

## PRESENTATION AT OAFC CELEBRATION OF AN ERA – Sat 13 June 2015

*Message from Bruce Corben. Past Premiership Player, OAFC Life Member, Chairman Match Committee:  
"To everyone who contributed to that special era, enjoy being together and reflecting on just what was achieved. It was a spectacular period in the lives of so many Ormond people. The recognition is very well earned. I'm sorry not to be part of this great occasion."*

*"No need to acknowledge my main contribution, that being to fine dining at Match Committee on Thursdays.  
My best to Michael Oaten, Geoff Reiley and Russell Barnes."*

Although it is a 30 yr Reunion of the 1985 Premiership, tonight is titled “Celebration of an Era”. And that is exactly what it is. 1985 was the start of a domination of A Section of the VAFA by this club, Our club, the OAFC.

The VAFA commenced in 1892 and has been running for 123 yrs. Private schools such as Wesley College, Scotch College, Melbourne Grammar, Xavier College and Parade College along with Melbourne University Blacks have had significant periods where they have dominated in A Section. But no other District Club has dominated an era like Ormond has done on 2 separate occasions.

The first was when Ormond won triple flags in 1971, 72, 73 and were surprisingly defeated in 1974 by only 14 pts by Uni Blacks. We should all be indebted to the players, coaches and administrators of those years. I am pleased to see a number of them here tonight. Their achievements announced to all in the VAFA that here was a powerful club, derived from local talent with no affiliation with the automatic recruiting fields that the Private Colleges and Melbourne University offers. The club was then, and indeed still is, so appreciative of the tireless work of the Ormond Junior clubs that provides a pathway for so many players to move through to Senior football.

However, the celebration tonight is to recognise Ormond’s 2<sup>nd</sup> great period of A Section domination, commencing in 1984 in which the Seniors were Runners-Up to De La Salle whilst the Reserves took out the flag that year. The Senior team then defeated De La for the flag in 1985 and the Reserves won too. It is indeed a great pleasure to have with us tonight the two highly respected Grand Final Umpires from 1985, John Horwood and Brian Goodman – 2 of the very finest VAFA Umpires with distinguished careers. They honour us as a club by being here tonight. Thank you to both of you.

The Reserves won again the following year in 1986, whilst the Senior team finished 4<sup>th</sup>. The Senior team then won 1987 & 1988, both wins over Xavs, with the Reserves also winning in 1988. The Seniors then defeated Collegians in both 1989 and again in 1990 and another outstanding VAFA Umpire, our own club President Richard Simon, umpired both those GFs. The Reserves also secured

the 1989 premiership. In that 7 year period the club won 5 A Section flags and 5 A Reserve Flags. A club effort contributed by many fine players and the club was led by many outstanding administrators.

#### A SENIOR COACH's MEMORIES OF THAT ERA

Courage and rucking of Graham Herkess, Matt McConville and Alan Naylor

Passionate leadership and toughness of Phil Mehrten and Russell Barnes

Sheer skill and coachability of Simon Eishold

Brilliant running ability of Phil Kingston, Paul Sutherland, Justin Clarkson, Paul Kitely

B&F ability of Guy Ritchie, Steve McCooke, Grant Petering

The tough, straight-ahead spirit of Craig Clark, Brett Burden, Tim Hille, Darren Edgell

Clever elusive skills of Greg Fisher, Bernie Eldering, Matthew Brown, Paul Nankervis

Reliable & skilful abilities of David, Mark, Paul McDonald, Adam Fitzgerald

Goalkicking of Michael Oaten, Geoff Singleton, Stuart Carboon and Paul Schuhkraft

High leaping of Ross Tonkin, Scott Taylor and later Lindsay McMahon

Sheer grit of Martin Tobin, Mark Gilmore and Craig Tonkin

Roving skill of Paul Cox, Andrew Mehrten, Bob Beard, Tony Boyanton, Brett Connell, Steve Grace, Andrew Best

No other district club has come anywhere near rivalling Ormond's two great eras of success, and indeed, only Scotch and Uni Blacks have had 2 separate periods of domination. So we should never lose sight of the unique status this club of ours holds in the rich tapestry that is the VAFA. Tonight rightfully celebrates its past successes.

But what is the relevance for the players of today? To the young Ormond warriors who are representing our club so impressively in 2015, many of whom are here tonight. Today's coach Ash Lever and the players may be sitting in the audience wondering what the fuss is all about, AND more on a personal note, "I've heard it all before and it doesn't help us today, 30 yrs later."

I would disagree! When I was honoured to be appointed Senior Coach in 1983, (and probably very fortunate to be re-appointed the following year?), as a playing group, we were very proud of the previous great successes of the early 70s and we used that history as a springboard. It inspired us. It had tremendous value to us. It gave us a blueprint BUT we knew we had to carve out our own story.

I am reminded of an anecdote the late great Allan Jeans presented to our playing group during that period. He told a story of a young man on a journey through the desert when he came to a multi-directional crossroad and a group of lost travellers who were stuck, confused because the only signpost had been knocked out of the ground. They were unable to proceed because they did not know which road to take. The young man thought for a moment or two, then acted decisively. He picked up the signpost and simply pointed the correct arm back towards where he had come from. Once he had made that direction clear, the correct road forward became obvious to everyone. Allan Jeans' simple homily is true for us all. To find your way forward in any pursuit, in any worthwhile endeavour, indeed, in life itself, you must know from where you came. Then, and only then, can you proceed with courage and confidence to write your own chapter and, in so doing, reach for the stars. Look back with pride Ormond, as you set out from this point forward to create your own history.

Shakespeare said, "Our destiny does not lie within the stars, it lies within ourselves!"

Go Monders!!

Mike McArthur-Allen, OAFC Senior Coach 1983- 1990 and 1993-1994