



Essendon Football Club Past Players & Officials Association

Newsletter – April 2024

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President's message- David Collins

Welcome to the first EFCPP&OA Newsletter for 2024. It has already been a busy start to the year with the DRC Golf Day in early February, the official opening of the Barry Capuano Room at Windy Hill, our monthly coffee club (EPPOCH), and our AGM.

Thank you to everyone who played a part in the creation and development of the Barry Capuano Room. I want to especially acknowledge The Biasin Family for their very generous donation of the fantastic furniture for the room and to Peter Watson for donating the magnificent Smart TV. Thank you all so much for your outstanding generosity.

Many members will be interested in one of the decisions made at our AGM, which is to reduce EFCPP&OA annual membership fees to zero. The main reasons for this decision are the strong financial position of the EFCPP&OA, along with a very significant reduction in the workload of collecting and recording the fees, as well as the following up on the non-payment of fees. Mark Fraser did not re-nominate for the Committee this year and Sue Anderson and Iain Findley have joined our committee. Thank you Mark for your input over the last 2 years and welcome to Sue and Iain.

It's great to announce that EFC Past Player profiles are now available on our website (<https://essendonfcpastplayers.com.au/past-player-profiles>). It's been worth the wait and thank you to Barry Capuano and Caroline Larson for updating and adding photos (where available) to profiles. Special thanks also to Gavin Keane and his company, Cloud Made Simple, for all their great work to set the profiles up on our website.

Plans for the 2024 DRC Luncheon on Wednesday 22nd May at the RACV City Club, Melbourne, are well advanced. Full details about this event and booking details will be communicated separately to members.

Looking forward, we plan on holding a DRC Cocktail Party mid-year at Windy Hill Venue and our Annual Dinner on the Wednesday before the AFL Grand Final.

Our Secretary, Charlie Italia is working with Andrew Underwood in South Australia to organise a lunch in Adelaide to coincide with the EFC v Adelaide Crows round 6 match. Our ultimate aim is to form a strong EFC SA Past Players group similar to the fantastic WA EFC Past Players Group.

I'm also very happy to report that our working relationship with the EFC Board and Executive is really strong. Our sincere thanks to all those at the EFC who assist us in achieving our goals.

As always, if any members are in need of assistance, or hear of other members who may be in need of assistance, please contact me. All approaches are strictly confidential.

Hope you are enjoying the start of the AFL season.

David Collins
President

2024 Dick Reynolds Club Golf Day



Another fantastic DRC Golf day was held at Sandhurst Golf Course on Wednesday 7th February 2024. The event was our best ever Golf Day, with 100 participants and great support from many sponsors.

The weather was perfect, and participants enjoyed playing on the North (Championship) Course, which was in great condition. Twenty five teams competed and almost all teams included a current EFC AFL or AFLW player, EFC Coach, EFC Board member, EFC Executive official or an EFC Past Player.

EFC/EF CPP&OA participants:

EFC

Brad Scott (Coach)
Craig Vozzo (CEO)
David Wills (Board)
Andrew Welsh (Board)
Richard Foote (Executive)
Kyle Langford
Darcy Parish
Jye Menzie
Arch Roberts
Jordan Ridley
Nathan Caddy
Xavier Duursma
Bonnie Toogood
Georgia Gee
Jacqui Vogt

EF CPP&OA

Terry Daniher
Joe Misiti
Steve Carey
David Calthorpe
Joel Reynolds
Marcus Marigliani
Kel Steel
Gavin Wanganeen
Jason Johnson
Barry Young
Howard Staehr
Marc Bullen
Steve Alessio



Winning Team: BMW Essendon- Michael Baker, Craig Fresney, Paulo Ribero and Jye Menzie.

Winner of the best individual score: Michael Baker (51 points).

Best female score: Bonnie Toogood (44 points).

Best individual score by a current EFC AFL player: Jordan Ridley (39 points).



After lunch, Kevin Dale (MC and DRC Golf Day Convenor) conducted several insightful interviews with EFC Coach, Brad Scott, Kyle Langford and EFC AFLW co-captain Bonnie Toogood.

The raffle was drawn, and Barry Young conducted a very successful auction. This event is a major fundraiser for the EFCPP&OA and assists in providing support to our members who may need assistance.

Special thanks also to event organisers Kevin Dale and Barbara Cullen along with Charlie Italia, Ken Gilbertson, Darryl Gerlach, Gary Grainger, Barry Besanko, Barry Young, John Dellar, Susie Norton, and Ray Sneddon who assisted on the day.

A big thank you to all of our 2004 DRC Golf Day sponsors and raffle donors:



Bendigo Bank Strathmore



EFC's Oldest Living Player – Fred Payne

OLDEST DON STILL HAS PRIDE IN SIDE.

By Glenn McFarlane, Herald Sun - Saturday 10th February 2024.

Article

link

https://edition.pagesuite.com/popovers/dynamic_article_popover.aspx?artguid=b4602bb2-6bec-4576-a3e4-a55fc2184093



Oldest Don still has pride in side

Glenn McFarlane

Essendon's oldest living player, Fred Payne – who once filled in for John Coleman and who was a part of one of the great grand final selection shocks more than 70 years ago – wants the modern-day Bombers to shoot for the stars ahead of the 2024 season.

Payne turned 97 this week and a handful of Bombers players including former skipper Dyson Heppell were on hand at his Tocumwal nursing home to wish him a happy birthday.

It was the first time the club had reconnected with Payne after losing contact with him a number of years ago.

Heppell, Matt Gueffi and Harrison Jones made the visit to Tocumwal from the club's community camp base at Shepparton and presented Payne with some Dons gear.

Heppell said the trio took as much out of the meeting as Payne did, saying it was great to talk about the past and the present with a person so passionate about the red and black.

"It was great to reconnect, to see his reaction and to see a bit of a tear in his eye," Heppell said. "You could see the pride he still has in representing the club. He wore No. 35 and Matt Gueffi wears No. 35 now, so he was over the moon about that. He said to me 'Make sure you look after my boy' (Gueffi)."

Payne played 42 games for the Bombers across five

seasons, making his debut in the same 1949 season as the legendary Coleman. He even filled in for Coleman at full forward on one occasion in 1951.

"I think John Coleman was away on representative duty (at the time)," Payne said. "I kicked a couple of early goals (against Richmond at Windy Hill), but the supply dried up then and I hardly touched the ball for the rest of the game."

Heppell said it was incredible to think Payne was a living link to some of the greatest names in Essendon's history.

He played in a team coached by Dick Reynolds and alongside Coleman, who was full forward

in the VFL-AFL Team of the Century, and a host of Essendon stars.

"I couldn't get over how sharp he was, even telling stories of his time there in the '50s, the '51 grand final and playing with the calibre of players he did," Heppell said.

Payne played three games in the Bombers' 1949 premiership season but was not selected for the finals.

He then played in a semi-final in 1950 but missed out on the back-to-back grand final success.

In one of footy's most stunning tribunal hearings, Coleman was suspended on the eve of the 1951 finals series for the remainder of

the season. Payne missed the semi-final and preliminary final that season with a thigh injury but was named on the bench for the 1951 grand final. On game day, he was elevated into the starting 18 in the forward pocket when John Gill was a late withdrawal.

That led to a game-day sensation with Reynolds, who was retired and hadn't played a VFL game since the previous year's grand final, being named to take Payne's place on the bench.

Payne kicked a goal, Reynolds came on late in the game in his final appearance, but the Bombers lost to Geelong by 11 points.

Essendon's oldest living player, Fred Payne, with current Bombers Matt Gueffi, Harrison Jones and Dyson Heppell and; (below) Gueffi in the No. 35. Picture: Essendon FC



EPPOCC – Essendon Past Players Officials Coffee Club

Contributed by Graham Leydin



Essendon Past Players Officials Coffee Hour (EPPOCH) has made a great start to 2024 season. We were delighted to have EFC President, David Barham, as our host for our first 2024 catch up in March. It was a chance to celebrate our first use of the recently opened Barry Capuano Room.

David spoke at length about the direction of the club and was quite confident that the Bombers would continue to make good progress under new coach Brad Scott. With continued improvement of younger players and the inclusion of experienced players from other clubs, a strong list was forming to challenge teams higher on the ladder with their strong brand of football.



David kept his audience enthralled as he drew on his 25 years of experience in the AFL industry, his establishment of the AFL's film and videotape library in the 1990s and in 2015, as Head of Sport for the Ten Network. He also highlighted his experience to deliver commercially successful major events and large scale projects, which clearly demonstrates his ability to provide excellent leadership to our club.

The EPPOCH were most appreciative of David giving up his time to speak to the group given all his other commitments, and we sincerely thank him for his involvement



The next "Coffee Club" will be on Monday 8th April, when Barry Capuano will be the guest host.

Please see below the EPPOCH program for the remainder of the year. It is subject to change depending on availability of guests, but you can look forward to some lively commentary and healthy conversations:

- Monday 8 April - Barry Capuano (Legend/Former CEO)
- Monday 6 May - Hugh Mitchell (1962/1965 premierships)
- Monday 3 June - Craig Vozzo (EFC CEO)
- Monday 1 July - Essendonians
- Monday 5 August - Natalie Wood (AFLW)
- Monday 2 September - Mark Bolton (Chief Strategy Officer)
- Monday 7 October - Tony Elshaug (Recruiting)

Hope to see you at a Coffee Club catch up in 2024!

2024 Annual General meeting

Our 71st AGM was held on 24 March 2024 at Windy Hill Venue.

A one minute's silence was held in recognition of the passing of the following members since the last AGM: Stephen Beaumont, Barry Colliver, Brian Crowe, Neville Gay, John Kilby, Ken Timms. RIP

The Minutes of the previous AGM were accepted without amendment. The reports by the President, Secretary and Treasurer were also accepted.

The main issues reported on and discussed were as follows:

- Sound financial position of the EFCPP&OA
- Decision to remove annual membership subscriptions from Full EFCPP&OA members.
- Very successful functions held since last AGM, including:
 - 2023 DRC Luncheon - "How to win a Premiership"
 - 2023 DRC Cocktail Party
 - 2023 Annual Dinner
 - 2024 DRC Golf day
 - EFCPP&OA Life Members function
 - Opening of the Barry Capuano Room
 - EPOCH monthly coffee catch ups at Windy Hill
- The great work of our Admin Assistant (Jane Lee) in producing such high quality Newsletters and her other excellent administrative and social media work.
- EFC Past Player profiles including photographs are now available on the EFCPP&OA website.
- EFCPP&OA memorabilia display cabinet to be installed in EFC Hall of Fame as part of the full refurbishment of the Glory and Fame museum at the "The Hangar".
- Excellent working relationship with the EFC Board and Administration
- Update provided by Barry Besanko on his work with the AFL, AFPA and CPPA regarding CTE/Concussions injuries.
- There were no recommendations by the Committee for EFCPPOA Life Membership at this AGM.

The 2024 EFCPPOA Committee is as follows:

President	David Collins
Vice President	Darryl Gerlach
Secretary	Charlie Italia
Treasurer	Ken Gilbertson
Committee	Barry Besanko, Graham Leydin, Gary Grainger, Ryan O'Connor, Jason Johnson, Sue Anderson, Iain Findlay.

Welcome to Sue Anderson and Iain Findlay and a big thank you Mark Fraser who has stood down from the Committee this year.

David thanked all members of the Committee for the loyalty and their contributions to the work of the Association during 20223 He also noted the great work of DRC Committee members namely, Kevin Dale, Barbara Cullen OAM, Glenn Shepherd, John Della and Susie Norton.

On behalf of his family and himself, Barry Capuano spoke and expressed his sincere appreciation for the great honour he had received with the naming of the refurbished room on the 2nd floor at Windy Hill as the "Barry Capuano Room". He also thanked those who had arranged for and funded the cost of refurbishment.

Milestones and achievements

The following members have or will achieve significant age milestones between the 1st January - 30th April, 2024:

- Pat Curcio (70 – 23rd February).
- Darryl Gerlach (80 -25th January).
- Ian Morrison (70 -29th January).
- Dr. Denis Scanlon (70 – 5th April).
- Gary Skillicorn (70 – 8th January).

Make sure you stock up on Essendon Football Club Past Players & Officials Association Official Merchandise!



EFCPP&OA Adults Cap – Grey
\$20.00



Golf Towel
\$20.00



Beanie
\$20.00

Order online -
<https://essendonfcpastplayers.com.au/shop/>

FUNDRAISING ASSISTANCE - As you are aware, the EFCPPOA and Dick Reynolds Club run a number of funding raising efforts each year and also an Online Auction and Special Effort raffle. If you are able to donate potential prizes for any of these efforts in 2024, please email us admin@efcppo.com.au

Barry Capuano Room

Over fifty invited guests attended the official opening of the Barry Capuano Room (formerly the Legends Room) at Windy Hill Venue on Friday 9th February.

Several members of the Capuano family were in attendance, along with a number of Barry's former team mates, and representatives from the EFC Board, EFC Executive, The Essendonians Coterie group, EFCPP&OA Committee and other special guests.

The Barry Capuano Room has been fully refurbished in a joint venture between the EFC, EFCPP&OA and The Essendonians, as well as due to the generous donations from Peter Watson (Big screen Television) and Glenda Biasin & family (all room furniture).



Around the room, a number of EFC historical pictures and honour hoards are featured. The bar has also been renamed as the "Essendonians Bar".

Mark Bolton (EFC Executive), Mark Basilone (Essendonians President) and David Collins (EFCPP&OA) all made speeches, giving different perspectives on Barry's outstanding career in football, with the EFC, his magnificent contribution to the EFCPPOA over 21 years and his excellent personal characteristics.

Barry Capuano responded and acknowledged what a great honour it is to have a wonderful room named after him, and how proud he and his family are of this recognition. Barry identified a few of his favourite memories from his involvement at EFC and also life in general.

The room was officially opened when Barry was asked to draw a curtain on a wall which revealed an illuminated "The Barry Capuano Room" sign to much applause from guests.

The room will be available to book for general use via Windy Hill Venue when not booked by the EFCPP&OA and/or The Essendonians. It is proposed that the room be used to watch EFC interstate games, some EFC VFL and VFLW games, committee meetings, as well as occasional social catch ups.

Special thanks goes to Charlie Italia (EFCPP&OA), Mark Bolton and Alan Burton (EFC), and Iain Finlay (The Essendonians) for their great work on the project.





Barry and Anna Capuano and family

TELL US YOUR NEWS ... We welcome news, articles and photographs from all our members. If you have experiences, insights and/or photos that you think may be of interest to other EFCPPOA members, please feel free to send them to admin@efcppo.com.au so if appropriate, we can include them in future newsletters editions.

Important Information for Past Players

The AFLPA Alumni.

The AFLPA have substantial programs to assist past players who are members of the AFLPA, including as listed below:

- Up to \$500 refund on excess payments when in hospital if you are in a Private Health Fund.
- Up to \$8,000 refund for out-of-pocket charges should you require surgery on body joints, including for damaged teeth, if you are in a Private Health Fund. Up to \$6,000 may be available should you not be in a Private Health Fund.
- An opportunity to seek funds from the Geoff Pryor Fund or an Injury and Hardship Fund, in the event of suffering financial hardship.

If you are not a Member of the AFLPA you can still join by contacting Rebecca Gross at the AFLPA on 86514351. There is a once up cost of \$50 or \$25 for pensioners or others assisted through Centrelink.

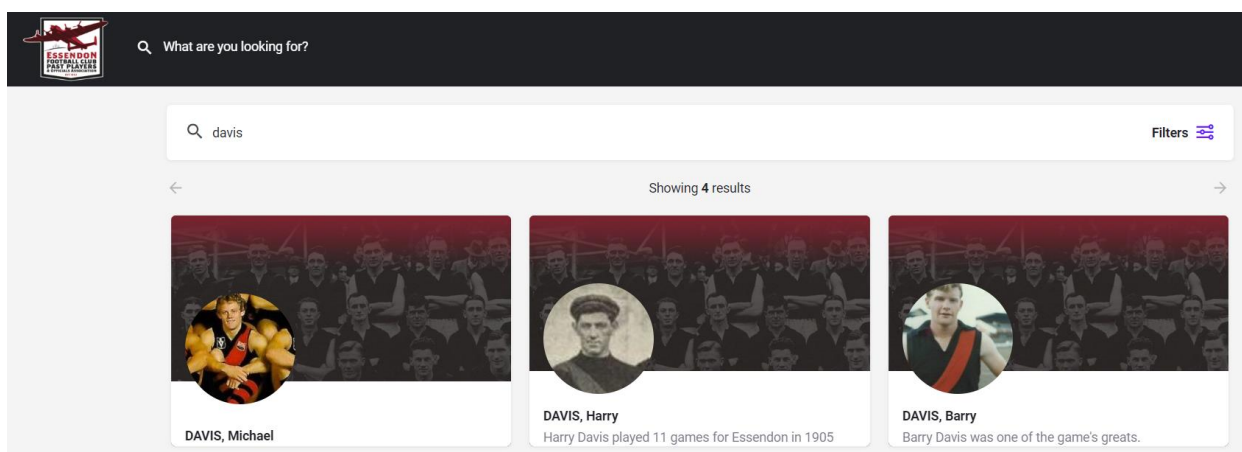
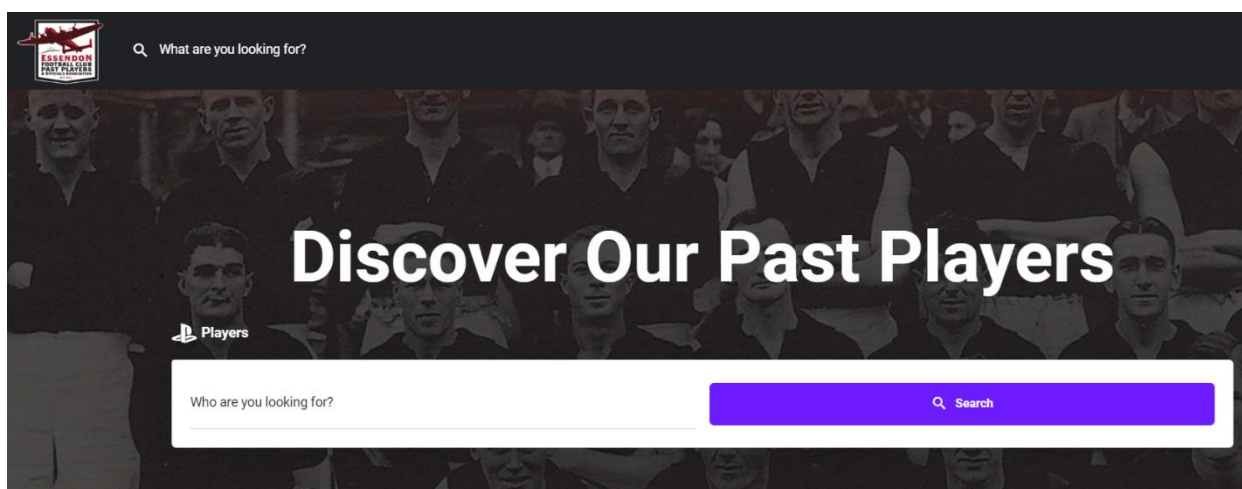
EFC Past Player Profiles

It is with much excitement that we announce that EFC past player profiles are now available on the Association's website - <https://essendonfcpastplayers.com.au/past-player-profiles>

Each player profile includes comprehensive player statistics, career highlights/achievements, photos (where available) and links [AFL Tables](#).

A big thank you to Gavin Keane and his company, Cloud Made Simple for setting up the profiles on the EFCPP&OA website and also to Carolyn Larson and Barry Capuano for their tireless work in completing and updating all EFC past player profiles.

We encourage you to visit the website and view some of the player profiles and enjoy reading about the achievements of over 1,100 EFC past players.





DAVIS, Barry

Barry Davis was one of the game's greats.

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Player Profile



Barry Davis was one of the game's greats. He was a superb half-back flanker and then ruck rover who came to Essendon from Essendon High School and started as a half-forward.

He played one game in the Seconds before debuting in Round 2, 1961, and played every remaining game that year to finish with the Best First Year Player award. In just his second season he played in a premiership. He had just turned 19. He won a second premiership in 1965 after missing seven games with a severe facial fracture, incurred in a game against St Kilda.

Davis had all the skills, was tough but scrupulously fair and could read the play well. He was a fabulous mark and one of the best kicks in the game.

In the 1960s he was part of Essendon's great half-back lines with Alex Epis and Ian Shelton. He ultimately became a top ruck-rover where he could display his talents all over the field. He won the Club's Most Consistent Player award in 1964 and 1966 and Best Team Man in 1967.

Davis captained Essendon in 1970 and 1971 before becoming vice-captain to Des Tuddenham in 1972. He had also been vice-captain in 1969.

Prior to becoming captain in 1970, he was one of the five senior players who resigned over pay and conditions, refusing to play in the first game of the season.



DAVIS, Barry

Barry Davis was one of the game's greats.

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Season Played

Year	Games	Goals
1961	17	14
1962	17	0
1963	18	1
1964	16	0
1965	12	0
1966	20	1
1967	17	0
1968	22	1

Club Awards

Best and Fairest 1968, 1969, 1971; 1973, 1975 (with North Melbourne)
 Best and Fairest Player runner-up 1972
 Best First Year Player 1961
 Best Team Man 1967
 Most Consistent Player 1964, 1966

Essendon Premiership Player

1962, 1965; 1975 (with North Melbourne)



DAVIS, Barry

Barry Davis was one of the game's greats.

Profile

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Born

15/09/1943

Debut Order

718

Height

185 cm

Number/Numbers

32

Weight

87 kg

Games

218

FifthQtr Foundation

The article below has been included at the request of Ken Hunter and Peter Venables (father of former WC Eagles player) Daniel Venables, who are key players in this new initiative. The article is for information only and has been sent to all other AFL Past Player Associations. A key element of the initiative is that it will be followed up by a survey provided by Ken and Peter. The survey will be sent to all EFCPP&OA past players in the near future.



Letter to Past VFL/AFL Player

We write to you as past VFL / AFL players to introduce you to FifthQtr Foundation.

FifthQtr Foundation is an independent, not for profit organisation supporting player health and wellbeing beyond the game. FifthQtr Foundation has been created by former VFL and AFL players, industry stakeholders and members of the grass roots sporting community to provide past players and their families with information and ongoing support when transitioning or when retired from the game they once loved to play.

We all know or are aware of former players and their families that have struggled beyond the game. Whether it be drugs, alcohol, gambling, employment, financial or relationship issues. These issues can lead to mental health and wellbeing problems and can develop further into depression, anxiety and sadly, suicide.

We also know that concussion-related brain trauma is emerging as a major post-game issue. Concussion and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) can develop into degenerative diseases including Dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

There has been extensive feedback and media coverage of many past players in recent years about the ongoing suffering and problems they are enduring. There is growing evidence that the support systems currently in place for past players are not fit for purpose in many instances. There are too many gaps.

Currently there isn't a dedicated support organisation that, as its core business, offers peer support management or provides information/advice and ongoing support to former VFL/ AFL players and their families. We believe that as a sporting community we should be doing more to support former players and their families when they need somewhere to turn. A place that understands them as an individual and the issues that they may face.

FifthQtr Foundation aims to provide early intervention solutions that can prevent and assist the mental health and wellbeing of former players. We plan to work with the AFL, AFLPA and AFL Clubs as an independent additional safety net for past AFL & AFLW players. A number of VFL/AFL Club past players, community sports people and medical practitioner's people are all involved voluntarily.

We are currently developing our operating model and it is critical that the support services we provide is informed and driven by the views and needs of past players. As a starting point we invite you to complete a past player survey. It will only take a couple of minutes of your time.

The insights of past players will be the fundamental driver of FifthQtr Foundation achieving its vision of healthy and thriving past players, ensuring we deliver the right model for independent past player support.

We would love to hear your views to help us help past players. Your individual survey input will be completely confidential and anonymous. We will communicate the overall survey results to all club Past Player Associations, the AFLPA and the AFL Commission.

I'd also be happy to have a one-on-one conversation if you'd like to discuss any aspect of FifthQtr Foundation or have any questions, or simply like a chat about your experience as a past player.

Yours sincerely

Ken Hunter

Supporting past VFL/AFL players and their families to have the best possible quality of life.

Obituary

Vale George Goninon

George ("Groucho") was a talented full-forward and played 9 games for Essendon between 1948-1950.

Recruited from Burnie, Tasmania, George's football career actually began in Essendon when he had played for Bill Hutchison's old team, the Essendon Stars, for three years before moving to Burnie.

Post Essendon, he transferred to Geelong and played in Geelong's premiership teams in 1951 & 1952. He also played for Newtown in 1955, Geelong West in 1956, West Footscray in 1957, Bruthen in 1958-1960 & 1962, and Lakes Entrance in 1961.

Our condolences to the Goninon Family. Rest in Peace George.



Tour of the Hangar

Any Past Players or Officials who are interested in a Tour of the Hangar, please contact our Secretary Charlie Italia via email; secretary@efcppo.com.au and Charlie can arrange a personal tour for you and your family.

Where Are They Now?

Andrew Underwood

Years played: 1989-1990 (Essendon), 1991 (Richmond)

Games: 24 (12 for Essendon, 12 for Richmond)

Goals: 8 (4 for Essendon, 4 for Richmond)

Number/s worn: 9 & 2 (Essendon), 12 (Richmond)



What did you do, football wise, following your playing days with Essendon?

I worked for the Westpac Bank whilst playing in Melbourne and stayed with the bank until 1996 and then I started "Your Financial Edge", a finance broking, consulting and property business.

In the late 1990's, I also got involved with the National Indigenous Radio Service and I'm still involved with them today. We provide a radio broadcast of AFL and AFLW games broadcast across the country, mainly to the areas that commercial broadcasters cant get to or are not interested in supporting

Are you still working?

Trying to work less and play golf and fish more.

Have you suffered with any post football injuries and have any required surgery?

Sadly, quite a lot. The knees aren't great, and I'm holding off getting a new one. The back is also very average with lots of arthritis symptoms

What are your thoughts on the modern game, and how would you change any of the areas that you don't like?

The rule changes haven't helped the genuine "footballers", and they probably wouldn't get a look today, as the game is designed for pure athletes. I understand the reasons why, but in the "old" days you'd often stand a player for long periods, sometimes the whole game, which made it a genuine one-on-one challenge and one where you could measure yourself against others.

Do you have any special anecdotes from your playing time to pass onto other past players?

Don't waste the opportunity and play every game like it's your last, as your career can be over in a blink of an eye. I can guarantee, you will miss it !

Who were your mates in your playing days with Essendon, do you keep in touch?

I lived with Brad Fox, Darren Bewick and Peter Somerville when I was playing - all funny blokes. It's so great to go the Past Player function every year during Grand Final week - always a fantastic night with lots of laughs.

Who were the players you most admired in your playing days at Essendon?

For Essendon:

I was relatively young when I got there yet there were many players that I admired. The list is long but included: Simon, Fish, Tim, Vander, all four Daniher Brothers, Harvs I could go on and on.

Other teams:

Being on the same field as Ablett, Daicos and the likes of Dermie was a privilege. Chasing around Paul Couch one day was also a real learning experience, as he gave me a fair touch up.

Do you have any comments that you would like to pass on about your time at Essendon?

My time at the Bombers was cut short, but I saw many highs and sadly plenty of lows with injury. I played with some wonderful players and learnt so much with Sheeds as the coach.

I was very fortunate to live with Pete and Lorraine Bateman, who welcomed me as I was a part of their family. Charlie Italia was always there for me in both the good and bad times and is like a big brother/father figure. Sponsors such as Iain "Fingers" Findlay and John "one L and one I" Panteli, were so supportive and wonderful company, all of which I appreciated and very much valued.

Where Are They Now?

Henry Slattery

Years played: 2005-2012

Games: 96

Goals: 12

Number/s worn: 34 & 20



What did you do, football wise, following your playing days with Essendon?

I played with the Port Adelaide Magpies in the SANFL for 2 years before moving to the Barossa in 2015 and played with Nuriootpa. In 2017-2019, I coached Nuriootpa.

What job/jobs did you pursue following your playing days, including what you are doing currently?

I worked with Port Power Football Club on a 9 month contract as a Player Welfare Manager before starting my Masters degree in Winemaking at the University of Adelaide. I completed my Masters in 2014, and then moved to the Barossa working as a winemaker at Barossa Valley Estate, at Seppeltsfield Wines. I'm now a winemaker at Penfolds.

Have you suffered with any post football injuries and have any required surgery?

Yes. I had surgery post-Essendon on a hernia in my left groin. I had hip issues in both hips during my Essendon playing days, and I have recently had a total right hip replacement. I will also need to get my left hip replaced soon.

What are your thoughts on the modern game, and how would you change any of the areas that you don't like!

I must admit that I have lost touch with watching football. I rarely go to watch games live or on TV. If anything, I will take my children to watch local footy as an outing. From the AFL that I have watched over the last year, the game is played at a high intensity and skills are very impressive.

Do you have any special anecdotes from your playing time to pass onto other past players?

We had some good times in Vegas after a season finished. The football season can be quite stressful, and it is difficult to see the different side of some of your team mates within season. The team trips away bring back some fond memories, including having our doctors, such as Bruce Reid and Ian Reynolds, there to look after us.

Who were your mates in your playing days with Essendon, do you keep in touch?

One of my closest friends is Jay Nash. I grew up playing cricket with Jay, who was a very good cricketer. Our own families are still very close, both with children a similar age. I played country football and coached with Jay at Nuriootpa, which is where he grew up. I also keep in touch with Hayden Skipworth when he is back in SA.

I feel that men may not be the best in keeping in touch with their mates, but I was very close with most people, if not all of my team mates in my playing days, so there are too many to name.

It is always great to catch up with people I played with, when I get back to Melbourne, which is not enough.

Who were the players you most admired in your playing days at Essendon?

For Essendon: James Hird, Matthew Lloyd, Dustin Fletcher, Jobe Watson, Scott Lucas, Jason Johnson, Mark McVeigh, Adam McPhee....the list goes on.

Other teams: Lenny Hayes, Simon Black, Brad Johnson, Stevie Johnson, Gary Ablett, Nathan Buckley, Matthew Pavlich.

Do you have any comments that you would like to pass on about your time at Essendon?

Essendon was a fantastic club when I was there. It went through a lot of change in the 8 years I was there. I learnt a lot of life lessons in that time and met some great people. The people within the four walls, like the volunteers, trainers, etc, are the true fabric of the club. Being a past payer is something that I am proud of.

As I do not live in Melbourne, it would be nice to have more opportunities to connect with the club and current players. Events for past players or invitations to games only appear to be in Melbourne. It is extremely difficult to get to these and therefore it can feel disconnected. When Essendon come to Adelaide, it would be nice to reconnect again.