach), A. Blurton, G. Valentine, R. Burns, D. Brunton, G. Bell, S. Trehwella, N. Bryant (Team Manager),
Middle Row: R. Humphries (P.E. Instructor), C. Turley, R. Malone, B. Fewster, M. Whitelaw, C. Groom, R. Smith, I. Downsborough, B. Stewart, T. Taylor (Chairman of Selectors),
Front Row: N. Mildenhall, T. Curley, P. Milka, J. Dimmer (Coach), D. Harris (Captain), D. O'Brien (Vice Captain), B. Barrows, B. Logan.

Interestingly, one of the coaches who influenced me significantly was my coach in under 17s. For him, it was all about winning (or that's how it seemed) and it was a negative experience for me. At that stage of my life, I wanted a coach who was interested in me as a person and one who would help me build my skill set, knowledge and confidence. Thankfully I received that with Corry Bewick, Mark Blakely, Paul Rafter (the state amateur coach in in 1991), Jeff Gieschen and John Dimmer. The coaching experience with Swan Districts and Greg Harding was also very positive.

How would you describe your coaching philosophy?

A coaching philosophy can mean many things, but for me it centres around values. I value resilience and belonging most. Anyone involved in football for long enough will tell you that there are just as many disappointments as there are celebrations. The great teams/clubs are the ones that deal with adversity and disappointment best and thrive under those conditions. This generally happens when you learn that it's ok to be vulnerable; that you don't need to have all the answers all the time; that you're willing to admit your short-comings and ask for help. There was probably no greater example of the power of resilience than the 2018 player group.

In 1992, long before trademarks/values/behaviours became fashionable, the playing group of that time had a simple doctrine... "no dickheads". We created a culture that was safe; where everyone felt comfortable being themselves and could truly express themselves on and off the field. The results followed and I know that if we are to have premiership success, we need a place where everyone feels a great sense of belonging and purpose. It's what draws people to this great club, but we must continue to work and invest in this space. The off-field events of last year and the natural politics of a football club have the potential to undermine a sense of belonging, so I implore all West Perth to invest in the sense of belonging that the playing/coaching group are looking to create in 2019 and beyond.

Finally, how good is it to be back at Joondalup?

I knew it would be great, but it feels better than I thought it could be.

My first game – Alan Watling remembers 1969

I played all my junior football with the Cardinals Junior Football Club. We trained and played at Lake Monger until the State Government decided to put the Mitchell Freeway through our oval, so we moved to Menzies Park in Mount Hawthorn. This suited me, as it was only a short walk down the hill from where I lived in Egina Street.

I later received a letter from West Perth inviting me to training. The grades trained together back then, and I was overawed when my dad dropped me off at Leederville Oval and I made my way to the change rooms. To be out on the track with my idols, including Whinnen, Dempsey, Dyson, and Nykyforak, among others, was an amazing experience.

I graduated to the West Perth fourths, under coach Geoff Hamel, then on to the thirds (now called colts).

In 1968, the thirds made the grand final under coach Don 'Mary' Porter, which we won by five points against East Perth, and it was the first time the club had won a thirds premiership. Unfortunately, prior to

the game, I came down with a bad bout of flu and couldn't take part, which was very disappointing. I spent time between the reserves and the thirds, but Don Porter kept pushing 'Polly' Farmer to give me a league game.

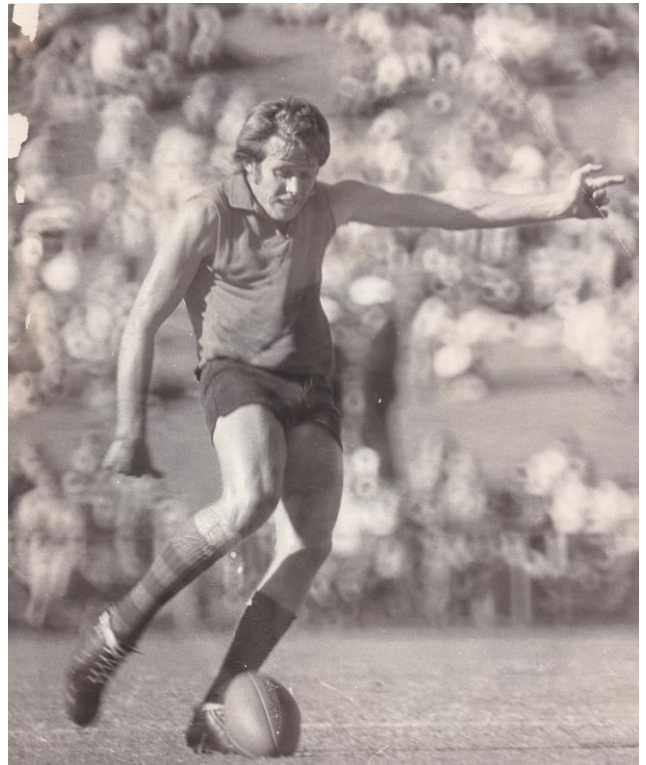
In 1969, North Melbourne had come over to play West Perth in a scratch match at Leederville as part of their pre-season preparation. In the week before that game, we played an intra-club scratch match consisting of half the league and half the reserves teams. I played in the second half, but managed to kick four goals on Barry McAuliffe.

On the Friday morning before the North game, brother Eddy burst into my room and yelled "you're in". I was still half asleep, so it was a bit difficult to get my head around it. We weren't advised of team selections, so the first I knew about it was via the newspaper.

Before the game, there wasn't much time to be nervous, and when I ran out and took up my position on the half forward flank I found that I was lined up on Denis Pagan, who later coached North to two premierships in the 1990s.

I felt I was able to play my natural game, and I put that down to the fact that everything had happened so quickly that I seemed settled. I kicked a couple of goals and picked up numerous possessions and was voted West Perth's best. But being a youngster and relatively new, I wasn't familiar with the after-match protocol, so I went home, showered, then went back to the club, but by that time I had missed the award presentations, and the festivities were just about over.

On the Thursday following the North Melbourne game, I broke my hand at training, and I missed the first four weeks of the 1969 season. After my hand healed, I spent the next three weeks in the reserves building my match fitness, and then my luck took a turn for the better on the 7th of June 1969.

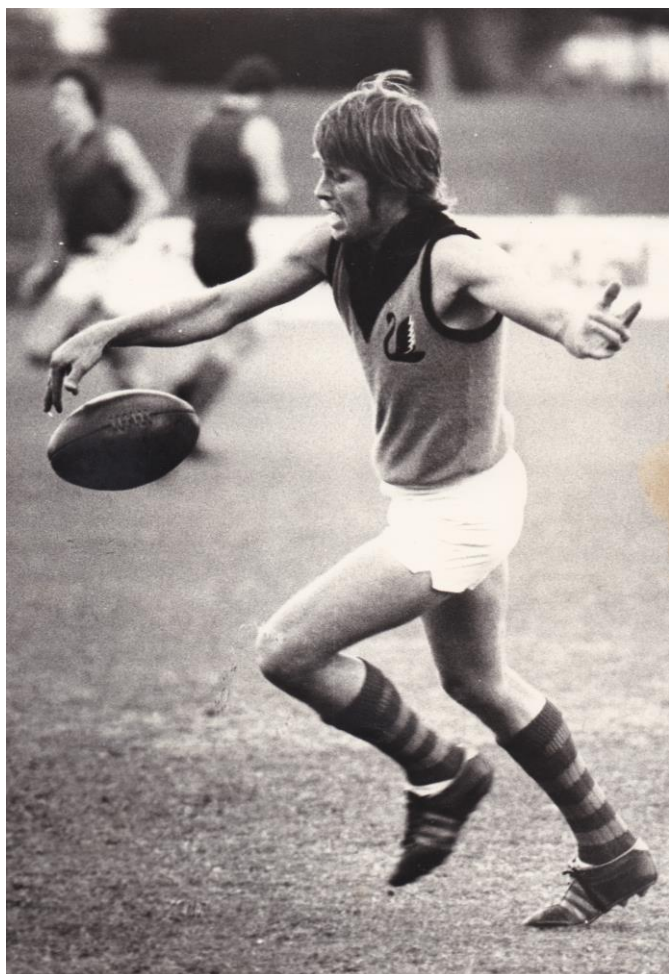


The state team was in Adelaide for the national carnival, which meant Polly was away, so Mel Whinnen took the reins as coach. I was expecting to play reserves, but John Wynne got a late call-up to fly to Adelaide to replace an injured player. Keith Miller had been playing on a half forward flank, but he was moved to centre half forward and I was selected to play on the flank.

We played Swan Districts at Leederville, and it was a tremendous feeling to run out on to the ground in a West Perth jumper to officially play my first full league game. I played on Lou Milanko and everything seemed to go right. I kicked five goals, and we won by 33 points. But it was such a strong team and, despite having a good game, I was still expecting to go back to the reserves once the state players returned. A newspaper article during the week also agreed with my thinking. However, I was selected to play on a wing the following game against Perth at Lathlain Park, which we lost by 42 points after having 29 scoring shots for 9.20.

Stephen Smeath and I went through school together, and we spent a lot of time down at Menzies Park kicking the footy around as kids. During our time at West Perth, Smeathy and I devised a plan whereby we would try and get the ball to each other whenever the opportunity arose. On game days, it would seem as though we were going to deliver the ball direct to where we were looking, but we both knew where each other was, and a 'look-away' handpass or screw kick around the corner used to work well, and a journalist later gave us the title of the "Dynamic Duo".

How fortunate was I, that in 1969, and in just my 16th league game, I played in a premiership, and in my first seven years played in four grand finals. I was very privileged to be teamed with so many



talented players, whose ball delivery made it so much easier to get into the game.

There was a humorous moment on the morning of one grand final when we had to 'empty' our stomachs and not have anything to eat after 10am to give us the extra stamina needed to run the game out. Arriving at the ground, we found John Wynne eating a hot dog. He was asked, "Why are you eating that hot dog?" to which Windows casually replied, "because the hamburgers were dearer". Even to this day that still makes me chuckle, and it helped to break the tension before the game.

Windows was such a gifted player, but never one to do anything by the book.

What a wonderful privilege to have played 284 games for the club that I loved, and to be involved in three great premierships, play for my State, be included in the All Australian team in 1972, and West Perth's Team of the Century in 2000, and inducted into the WA Football Hall of Fame in 2009. These things don't happen without the support of your family, friends, team mates, coaches, club staff, and so many good people inside and outside the club. To them I say thank you for what's been one heck of a journey.

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FALCONS



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1ST PRIZE

\$40,000 PACKAGE

- Your logo on the back of our men's league team jumper
- Lollipop sign (5mx3m) at our WAFL home ground in Joondalup
- 2019 Match Day partnership at a regular WAFL home game fixture
 - Naming rights to a President's pre-game luncheon
 - Opportunity to provide speakers, banners, flyers, giveaways etc. at luncheon
 - Toss the coin at a League match and provide a junior mascot to lead the team onto field
 - Web banner on www.westperthfc.com.au leading up to the fixture + much more!
- Invitation for six guests to pre-game 2019 "Sponsors' Recognition" luncheon including gate entry, buffet lunch, beverages, afternoon tea, reserved seating in the Whinnen Dempsey Grandstand and VIP parking
- PA system promotion of your company at regular 2019 WAFL home games
- Half page advertisement in the WPFC 2019 Yearbook
- Invitation for two guests to our in-season Inner Sanctum experience

2ND PRIZE

\$10,000 PACKAGE

- Perimeter fence sign (6mx1m) at our WAFL home ground in Joondalup
- Invitation for six guests to pre-game 2019 "Sponsors' Recognition" luncheon including gate entry, buffet lunch, beverages, afternoon tea, reserved seating in the Whinnen Dempsey Grandstand and VIP parking
- Half page advertisement in the WPFC 2019 Yearbook
- Invitation for two guests to our in-season Inner Sanctum experience



3RD PRIZE

\$5,000 PACKAGE

- Perimeter fence sign (3mx1m) at our WAFL home ground in Joondalup
- Invitation for two guests to pre-game 2019 "Sponsors' Recognition" luncheon, including gate entry, buffet lunch, afternoon tea and reserved seating and VIP parking
- Quarter page advertisement in the WPFC 2019 Yearbook
- Invitation for two guests to our in-season Inner Sanctum experience

Every entrant receives \$1,000 worth of benefits including an invitation for two guests to attend the West Perth Football Club's *Corporate Classic* cocktail function to draw the winners.

TO ENTER AND MORE DETAILS

VISIT WWW.WESTPERTHFC.COM.AU/CC

Obituaries – Len Harman

Len Harman passed away in early January, at the age of 94. Former teammate Neil Garland reflects on one of our club's finest and his mate of more than 80 years.

I first met Len Harman in 1935 or 1936 through local junior football. We played for North Perth in the Temperance League and won the 1936 Under 14s premiership, the grand final being played at Subiaco Oval. Len was 12 and I was 11. Of the 18 boys to play in that winning team, five went on to play league football for West Perth - Norm Lamb (77 games), Vic Fisher (65), Bob Foster (49), Len and me. Vic also played 25 games for Essendon and was a member of that club's 1949 premiership side. About 12 years ago, the members of that Temperance League team started meeting once a year for lunch, and we continued until there were only four of us left some three years ago. Len always made the trip up from Rockingham until we reluctantly decided to discontinue due to lack of numbers.

Len's parents lived in Vincent Street, opposite Beatty Park, and we would often see Len and his brother Frank playing kick to kick. Fred Buttsworth, who lived on the north side of Beatty Park, would often join them. This is where Len developed his ability to take a high mark in the pack, a skill that was so much a trademark throughout his career as a great player for West Perth and Western Australia.

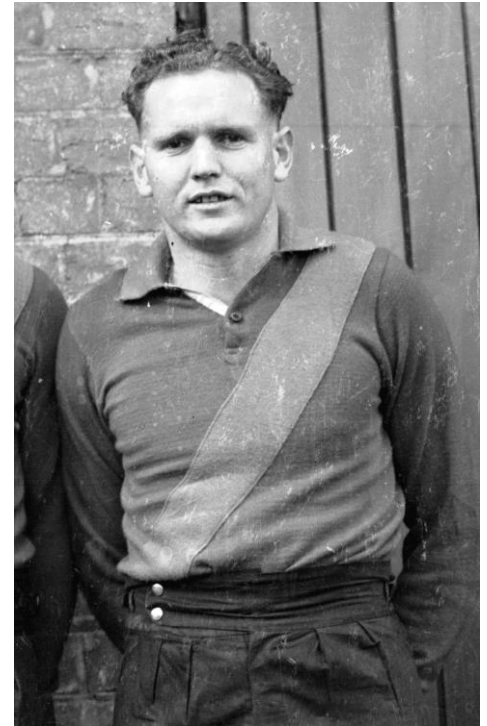
In 1942, Len captained West Perth in the under-age competition. Under his guidance, West Perth won the premiership that year. Len had a superb season playing mostly at centre half back and was equal second in the Sandover Medal count. Len's teammate Laurie Bowen won the medal by a single vote. A knee injury caused Len to miss one game, so he may have won the Sandover with an ounce of luck.

Like many others, Len's football career was put on hold by four years of Army service. By 1947, however, he had re-established himself at West Perth, and he represented Western Australia at that year's carnival in Hobart. Western Australia caused an upset by beating Victoria by four points, the first time Victoria had been defeated in a carnival match since 1921. Len, playing off a half back flank, was named as one of WA's best. He consistently acquitted himself very well in the higher echelons of interstate football.

Len saved much of his best football for grand finals. He was included in the best player list in each of the seven grand finals West Perth played between 1946 and 1953, and was instrumental in the club winning the 1949 and 1951 premierships. Many a good judge consider the 1951 grand final, which we won by three points, to be the finest in which West Perth has played. Len was a stalwart in defence, alongside Ray Schofield and Wally Price, a mantle he carried through those epic golden years of the West Perth Football Club.

Len called time at the end of the 1954 season, retiring after playing 201 games for his beloved Cardinals, and ten for Western Australia. He continued to serve the club on the committee and as a selector.

Len was a good friend to those of us lucky enough to have enjoyed his comradeship. In my case that friendship spanned more than 80 years since we played football together as kids.



Obituaries

We are saddened to report the passing of the following past players and officials of the club since the last edition of Heartbeat:

Past Player

Graeme Comerford 1959-2018

Graeme passed away at the age of 59 in December. Debuting for Swan Districts in 1977, "Comers" battled for opportunities as a defender in a side building toward three successive premierships in the early 1980s. He played 14 games between 1977 and 1981 before heading to Leederville to try his luck with the Falcons, playing the first of his 80 games for West Perth in Round 2 of the 1982 season and kicking three goals in a 113-point victory over South Fremantle. A prodigious and accurate kick, he played much of his football at Leederville as a forward, booting 88 goals. Comers played the last of his games for West Perth in 1986.

Regularly called upon to play a defensive role when team balance demanded, Comers was a respected teammate who frequently demonstrated a keen sense of humour and dry wit.

Past Player

Graham Heal 1945-2018

A member of one of West Perth's most famous footballing families, Graham Heal played his early football with Subiaco, making his league debut with the Lions in 1965. He played 50 WAFL games to the end of 1967, then joined North Melbourne in the VFL. Heal played five games for the Kangaroos in 1968, before moving back to Subiaco for another 10 games in 1970 and 1971. He finally followed in his famous father's footsteps by joining the Cardinals in 1972, thereby hooking up with his brother Laurie in a great era for West Perth. Heal managed 62 games in the red and blue, including one in the national cup competition, bringing his career tally to 127.

Past Player

Tom Lawler 1957-2018

A left-footed wingman and half forward, Tom played nine games for the club between 1975 and 1977. He played a lot of football in Darwin after leaving the club.

Past Player

Bob Ptolomey 1963-1965

The nephew of former president Fred Ptolomey, Bob was a big ruckman who was well regarded at the club but faced stiff competition for a league spot in an era in which West Perth was spoiled for quality ruckmen. He played 13 league games for 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

