

## **NIGHTCLIFF FOOTBALL CLUB**

The Nightcliff Football Club was originally formed as the Works and Housing Football Club in 1950 and competed in the 1950/51 season. As the NTFL consisted of only the League competition until the Reserves Grade was started in 1953/54, and the Senior Colts competition established in 1956/57, the Works and Housing Club was established to give fringe players and a number of younger players who could not get a game with Buffaloes, the opportunity to play in the NTFL competition.

The club was renamed Nightcliff Football Club in 1963/64. The fledgling club played in its first finals series in the 1951/52 season reaching the preliminary final. The club lost the 2<sup>nd</sup> semi final to Buffaloes and then lost the preliminary final to Wanderers.

The foundation members of the Club were Bert Garrett, Secretary, Merve Hunt, Ron Bridget, Roly Dunn and Bob Renner. The Commonwealth Department of Works and Housing employed most. Former Buffalo players Leo Pon and Ron Chin supported them.

Since it's inception the club has only won three Premierships in 1956/57, 1960/61 and 1964/65. The Tigers' League teams must have been reasonably strong as they were runners-up five times, Third 14 times and Fourth 10 times. The Club has won seven Reserve Grade and six Under-18 Premierships.

The Football Club is part of the Nightcliff Sports Club and has it's own home ground with change rooms at Nightcliff Oval which was first used for NTFL fixtures in 1972. Within the grounds is a licensed Club House, which is shared by all embers of the Sports Club.

The club has played games at the old Darwin oval (now Centenary park on the Esplanade), Larrakeyah barracks (the club used this ground as a training ground as well), Parap (current netball courts), the RAAF base, gardens oval and of course Nightcliff oval.

The official Guernsey colours are black with yellow sash, yellow numbers, black logo shorts and black and yellow-hooped socks and obviously adopting the tigers as the club emblem..

Seven Nightcliff players have won nine Nichols Medals. They are Harold Muir 1956/57, Joe Bonson 1958/59 and 1959/60, Benny Lew Fatt 1963/64, Ken Bonson 1970/71, Mark Motlop 1977/78 (tie), John Tye 1978/79 and Joe Daby 1972/73 (tie) 1980/81. Joe Bonson was the first of six NTFL players to win the Medal twice. He was also Runner-up to Ted Cooper 1957/58 and Bertram 1962/63. Joe Daby was also a dual Nichols Medallist.

Because of his VFL/AFL reputation, Michael McLean stands out as the most celebrated local player to come from the Nightcliff Club. He played all his junior football with Nightcliff before being discovered by VFL/AFL club Footscray. Michael won the U-15 Best & Fairest Gunderson Medal in 1978/79, the U-17 Best

& Fairest Hickman Medal in 1979/80, was a member of the 1980 and 1981 NT Schoolboys team, the 1981 All Australian Schoolboys, NT TEAL Cup member in 1980 and 1981 winning the Best and Fairest award in 1981.

In senior football, Michael played 35 NTFL games and represented the NT against North Melbourne in 1988, Tasmania, Australian Amateurs and VFA in the 1988 Bicentennial 2<sup>nd</sup> Division National Championships, and was one of three NT players' names in the All Australian Team at the Bicentennial Championships. He was Vice Captain of the NT team against Hawthorn in 1991 winning the Australia Day Medal for Best on Ground. He also represented the NTFL against Geelong in 1992 and Melbourne in 1993. Michael has played over 120 VFL/AFL games with Footscray and Brisbane Bears, winning Club Best & Fairest 1991 and 1993.

One of the best Tigers team from the eight which made the Grand Final would have to be the 1973/74 team which lost one of the most exciting and close games (by three points) to the best ever Waratahs team. The line-up was:

Stewie Clark, Keith Smart, Frank Griffin, Ken Utting, Ian White, Tom Blackley, Mike Crawshaw, John Greenoff, Costa Karaolias, Eddie Motlop, Paul Bleile and Cedric Suradi are amongst a long list of Nightcliff stalwarts who have over the years given dedicated and tireless service to the Club. **(Courtesy Michael Barfoot - NTFL Historian)**

## **Kidney Family**

### **Adrian Kidney**

Adrian although being a twin with his brother Robin (Glenelg), was recruited from West Adelaide in the SANFL. Adrian's football career did not take off like his twin brother's as Adrian was also involved with weight lifting as another sport. In 1983, Adrian won the Silver medal at the National U/21 Weight Lifting Championships. Back at West Adelaide, he won the Club's Under 19 Best & Fairest in 1985 and played 5 league games between 1986 and 1987. Adrian travelled to Darwin and commenced his career with the Tigers in 1987/88 where he went onto earn the respect as a tough player anywhere in the back line, captained the club in 1993/94 season under coach Ray Buckley and won the Club's Best & Fairest in 1992/93. In total Adrian played

In between, Adrian travelled back down south and he played 25 leagues games with Sandy Bay (Tasmanian Football League) including being a member their 1989 Premiership team.

### **Robin Kidney**

Robin was recruited from Clarence (Tasmania) originally hailing from the SANFL where he played his 1<sup>st</sup> league game in 1983 as a 16 year old with Glenelg. He had 5 seasons with Glenelg (83-87) before moving to Tasmania where he played for Sandy Bay & Clarence. Robin was a member of Glenelg's 1985 & 1986 premiership teams.

His team mates in the 1985 team included Stephen & David Kernehan (Carlton), Tony Hall (Hawthorn), Tony McGuinness (Footscray) & Wayne Henwood (Sydney Swans & St Marys) who went on to play AFL football. Robin and former tiger team

mate Peter McGann were members of the South Australian side which played in the Teal Cup at Gardens oval in 1983.

Robin was a robust medium sized player who kicks effectively with either foot. His hustling bustling style of play made him one of the tiger's chief ball-getters and he was always amongst the leaders in the team's statistics for most possessions in a game.

Name	Robin Peter Kidney
Guernsey no/club	17 - Nightcliff Football Club
Position	Rover/ruck rover
Nickname	Kids
No of NTFL league games	21
Recruited from	Clarence (Tasmania)
Other clubs	Glenelg (SA) 83-87, Sandy Bay (Tas) 88-89, Clarence (Tas) 90 & 91
Player awards	Runner-up B & F Sandy Bay 1988, 3 <sup>rd</sup> BF TFL 1988
Highly rated team-mate	Peter McGann
Most influence on football career	Graham Cornes (Glenelg coach)
Age	24
Height	172 cm (5'9")
Occupation	Flight assistant
Marital status	Single (girlfriend Martina)
Favourite past-time	Music, travel (also plays the trumpet)
Favourite food	Roast pork
Favourite drink	Bourbon & coke
Favourite nightclub (Darwin)	Shamrock hotel (Hobart) Beachcomber

Admired person outside football Mike Tyson (world heavyweight boxing champion)

## **Norm Murphy**

Norm began his football career with Nightcliff from the under14's. He progressed through the grades to eventually play senior football at the age of 17 in 1990/91, Norm has played \*\* NTFL games and represented the NTFL against Essendon in 1998.

In 1997/98 Norm won his second Nichols Medallist with 15 votes from Matthew AhMat (Darwin) and Willie Rioli (Waratahs). Norm became only the third player in the history of the Medal to win back-to-back medals, others to have won were Joe Bonson (Works & Housing) 1959/60 and 1960/61 and Pat Murphy (St Marys) 1971/72 and 1972/73.

Norm also won the club's best and fairest twice in 1995/96 and 1998/99.

In 1998, Norm was recruited by Sturt in the SANFL and spent two seasons with them. He played in Sturt's successful 1998 Reserves Grand Final winning team.

## **Benny Lewfatt**

Benny was born in 1938, the second child of Walter and Monica Lewfatt. Evacuated to South Australia during World War II, the Lewfatt family returned to Darwin in 1947 where Benny was educated at Darwin Primary and Darwin High. Benny left school at 16 to take up a carpenter's apprenticeship with the Department of Works and Housing. It was a job, which committed him to a football career with Works and Housing (later Nightcliff).

The Lewfatt brothers Terry, Kenny, Benny, Gympie, Charley and Dennis were all leading players in the NTFL. Terry and Gympie spent all their careers at St Marys, whilst Dennis transferred to Darwin. All played in many winning grand finals for their respective clubs however, Benny and Gympie went on to win Nichols Medals.

Like his older brother, Terry, Benny Lewfatt was unquestionably one of the great Territory sportsmen of the 50s and 60s, making his mark in both Australian Rules and basketball. While most judges find it impossible to separate the two, Benny achieved two things Terry did not - he won the Nichols Medal and he represented Australia in basketball.

Benny was a centre man of immense natural skills and blistering speed. He played with Nightcliff until the late 1960s, amassing about 200 games, playing in three premiership sides and twice winning his club's best and fairest award. In 1963-64 he won the Nichols medal, which had so often eluded his older brother, beating Darwin's Jimmy Anderson in a low count.

Like most footballers of his era Benny's representative chances were restricted to the occasional games against Alice Springs and Mt Isa, one can only speculate what may have been achieved if more opportunities were available. Benny now holds life membership of both the NTFL and Nightcliff (1967). He has been an NTFL selector, served on the Umpires Appointments Board and coached at junior level with Nightcliff.

Benny's basketball career with the dominant Pioneers club mirrored his involvement with Australian Rules football but in this sport he played with, not against, his brother Terry.

An outstanding guard, Benny played in nine Australian championships from 1959-67, and was voted by one newspaper as the player of the series at Devonport, Tasmania, in 1963.

After the 1961 championships in Melbourne Benny was selected in the Australian team which played a 10-match tour of New Zealand.

Benny retired from A-grade basketball in the late 60s. His achievements included at least two best and fairest awards in the competition, a string of A-grade premierships, and coach of an NT team which played overseas in Timor. After retiring from football and basketball Benny devoted himself to golf, at one stage getting his handicap down to 13 on the old sand green course at Fannie Bay. He

says the golf club's move to Marrara ruined his game because the ball would always run off the greens!

These days Benny still plays social golf, he's tried his hand at lawn bowls, but most of all likes to spend his Saturday's having a flutter at the Fannie Bay racetrack.

In his working life Benny spent 38 years in the public service before taking his redundancy last year. He is now a community worker with the Forward drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre at Stuart Park. Benny is married to Sandra and they have three children.

### **Bob Elix**

Bob Elix arrived in Darwin in June 1969 after breaking his leg in his last game with Port Adelaide on Anzac Day 1969. He was transferred in his job with the New Zealand Insurance Company which he later left to join Aldo Rossetto in his sporting goods business. Bob played as a half flanker in his five seasons with Port Adelaide, and was a member of the club's 1965 Premiership team. The coach of the Premiership team was the legendary Fos Williams, and Bob's team mates included Geoff Motley and John Cahill, both of whom had stints as Coach of the club.

#### **Darwin's Premiership Playing-Coach:**

After his arrival in Darwin and not long after his leg was out of plaster Bob played for Darwin and took up the offer of playing captain/coach for Darwin in the 1970/71 season. Without any undue fanfare he led the club to its fourth consecutive Premiership, the other three being under the leadership of Aldo Rossetto. Darwin also won the umpire's carnival that season. Shortly afterwards a knee injury forced him to retire from football.

#### **Waratahs First Premiership in 20 years:**

After the one season with Darwin, Bob returned to football coaching Waratahs in 1971/72 and 1972/73 (both seasons finishing third), and two Umpire's Carnivals. Bob returned to Waratahs in 1967/77 and took them from wooden-spooners 1975/76 to premiers. The 1976/77 grand final had a royal flavour with Her Majesty the Queen a guest of the NTFL and arriving at Gardens Oval wearing a red and white outfit.

#### **Nightcliff Minor Premiers:**

Not sitting on his laurels Elix took over the coaching of Nightcliff who were having a bad run and helped get them as far as the preliminary final in 1977/78, and a fourth Umpire's Carnival. The following season he coached the Tigers the Minor Premiership and they had every chance to taking out the 1978/79 Premiership. Nightcliff lost to St Marys in the grand final. Had this chance been achieved, it would have been a unique feat as Elix's third premiership as coach with his third different club to go along with four umpire's carnivals with three different clubs. Ironically, St Marys coach was Aldo Rossetto, Bob's business partner. Bob returned to the tigers in 1980/81 after internal upheavals but success eluded him, with Nightcliff finishing fifth.

NT State Coach Bob Elix's appointment as the first NT State Coach and the Coach of the 1979 City of Darwin All Stars Team is in recognition of his proven ability to get the best out of a side and this must make him one of the greatest Football Coaches ever seen in the Top End. Hail Bob Elix!

Very much a permanent resident of Darwin, Bob has a fairly hectic schedule running his sporting goods business, serving as an Alderman and Deputy Mayor in the Darwin City Council, and Vice Chairperson of the Darwin Turf Club. He has also found time to coach the University team in the NTFA Sunday competition (1993/94 and 1994/95 Premiers).

## **Bonson Family**

### **Joe Bonson**

In the history of Australian Rules football in the Territory no player has won the coveted Nichols Medal three times. But the man who came closest was the great Nightcliff legend, Joe Bonson. Joe won the Nichols Medal in the 1958-59 and 1959-60 seasons and was runner-up twice. No other player in the history of the NTFL can boast such an outstanding individual record in Nichols medal voting.

Joe was born the third of 12 children to Donald Harold Bonson Snr and Patricia Bonson Snr in 1937. The family was evacuated to the small country town of Merbin, near Mildura during the war years, and it was here that Joe first started kicking around a football. After the war the family lived at Pine Creek for two years where Joe's father worked as a fettler on the railways. In 1948 they came back to Darwin and, as Joe remembers it, "squatted at a place called Nightcliff."

Joe was 16 and still going to Darwin High when he started playing A-grade with Works and Housing in the 1953-54 season. The club later changed its name to Nightcliff, and Joe played for 15 seasons until 1968, amassing somewhere in the region of 200 games.

In the 1957-58 season Joe, a ruck rover/centre half-forward, played in his first premierships side, but lost the Nichols Medal by one vote to Buff's Ted Cooper. Joe won the medal the next two seasons (in 1959/60 he beat Terry Lewfatt on a count-back), and while he finished out of a place in the 1960/61 season, Works and Housing won the premierships, Joe was best-on-ground in the grand final, and also won The NT News player of the year award.

Two seasons later Joe was again runner-up in the Nichols Medal, losing by one vote to Bertram Kantilla of St Marys who played just three games but polled the maximum nine votes. In 1963 Works and Housing sowed an oval and built clubrooms at Nightcliff (which became the club's new name) - it was on the same ground the Bonson family had lived when they returned to Darwin from Pine Creek in 1948. In 1964/65 Nightcliff won the premierships (Joe's third the club has not posted another success since then).

Joe retired from playing in 1968 when he started work with the NT Fire Service - the shift work made it impossible for him to train regularly.

During his 15-year career Joe won Nightcliff's best and fairest award five times, was made a club life member in 1964 and an NTFL life member in 1983. Twice Joe toyed with the idea of playing football interstate, once with North Adelaide and once with East Perth, but his apprenticeship obligations meant he could only play in trial games while on holidays. Joe was unlucky that his best years in football coincided with a period in NTFL, history when representative games were few and far between. Joe played only in country lightning carnivals in Mt Isa he was past his best when VFL sides like Collingwood and St Kilda played games in Darwin in the late 1960s.

Joe was also a basketballer of considerable talent. He played with Pioneers (now Pioneer-Pints) from 1954 to 1968, was a member of the NT team which played at the Australian Championships in Devonport, Tasmania, in 1963, and he played in 11 A-grade premiership sides. These days Jose still works with the NT Fire Service and is married with two sons, both of whom have had their spotting careers limited by what ice calls "that old Bonson knee." Joe is remembered as one of the greats of the 50s and 60s and the man who came closest to winning the Nichols medal three times.

Joe's sons Joe Jnr and Rodney both played senior football, Joe 34 games and Rodney 11 games. Joe was almost a regular player in the seniors following his debut year however a continuous knee injury ruled him out for a number of years. On his return Joe played a number of reserve games but found the lure of touch a much better option for his knee and in the representative sphere. Rodney never really lived up to his potential and following transfers to Darwin and North Darwin and, a new job prospect, before returning to Nightcliff finished Rodney's football career before it really started.

## **Pat Bonson**

Pat Bonson (nee Wayne) was born on the 18th October 1942 at the Crown Street Women's Hospital in Sydney. She was the eldest daughter of Daphne and Claude Wayne.

Pat and her first moved to Darwin in 1947 to settle. Pat first attended a Darwin Catholic School at age 4 when the family where living at the Allan Brothers Compound at the old 11 Mile.

Pat didn't attend high school and commenced her first job at Ernie Wonsons Electrical Store before her close friend Janet Smith (now known as Janet Roe) got her a job at the Department of Works & Housing in the registry section at 14 years of age.

The Wayne family were living at the old Nightcliff Camp when Pat first met Joe and the Bonson family who were also living at the camp. The Bonson's where an old pioneering Darwin family. Pat made many friends during her time at the Nightcliff Camp such as Janet McCourt, Julie Fowlstone, Patsy Bonson, Sandra Lewfatt and Judy Bennett to name a few. It is said Pat only befriend Patsy Bonson as an excuse to get closer to Joe who she had a crush on.

In 1954 the Wayne's moved to 16 McKillop Street, Parap where they lived for 16 years. Pat started dating Joe Bonson at age 14, while the Bonsons moved to Henry Street Stuart Park in 1957.

After getting engaged Pat and Joe married on the 21st October 1961 at the Church of England in Smith Street. The wedding reception at the Old Darwin Town Hall was one of the biggest at the time with many drinkers from the Vic Hotel gate crashing. It was estimated over 500 people were present that night. Joey, Rodney, Pacita and April and the granddaughters arranged a surprise 40th wedding anniversary for Pat and Joe at the Nightcliff Sports Club. It was to be their last anniversary together.

Pat and Joe moved into the ground floor flat at the Wayne residence in McKillop Street before moving to their first home in Armidale Street, Stuart Park. They then moved into 4 Narrows Road, The Narrows in 1964 where they lived until 1999. Pat gave birth to their first child Joseph Fredrick on the 3rd July 1962. Their youngest child Rodney Andrew was born on the 12th March 1972.

After Cyclone Tracey Pat and the boys evacuated to Sydney where they stayed with Pat's family in Rooty Hill. They returned later in the year. Luckily their Narrows Road house wasn't damaged during cyclone Tracey.

One of Pat's greatest achievements was her 53 year involvement with the Nightcliff Football Club formerly known as Works & Housing. In the early 60's Pat and her close friend Rosanne Ruddick worked tirelessly in the Nightcliff canteen at Gardens Oval. Rosanne was later to become Pat's Bride's Maid and sister in law as she married Joe's younger brother Robert.

Pat was there side by side with Joe when he won dual Nichol's Medal's, 6 Club Best & Fairest, over 200 NTFL games, a member in all 3 of Nightcliff's premiership teams and a Nightcliff and NTFL Life Member. Pat's eldest son Joseph first starting playing with the Nightcliff under 14's in 1975, with their youngest son Rodney commencing with the Under 13's in 1984. Pat was involved with the Nightcliff Football Club junior committee from 1984 to 1991.

Pat served as President of the Junior Committee from 1988 to 1991 where they were successful in raising over \$21000 for the juniors.

Pat and Joe starting donating trophies for the Nightcliff Juniors in the mid 80's and this support continued until Pat's passing. Pat also attended the last 7 Senior Presentation nights to witness the Best and Fairest player being awarded the Joe Bonson Medal named after Joe's passing in 2002.

Pat was awarded Nightcliff Life Membership in the mid 80's as a reward for her outstanding services to the Nightcliff Football Club. She became known to all players, supporter's, coaches and officials as simply "Auntie Pat", the little lady with the biggest heart.

Pat will always be remembered by her family, her brother's & sisters and her closest friends as a kind hearted natured person who you couldn't help but love

and adore. She would call spade a spade and be direct, that was her way. We are all proud of her courage and her fighting spirit she displayed to the very end. We have all been blessed with Pat's friendship and presence and she has left us all our own special memories that we will all cherish forever.

Farewell to a grand old lady, a courageous inspirational battler who will always be known as "The little lady with the big heart".

Rest in peace Pat.

## **John Bonson**

John commenced his playing career with works & housing in 1953/54 at 16 years of age and played reserves football in 1954/55, 1955/56 and 1957/58. In 1956/57 John broke into senior football and was a member of Works & Housing 1960/61 and Nightcliff's 1964/65 premierships teams. He also played in the 1965/66 losing grand final team.

John's career expanded over eighteen seasons and an estimated 240 league games before his retirement in 1971/72. He remained as an active committee member of the Nightcliff football club, being social director for five years (1970 - 1974). John was granted life membership of the Nightcliff football club in 1966 and NTFL Player Life Membership in 1986.

John represented the NTFL twice against All Stars (VFL) and Collingwood (VFL) in 1967. John was in the initial squads for the 1966 clash with North Adelaide and in 1969 against St Kilda but withdrew through injury.

During his career John won the best player in the finals in 1965/66, best team man in 1967/68 and again best player in the finals in 1969/70. John was awarded club life membership in 1964/65 and NTFL player life membership in 1986.

John was also a member of the Works and Housing touring team (the first NTFL team to ever tour) which travelled to the North Queensland Centenary Carnival in 1959, in Mt Isa, and won the competition against Alice Springs, Mt Isa and Mary Kathleen.

John was also a member of the NTFL's first representative team against Mary Kathleen in 1961.

John's two sons Jason and John now play league football with the club after coming through the junior ranks. Jason was captain for two years 1996/97 and 1997/98 and was a prolific goal kicker right through his football career. In fact, in the 1989/90 season Jason kicked a staggering 70 goals in the Under 18 competition whilst in the seniors, Jason is well on the way to kicking 100 senior goals. This figure would have been reached far quicker had Jason not missed a full season with a knee injury and a season playing at fullback. Unfortunately for Jason, this injury has flared up again in the 2000/2001 season thus restricting him for the year.

John has taken time to live up to his potential. Whilst he shone brilliantly in any given game, there were many more where he did not perform to his ability. Currently, a more mature outlook has seen John to take up the mantle and is now expected to become the club's permanent centre half forward with his strong marking ability.

## **Ken Bonson**

Ken commenced playing with Works & Housing in the 1957/58 season, at 13 years of age. He played his first senior game during the 1962/63 season, and his playing career (league) ended during the 1977/78 season, combining an estimated total of 290 senior games.

Ken represented the NTFL against Collingwood (VFL.) in 1967, all stars (VFL) in 1967, and against Alice Springs (CAFL) in 1972. Ken was a member of Nightcliff's 1964/65 premiership team, and grand final team 1965/66, and Darwin's 1975/76 premiership team.

Ken won the NTFL's most coveted award, the Nichols medal in 1970/71, winning his clubs best and fairest in the same year, and has an incredible record of being runner up in the clubs best and fairest seven times. Ken coached the tigers for two seasons in 1969/70 and 1970/71, and has since been involved in juniors, coaching all grades and holds NFL level 1 coaching certificate. Ken received life membership of the Nightcliff football club in 1972.

Ken's sons also played senior football, Jacob 1 game and Kane 15 games. However, serious injuries have restricted both sons from playing more games. Kane in particular was outstanding when he broke into the senior team until the injury (shoulder?) forced him into a long layoff from the game. When he returned, he did not play any more football rather he took up rugby league where he played in a number of winning grand finals for the Nightcliff Rugby League Club and in 2000 went onto captain the club to another grand final win.

Jacob similarly returned to sport and he too played rugby league although Jacob did play a number of reserve games for a short time.

## **Brentley Hughes**

Recruited from Southern Districts Brentley coached Katherine South to two Premierships (1992/93 and 1993/94) in the KDFL and won the 1989/90 Nichols Medallist, winning the Southern Districts Club Best and Fairest in the same year. In the 1999/2000 season, Brentley coached the senior team with out much success.

Brentley was a member of Katherine's 2 NTFL Reserve Grade Premierships winning the Mitch Lee Medal (NTFL Best & Fairest Reserve Grade) in 1985/86. He won Katherine's 1987/88 club Best & Fairest in their only season in NTFL. He also captained Southern Districts in 1989/90 and 1990/91. Brentley has represented the NTFL against North Melbourne (1988), Australian Amateurs and VFA in the victorious Northern Territory team, which won the second division of the 1988 Bicentennial Carnival in Adelaide; he also played against Essendon (1989 and 1990), Port Adelaide (1989), St Kilda (1990) and Hawthorn (1991).

NTFL games played: Wanderers 18 (13 goals), Southern Districts 55 (30 goals), Katherine 17 (23 goals) and Nightcliff 8 (2 goals).

### **Damien Squires**

Rover/half forward Damien Squire was League Player of the Week winner of round 7 of the NTFL in only his third NTFL game since being recruited from North Adelaide (SANFL). Damien played his junior football with Greenaeres until 1989. From 1991 to 1994 Damien has played 45 League games with North Adelaide, finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in the SANFL Leading goal kicking award. Former North Adelaide Reserves Best & Fairest Runner Up. Since then, Damien transferred to Sturt playing in the losing 1999 grand final to Port Adelaide however, during the 2000 season he won the coveted Margary Medal. The SANFL's Best and fairest. He played a total of 11 games kicking 16 goals.

### **Greg Brain**

Greg played for the club for four seasons, his first stint commenced in 1986/87, 1987/88 and 1988/89. and he returned in 1990/91 to live here permanently with his family however life did not work out for Greg and his family and they all returned back south after one season back.

Greg played all his junior football with Finlay and progressed through the junior ranks to play his first league game at 17 years of age. He was a member of the Clubs 1982 Premiership team. Greg has also represented Murray Football league in 1987 and also as a junior.

### **Brett Wills**

Brett Wills played a total of 74 games for 84 goals after commencing his career with the then Under 15's. Brett represented the Northern Territory in 1987 Secondary Schoolboys and 1988 Teal Cup. Brett was a member of the Tigers 1989/90 Reserves Premiership team. He transferred to Port Adelaide (SANFL) in 1990, but a broken leg in a trial match curtailed his career with Ports. Brett moved to Perth where he played senior football with East Perth???

Brett's younger brothers Glen and Mark Wills also played senior football with the club. Glen never saw out a full season, always returning south for personal reasons and Mark, after he broke in to the senior side felt that he should not have been dropped and transferred to Darwin. At Darwin, Mark did not see out the season and drifted out of the Darwin football scene, possibly moving south.

The boy's parents, Lou and Lorraine served on the club's senior and junior committees in particular Lorraine who worked tirelessly on many occasions raising funds for the club.

### **Brian Hood**

Brian coached senior football in Darwin for six years having previously coached Southern Districts from 1987 to 1989, Wanderers from 1991 to 1993 winning the Premiership in 1992/93 and Nightcliff from 1994 to 1996. Brian also coached club's reserve grade in 1983/84 and Southern Districts during that club's NTFA years.

Brian's football career dates back over 3 decades when he began playing junior football with North Beach Amateurs in the late 1960's. He has played with Osborne Park (WA), Kedron (QAFL), Busselton (WA), Griffith (NSW), Port Hedland and Geraldton (WA) before joining Nightcliff after Cyclone Tracy in 1975.

Brian has represented the Great Northern Football league twice in 1979 and 1980 and played in two Grand Finals during those years. In 1981 he was voted equal Club Best & Fairest for the Port Hedland Rovers. He played with Nightcliff Football Club from 1975/76 to 1982/83 playing 65 senior games (17 goals) and 23 reserve games (10 goals).

Brian played with the Nightcliff from 1975 until 1983 before coaching the Reserves in 83-84 as assistant to Senior Coach Derek Gibson whose 2 sons returned to play with the club this season.

In 1983/84 Brian coached the Tigers Reserves side and then the

On completion of his coaching stint Brian returned to the club in 1998, after standing successfully as the clubs President, a position he still holds in 2001. During his time as President, the club continued to prosper financially regardless of the lean years. Using his many contacts from the football and business worlds, Brian was instrumental with recruiting Craig Williams to the club for the 2000/2001 season, which has seen the club's fortunes take a turn for the better.

Brian's contribution to the club does not end here; Brian's wife, Chicki is heavily involved with fund raising, Whilst daughter Jessica has been assisting with the canteen at home games for the past few years. Further, the Hood's home has been home to many footballer's who have travelled to Darwin to play football with the Club. This form of generosity is over and above the call of committee work.

Despite increasing business commitments Brian accepted the Senior Coaching role at Wanderers in 1991/92 and leading the Eagles to what has become the club's most recent NTFL Premiership and one of those "Special" premierships in 92/93.

Brian then returned "home" to Nightcliff where he was the Senior Coach for 2 seasons in 94/95 and 95-96. Brian retired from the League Coaching role having acted in the Senior Coaching role at Southern Districts, Wanderers and Nightcliff for a total of 105 matches.

Brian's expanding business activities including projects in Indonesia ended his Coaching role and he turned his attention to Club administration becoming Nightcliff President in 1998-99 and has remained in the role for 7 years.

His influence from a club viewpoint on the creation of the AFLNT has been profound particularly in addressing the relationship between the administration and club officials in the areas of competition rules, regulations

and bylaws. He ensured the NTFL club perspective was heard and understood by the Board and Administration.

## **Michael McLean**

Michael is the Club's most famous export and the Northern Territory's longest serving AFL player with (187) 200\*\*\* senior games to his credit 15<sup>th</sup> AFL season. Michael joined Footscray in 1983 and played 95 games for the Dogs in an injury-interrupted stay. He joined the Bears in 1991 through the 1991 pre-season draft and won the clubs best and fairest in his first season there. In 1993 Michael won his second Brisbane best and fairest. He has been vice captain of the Bears for the last two seasons and also vice captained the 1993 NT/QLD side. He captained the NT in 1993 and the Aboriginal All-stars in 1994.

Michael played many games for the NTFL representative sides.

Following his retirement from AFL football in 1996, Michael returned to Darwin, unfortunately not to Nightcliff rather to North Darwin however, after one season with Norths, Michael was appointed for two years (1997/98) as one of the assistant coaches at Brisbane under Leigh Matthews. Again after completion of this role, Michael returned to North Darwin.

Michael was first noticed by Footscray in 1982 and was approached by Footscray with out the Nightcliff Football Club being consulted. In those days, it was illegal for any VFL/AFL club to contact a player direct and once the approach was discovered Footscray were staring at a \$100 000 fine from the VFL.

Nightcliff engaged a southern lawyer who had experience in this field and after protracted negotiations, a fee was agreed. In short, after so many league games with Footscray, Nightcliff was to receive \$40 000. After a few VFL seasons this amount was paid in full.

The whole saga however, strained relationships between the club, the then President Bob Elix, the McLean Family, Michael himself and even between supporters. I believe that Michael felt that the club owed him something whilst some that were involved at that time believe that Michael owed the club something.

One way or another, Michael holds the unique record of being the second Territorian (behind Ruben Cooper who played two AFL games \*\*\*\* with South Melbourne) to play in the VFL/AFL direct from Darwin and Nightcliff's greatest export in the modern era.

Aboriginal All Stars v Collingwood 1994 (Captain

Aboriginal All Stars Coach v Carlton 2003

v Western Bulldogs 2005

v Essendon 2007

Brisbane FC B & F 1991 & 1993

Brisbane FC Assistant Coach 1999 – 2000

VFL / AFL games 202 – Footscray (95), Brisbane (88), Preseason (15) and state of origine (5), Nightcliff FC (35)

Gundersen Medallists 1978-79  
Hickman Medallists 1979-80  
All Australian Schoolboys 1981

NTFL Teal Cup B & F 1981

NTFL representative matches (7) – Nth Melbourne 1988, Tasmania, Australian Amateurs and VFA 1988 Bicentennial Carnival, Hawthorn 1991, Geelong 1992 & Melbourne 1993.

QLD/NT v Tasmania 1993

Allies v WA 1995 State of origine

AFL Player Life Member

Nightcliff FC coach 5 years (2001-02, 2002-03, 2003—4, 2004—5 and 2005-06)

Finalists each year

Southern Districts Coach 2006-07 (Premiers)

## **Peter McGann**

Ruckman cum full forward, Peter McGann played 170 games and scored 210 goals in eleven seasons of NTFL football having been recruited from Glenelg (SANFL). South Australian Teal Cup representative 1983, Runner-Up Glenelg's Reserves Best and Fairest 1984. NTFL representative (13) thirteen times including Australia Day Medallist 1989. Runner-Up in the 1986/87 Nichols Medal winning Club Best and Fairest 1986/87 and 1994/95. Member of Tigers 1985/86 Grand Final team.

Peter was joint captain with Mo Motlop whilst he was the club's leading goal kicker in 1989/90, 1991/92 and in 1993/94. In the eighties, Peter would have to be considered as one of the best big men to have played the game in the NTFL in particular with his ability to ruck, mark, quick goals and was very mobile for his size.

Peter also played I League game fro South Adelaide in the SANFL.

## **Buckley Family**

### **Ray Buckley**

Ray has coached for six season in the NTFL having coached St Marys in 1976/77, 1977/78 (Premiers) and 1980/81, Southern Districts 1989/90 and 1990/91 and Nightcliff 1993/94. Ray also coached the Nightcliff Football Club Under 16 grade in 1988/89, the year Nathan was still playing his junior football with Nightcliff.

When Ray first arrived in Darwin in 1973????, he played with Nightcliff for six games and 8 goals.

Ray played all his junior football with Woodville and is a Player Life Member of Woodville and the SANFL, Woodville Reserves Best and Fairest 1973, All

Australian Amateur in 1976. Ray has also coached Port Districts (SA - Amateurs), Morningside (QAFL), West Canberra (ACT) and Nightcliff juniors.

Ray was an inaugural member of the NT Superules, Superules All Australian 1983 and 1986, and all Australian (Superules) Coach 1984 when NT won the Australian title in Darwin. Ray was also Teal Cup all Australian Selector in 1991 and NT. Selector in 1992 and 1993.

### **Nathan Buckley**

Nathan played his junior football with Nightcliff ( 3 under 18 games for 2 goals and 9 under 16 games for 12 goals up to the 1988/89 season) and Southern Districts. He was a member of Southern Districts 1989/90 Under 18 Premiership side, winning the 1989/90 Haritos Medal for a best on ground performance in the Grand Final. Nathan transferred to Southern Districts in 1989/90 after his father was appointed senior coach at that club. Nathan's transfer was made on the assumption that when his dad was coaching him, he hardly got a game in the under 16's anyway (on occasions Ray would "tell him off") and the chances of him going on appeared slim or so thought one official. So when Nathan applied to go to Districts, a clearance was granted based on the above and to allow him to be at the same club as his father - the rest is history.

However, all was not lost; as thanks to the alertness of the then NTFL General Manager and former Nightcliff great player and President, Mike Crawshaw, the club still received a substantial amount from Nathan's transfer to the AFL.

Nathan played for Port Adelaide in the SANFL and enjoyed a magnificent 1992 season with the club. He won the 1992 Magarey Medal and Port Adelaide's 1992 Best and Fairest award, and was a member of Port Adelaide's 1992 Premiership side, winning the 1992 Oatey Medal for a best on ground performance in the Grand Final.

Nathan won Southern Districts 1990/91 Best and Fairest award and was also Southern Districts 1990/91 leading goal kicker. He has represented the NTFL on three occasions: in 1991 (Hawthorn), 1992 (Geelong) and in 1993 (Melbourne). Nathan made his AFL debut in 1993 for the Brisbane Bears. He won Brisbane's 1993 Best First Year Player award and was also named the 1993 AFL Rookie of the Year. Nathan transferred to Collingwood in 1994 and won Collingwood's 1994 Best and Fairest award, and last season added Collingwood's 1996 Best and Fairest award to his list of achievements as well. He has played a total of 85 AFL games.

### **Craig Simon**

Craig played all his football with Nightcliff coming through the junior grades. His games tallies in the lower grades were not high as he was considered a very good player was promoted almost every second year 140 senior games, 56 goals, 22 games and 11 goals in the reserves, 25 games, 9 goals in the under 18's and 22 games, 4 goals in the under 16's). Craig represented the NT at Secondary Schoolboy (1980) and Teal Cup (1980,81) levels. He has played with several southern clubs in Victoria Country and South Australia with the highlight being a

Grand Final appearance with Mildura Football Club in 1984 in the strong Sunraysia league.

Craig has been Nightcliff's Vice Captain for several seasons and has recently received his life membership. Craig's brother Peter also played football with Nightcliff however, his work commitments and probable a lack of opportunities resulted in him only a handful of senior games and transferred to Darwin for a number of years.

### **Daniel Graetz**

Daniel has played all his junior and senior football with Nightcliff. He represented the Northern Territory at Primary Schoolboy level in 1986 and was a member of Nightcliff's 1986/87 Under 13 Premiership side as well as Nightcliff's 1986/87 Under 15 Premiership side. Daniel represented the Northern Territory at Secondary Schoolboy level in 1988, 1989 and 1990. He won Nightcliff's 1989/90 Under 16 Best & Fairest award and Nightcliff's 1989/90 junior Football of the Year award.

Daniel was a member of the NT Teal Cup sides in 1990 and 1991. He made his senior NTFL debut in 1990/91, aged 16, and was a member of Nightcliff's 1991/92 Under 18 Premiership side. Daniel has spent the majority of his senior football in defence with occasional ruins on the ball. The 1995/96 season saw him establish a permanent spot in the Nightcliff midfield in his first full season filling that role.

Daniel is the nephew of Nightcliff stalwart life member Tim Cardona and the grand son of the great Joe Cooper who played his football with the Darwin Football Club back in the forty's.

### **Ingvar Dyrting**

Nightcliff defender Ingvar Dyrting played 201 NTFL games for the club after making his senior NTFL debut in 1982/83 after commencing his football career with the Nightcliff under16 team in the 1981/82 season. After only one season in the under16's and under18's, Ingvar had his first league game in the 82/83 season.

Ingvar became only the second player to play 200 NTFL games for Nightcliff, following in the footsteps of Mark Motlop. The Tigers take great pride in the fact that both of the 200 senior game players produced by the club have been local juniors.

Ingvar represented the Northern Territory at Secondary Schoolboy level in 1980 and 1981. He was Captain of the NTFL Under 21 side that played the Tiwi Island FL in the curtain raiser to the 1985 Australia Day clash between the NTFL and Glenelg.

Ingvar was Nightcliff Captain for five successive seasons from 1988/89 - 1992/93 and again in 1994/95. He was Nightcliff's 1988/89 Best & Fairest winner and Nightcliff's Best & Fairest Runner-up in 1987/88 and 1989/90 was a member of 1985/86 losing grand final team. He represented the NTFL against Alice Springs

in 1984 and was selected in the NT News NTFL Team of the Year in 1983/84 and 1988/89.

Over the years Ingvar has become recognised as one of the most consistent defenders in the competition. Despite rarely being touted as a star player for the Tigers, he has always displayed an uncanny ability to get involved in the play and gain a possession whenever Nightcliff move the ball out of their defensive area. A medium sized right footer Ingvar has proved that he is one of the most dependable half back flankers in the NTFL. Although he is hardly noticeable when the ball is cleared from the tigers back line you can always bet he had a hand in the action. He was always cool under pressure and could be dubbed the tigers “quiet achiever.

Ingvar was awarded Life Membership of the Nightcliff Football Club in 1996.

Ingvar has managed to mix top grade football with top grade hockey (in the NTFL off-season) & unbeknown to a lot of football followers Ingvar is a top class hockey player who is a regular member of the NT representative sides competing at national championships. Recognition of his outstanding ability by hockey's national hierarchy resulted in his selection to attend 12 months intensive training & coaching in 1987 at the AIS hockey headquarters in Perth.

Ingvar's younger brother Sigurd also played football with Nightcliff who played 5 senior games after coming through the junior ranks however, Sigurd left Darwin at a young age and did not continue playing football.

The following information should give football followers an insight into the character of one of the tigers leading players.

Name	Ingvar Dyrting
Guernsey no/club	9 - Nightcliff Football Club
Position	Half back flank
Nickname	The iceman
No of NTFL games	138
Recruited from	Local player
Player awards	Best & fairest Nightcliff league 1988/89 runner-up best & fairest Nightcliff league 87/88 & 89/90
Highly rated team mate	Tony Dragun (tiger star in the early to mid 80's)
Most influence on football career	John “Bubba” Tye (former buffs, tigers champion)
Age	26
Height	175 cm (5' 10")
Occupation	Technical officer
Marital status	Single
Favourite past-time	Music, movies
Favourite food	Chicken curry
Favourite drink	CC & coke
Favourite nightclub	Crystals
Most admired person outside football	Jay Stacey (Australian hockey player)

## **Joe Daby**

Joe Daby - arguably the greatest player to ever play football in the NTFL; in the opinion of the writer.

Of Joe himself, there is nobody respected more than within his club.

Between 1971/72 and 1980/81, Joe polled high in the Nichol Medal winning it twice. His first win was in 1972/73. However, that year Joe was officially declared runner up on count back after finishing equal with Pat Murphy of St Marys. The rules were then changed so that ties became to be considered as joint winners and two medals warded.

Joe was also third in 1971/72, and then Joe Daby the "flying five" won his second most coveted award, the Nichols Medal in 1980/81. 1980/81 was probable Joe's swan song although there were many highlights. This time he proved without a shadow of doubt he was the winner. Joe polled 14 votes, which consisted of three first votes, two second votes and one third, and although it appears low in number, many medals have been won on lower counts.

However, Joe is the winner and his other awards that year have been the NT News Footballer of the Year \$700, Qantas Award \$700 Airfares, Vic Jewellers Award \$500 Diamond, and Runner-up BP Player of the Year Award.

"I was fortunate enough to go with Joe from the Top of the Telford to NTD 8 for the presentation at his \$1 000 win, and I have never seen such elation from any footballer. Joe is probably one of the best rovers ever to play in Darwin, being selected as V/Capt. NT News Team of the Year, and it is obviously a great influence on our junior footballers." Quote from Michael Barfoot NTFL Football Operations.

Joe Daby the "Flying Five", one of the best players to play with the Nightcliff Football Club, indeed in the NTFL played all his football in Darwin between 1970/71 and 1984, (fourteen years) with one club after starting in the then under 17 grade. He was the club's Best and Fairest six times - 1971/72, 1972/73, 1973/74, 1975/76, 1976/77 and 1980/81. Member of Nightcliff's 1973/74 and 1978/79 grand final teams, Joe represented the NTFL against the Australian Amateurs in 1979 at VFL Park. Nightcliff's Club leading goal kicker in 1973/74 with 64 goals. NTFL Games: 162, Goals: 104 (since 1975/76) however, it is now officially acknowledged by the NTFL through its records that the three seasons prior to the cyclone (1974) Joe played a further 50 odd games and his total games is now recognised as over 200.

Joe will be long remembered for his lightning quickness with unbelievable ball skills was the key to Joe Daby's makeup. This coupled with a huge heart made Joe Daby a superstar of NTFL football. Who will ever forget the flying No 5 exploding from the pack twirling the ball on his fingers?

## John Tye

"Football's post-cyclone champion" quote from NTFL's Football Insight. Australian Rules football has always been the Territory's number one sport, and Darwin has always been home to the strongest competition. It's also true that Darwin football has never been stronger than in the post-Cyclone Tracy years. So when a special NTFL panel chose John "Bubba" Tye in 1990 as the best player since cyclone Tracy, it was a monumental honour.

The panel consisted of more than 20 long-time football followers who were asked to cast votes for a Toyota Top 20 players list. John was the convincing winner.

John was born in Darwin in 1951 and his football career began in 1957 when he played colts at the age of seven with Darwin Football Club. After playing ten seasons with buffalo colts "Bubba" at the age of 16 was promoted to the League team, and was a member of Buffaloes 1968/69 to 1972/73 premiership teams, and won the Chaney Medal (Best On Ground) in the 1972/73 Grand Final.

John transferred to Nightcliff in 1973/74 playing in their 1973/74 grand final team and winning his second Chaney Medal (the only player ever to have won two medals since 1970/71. In the same season Bubba was equal runner-up to Michael Graham in the Nichols Medal.

At his retirement some 20 years later John had played well in excess of 200 league games - about 120 with Darwin and 138 with Nightcliff.

A versatile player, immensely skilled, lightning fast, courageous and a ferocious tackler, John's reputation was as a player always at his best in big games. This is shown in his record - he is the only player since 1970 to twice win the Chaney Medal for best afield in the grand final. He did that in the 1972/73 grand final playing with Buffs, and again in 1973/74 playing with Nightcliff. In 1974 John captained the NT side when it recorded one of the great milestones of Territory sport - the historic win over Queensland in Brisbane, a game, which effectively put Territory football on the national map. Five years later in 1979, he was a member of the Territory team which played on VFL Park in Melbourne against the Australian Amateurs.

Back in Darwin for the 1979/80 season John won a long overdue Nichols Medal with 17 votes, (he had been runner-up in 1973/74 and highly placed in several other seasons) while playing for Nightcliff, also winning Nightcliff's Best & Fairest in the same year. The win is notable because it was the first time in his career that John had played a full season on the back line, a move conjured up by then coach Bob Elix. In the mid 1970s SANFL club, Norwood, recruited John. Although well up to league standard, he only played nine senior games and was a member of Norwood's 1974 Reserves premiership team before returning to Darwin to be with his mates and to pursue the great love of his life, fishing. In the 1983/84 season John coached Nightcliff's league team but pressures of work prevented him from continuing what appeared to be a promising coaching career. In 1987 John was awarded player life membership of both the Nightcliff Club and the NTFL.

His career in football is best summed up by the words penned in the NTFL Football Insight when he was chosen the best player since Cyclone Tracy; 'His inspirational play earned him the respect of all football followers. His fierce attack on the ball sent shudders through all his opponents. A brilliant mark and a superb kick, to watch "Bubba" play would often give all his supporters goose bumps. "Bubba" could have been one of the greats in either SANFL or VFL.'

John also made his mark in Territory rugby league, a fact often overlooked because of his success in Australian Rules. He was a brilliant halfback and fullback with the RSL club, and represented the NT side on the 1972 tour of New Guinea where games were played in Lae and Port Moresby. John was also a good basketballer, playing in the A-grade competition in the late 60s and early 70s.

For the last 10 years John has been a ministerial driver for the NT Government, a job with demanding hours that has forced him out of organised sport. He likes to go fishing whenever he can, and to follow the career of his son, Shannon, who has also played senior football with Nightcliff.

### **David Croker**

Giant ruckman David 'Keg' Croker played all his football with Nightcliff. David has represented the Northern Territory in 1977 at schoolboy level in Hobart. In 1980 SANFL season with Norwood David won the club's and the SANFL Colts goal kicking award with 110 goals and also in 1980 he played two (2) reserve grade games with the Norwood club. A member of tiger's 1980/81 reserve grade premiership team and 1985/86 losing grand final team, David has played 76 senior games (81 goals) mainly at full forward and 20 reserve games for 29 goals, 29 under 18 games for 49 goals and 1 under 16 game.

### **Basil Damaso**

Former Darwin player who transferred to Nightcliff in 1984/85, Basil won the 1976/77 Nichols Medal and Darwin's Best and Fairest in the same season. Former captain of Darwin, Basil was a member of their 1975/76 and 1979/80 premiership teams. Basil played one season with Nightcliff due to a knee injury, which cut his career short.

### **Kelly O'Donnell**

Kelly commenced his junior football career with Kyabramin Goulburn Valley Football League (Vic) and in 1979 at 17 years of age Kelly transferred to Melbourne (VFL) after a season with Kyabram league side.

From 1979 to 1984 Kelly played 80 VFL games with Melbourne and in 1985 played four reserves grade games with Fitzroy before he broke his shoulder. Kelly spent both 1986 and 1987 overseas and this season with Nightcliff is his first since the injury.

A member of Melbourne's 1984 Reserve Grade Premiership Team, he rates his most difficult VFL opponents as Keith Greig (North Melbourne) and David Glascott (Carlton).

Kelly moved to Darwin for the 1988/89 season and played 15 games kicking 10 goals and was a member of the NTFL's 1988 Australia Day game and successful second division Bicentennial squads.

Since then Kelly returned south to further his coaching career. He coached the Murray Bushrangers in the U18 TAC Cup competition between 1993 – 2000, winning the grand final in 1998 including 5 other finals.

He then travelled west to be assistant coach of the Fremantle club for 5?? Years and in 2008 moved to Melbourne to head that club's Development program.

### **Motlop Family**

The story of a love affair which commenced a stone's throw away, (the Motlops lived at Phoenix street, Nightcliff) from Nightcliff oval back in 197\* and was so tragically torn apart in 1993/94.

1981/82 under Bill Bennet, Mark was B& F, Paul was runner up, Mo was third.

### **Eddie Motlop**

The eldest of the four brothers, Eddie commenced his playing career with Nightcliff's then under 17 team and progressed to senior and reserve's football. Eddie is one of the few players in the NTFL to play over 100 games in both seniors and reserve's, and coach the reserve's side to a grand final win (1989/90). Eddie would have played many more senior games, and under 17 games had he not broken his leg twice during each grade which robbed him of at last further 20 odd games in each grade.

### **Mark Motlop**

Mark was the first NTFL player to reach the 300 NTFL game milestone. Mark played his first 261 NTFL games for Nightcliff and is that club's games record holder. He played another 15 games for Wanderers in the 1994/95 season before taking on the coaching position at Southern Districts, for whom he played another 29 games. Overall Mark finished a distinguished playing career on 305 games. Mark retired from playing after having played for 16 seasons with Nightcliff, Wanderers and Southern Districts.

Mark would be in the Club's top 5 best ever players based on his long playing career and the way he played the game. Mark never shirked a contest and on most occasions he won the ball in contests fairly and cleanly. This is a big call given that the Nightcliff Football had such greats as Joe Daby, Joe Bonson and John Tye who also graced the club's colours.

Mark won Nightcliff's Best and Fairest award five times: in 1979/80, 1981/82, 1984/85, 1985/86 and 1989/90, and was a member of Nightcliff's 1978/79 and 1985/86 Grand Final sides. He was Nightcliff Captain in 1982/83 and 1986/87, and Nightcliff Coach in 1990/91, 1991/92 and 1992/93. Mark won the NTFL's most prestigious individual award, the Nichols Medal, in 1977/78, but didn't receive the medal until it was awarded retrospectively in 1993 when the count back system was abolished. He had tied with Saints Bill Bennett and North

Darwin's Ian Wallace, with all three players now being recognised as the 1977/78 Nichols Medallists.

It was only fitting that Mark finally received a Nichols Medal after being tantalisingly close to claiming the award on several occasions after the 1977/78 tie. He was third in 1979/80 finishing two votes behind Hank McPhee, runner-up in 1982/83 finishing one vote behind Tony Lehmann, third in 1984/85 finishing two votes behind Steve Thomson, and third in 1985/86 finishing two votes behind Damien Christensen. Mark's amazing record in Nichols Medal voting dictates that he be ranked as one of the all-time great players in the NTFL.

A vote or two more in any of those seasons would have seen him recognised as a multiple Nichols Medalist, and a vote or two more in all of those seasons would have left him with a record that would have probably seen him remembered as the best NTFL player ever.

Three NT News Player of the year, one tied with Tom Thorn and two won outright.

Mark also played 47 SANFL games for Glenelg and 3 WAFL games for South Fremantle. He represented the NTFL on nine occasions: in 1985 (Glenelg), 1986 (Essendon), 1987 (Sydney), 1988 (North Melbourne, Tasmania, Australian Amateurs and VFA - Bicentennial Carnival), and 1989 (Essendon and Port Adelaide).

Mark was awarded NTFL Player Life Membership in 1990 after passing the 200 NTFL game mile- stone. He may also be able to claim celebrating a 400 senior game milestone if his SANFL and WAFL appearances, 33 games for Jerilderie, and numerous representative matches for the NTFL, Aboriginal sides and Murray Football League are taken into account.

Mark has also coached the NTFL representative team having coached Southern Districts Football Club since 1995/96 for 6 six years, then southern districts for another six years finally returning home to Nightcliff in the 2007/2008 season. Overall Mark coached for 17 seasons, over 340 games with only 5 of those season missing out on the finals for one grand final win (with southern districts).

South Fremantle (WAFL) 47 games  
Port Adelaide SANFL  
Glenelg SANFL (3??)  
Nightcliff 261  
Sthn Districts 29  
Wanderers 15

Total NTFL games 305, 221 goals

Nightcliff FC B & F (5) 1979-80, 1981-82, 1984-85, 1985-86 & 1990-91

Nightcliff FC Captain (2) 1982-83 & 1986-87

Nightcliff FC Grand Final 1978-79 & 1985-86

Nichols Medallist 1977-78 (runner up 1982-83 & 3<sup>rd</sup> three times)

NTFL representative matches (9) – Glenelg 1985, Essendon 1986, Sydney 1987, Nth Melbourne 1988, Tasmania, Australian Amateurs and VFA 1988 Bicentennial Carnival, Essendon & Pt Adelaide 1989.

Nightcliff

1990/91 to 1992/93

Coached 54 Won 21 Loss 33 (includes 2 finals)

Sthn Districts

1995/96 to 2000/01

Coached 113 Won 72 Loss 41 (includes 13 finals & 1 Premiership)

Wanderers

2001/02 to 2006/07

Coached 117 Won 53 Loss 63 Draw 1 (includes 8 finals)

Nightcliff

2007-08 - 2009-10

Coached 36 Won 13 Loss 23 ???

Total NTFL games coached 320

Won 160 Loss 159 Draw 1

NTFL Representative Coach - Essendon 1998

- Richmond

- Sth Fremantle 1998

NTFL Player Life Member and Nightcliff FC Life Member

## **Mo Motlop**

Mo Motlop has now played 200 NTFL games and qualified for Player life membership of the NTFL after being elected a life member of Nightcliff Football Club in 1989.

Mo commenced his League career with the Tigers in 1978 and was a member of the Tiger's 1984/85 Grand Final Team and in 1995/96 was joint captain with Peter McGann. This after serving five years from a fifteen year suspension for an altercation with central umpire \*\*\* in 198\*.

During his career Mo has won several club awards and was one of the most consistent players throughout the last three decades.

### Playing Record

Games	Goals		
Nightcliff Football Club	189		74
Wanderers Football Club	17		0****
Total	206		74

## **Paul Motlop**

Paul Motlop has also played 200 NTFL games and qualified for NTFL Player Life Membership.

Paul becomes the third member of the Motlop family to play 200 NTFL games. Paul was a member of the 1977 NT Secondary Schoolboy's team.

He has also successfully represented the NT against the Sydney Swans (VFL) 1987, North Melbourne (VFL) 1988 and the 1988 Bicentenary Championships in Adelaide against the Australian Amateurs and the VFA in the final.

Paul was a member of Tigers 1978/79 and 1985/86 Grand Final teams. Tiger's leading goal kicker in 1986/87, 1987/88 and 1 988/89.

Paul won Norwood's (SANFL) 1981 Reserves Best & Fairest and has played with Norwood, Glenelg SANFL, West Perth (WAFL) and Jerilderie (NSW).

### **NTFL Playing Record**

	Games	Goals
Nightcliff	174	266
Sthn Districts	11	8
Darwin	15	6
Total1	200	280

Paul coached Darwin FC in the 2004/05 and 2005/06 seasons and Wanderers in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Paul was bestowed NTFL Player Life Membership in 1998/99.

## **Muir Family**

### **Harold Muir**

The history of Territory sport is littered with stars that excelled in more than one sport. Up with the very best of them is Harold Muir, an eight-year veteran of first grade rugby league in Brisbane, and a Nichols Medallist in Australian Rules.

Harold was born in Darwin on Anzac Day, 1939, the third of eight children raised by Hilda and William Muir. Like just about everyone else in Darwin, the Muir family was evacuated before the Japanese attack in 1942, and spent the war years in Brisbane.

After the war Harold was educated at the old Darwin Primary School and a new Darwin High School, which opened in 1951. Barely into his teens Harold was in demand as a sportsman in both rugby league (which began competition in 1950) and Australian Rules.

In rugby league Harold started with Hornets in the 1953-54 season, playing alongside names like Chico Motlop, Billy Roe and Cyril Ah mat. His natural ball-handling skills and brilliant speed made him ideal as a fullback, the position he played for most of his career.

Hornets disbanded after one season and Harold moved to Navy for two years and then to Qantas. Playing with Qantas as a 17-year-old he was runner up in the A-grade rugby league best and fairest medal.

The following season Harold played in the club's 1958/59 premiership side, missed the 1959/60 season with a dislocated shoulder (it was operated on by a Dr Bromwich and Harold never had any trouble with it after that) and played again in 1960/61 when Qantas was runner-up in the grand final. In the 1960 southern winter Harold went to Sydney for a trial with Manly. He was graded and given the club's No 51 jumper, which he still has.

Harold played the season in the Manly third grade. He remembers it as the coldest and loneliest year of his life, but he stuck at his task and had the honour of playing in Manly's grand final team, which won the third grade premiership on the SCG. Harold had first played on the SCG on Anzac Day that year, the occasion of his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, another fond memory.

In 1961 Harold decided to try his luck in Brisbane with Wynnum Manly and was an instant success. He became the first grade fullback, a position he did not relinquish until his retirement eight years later. In Brisbane Harold also met the woman who became his wife in 1963. They stayed in Brisbane for the next 20 years, a decision which not only ended Harold's rugby league career in Darwin, but also his days in Australian Rules.

Harold began playing football in Darwin in the 1953/54 season at the age of 14 for Works and Housing (later Nightcliff).

In those days football and rugby league were both wet season sports - Harold played football on Saturdays and league on Sundays. In the 1956-57 season, at the age of 17, Harold won the Nichols medal beating Buffs Willy Taylor and the champion St Marys player, Stanislaus. Works and Housing won the premiership in the same year and it was also the season Harold was runner-up in the rugby league medal.

In 1958 Harold toyed with the idea of playing league football with East Perth and actually travelled west for trial games. But he had to make a choice, and rugby league got the nod.

Over the years Harold has put a lot back into sport as a junior coach and strapper. During his years with Wynnum Manly Harold coached district junior sides every season and in 1964 took the Brisbane under 16s team on a tour of NSW country centres. These days Harold, now 53, is back in Darwin where he works as a plumber with the Power and Water Authority. He is a strapper with the Nightcliff club and has been the official medico with the Territory Titans over recent rugby league seasons.

## **Bill Muir**

Bill first played for Works & Housing in 1954/55 and was a member of Works & Housing 1956/57 and 1960/61 premiership teams. He also played in Nightcliff's

1964/65 premiership team. Played in tigers 1957/58 and 1965/66 grand final teams.

Represented the NTFL against Mary Kathleen (Queensland) in 1961. Captained Nightcliff for five seasons, winning clubs best & fairest award twice he coached Nightcliff's first under 15 team and is still currently involved in junior football at club level.

For his services to the club bill was awarded life membership in 1969. He played an estimated 250 league games. Billy passed away in 2009.

### **Peter Molloy**

Peter played his junior football in Queensland and won North Cairns 1987 Under 13 Best & Fairest award. He also won North Cairns 1989 Under 15 Best & Fairest award.

Peter represented Queensland at Secondary Schoolboy level in 1990 when he earned All-Australian selection and he was also a member of the Queensland Teal Cup team in 1991. He won Mayne's (QAFL) 1991 Under 17 Best & Fairest award.

Peter made his NTFL debut in 1992/93 and since then he has established himself as one of the most attacking and versatile key defenders in the competition.

### **Darren Thorne**

Nightcliff defender Darren Thorne plays his 50<sup>th</sup> NTFL game on Sunday against Darwin

Darren played his junior football with Boyanup in southwest Western Australia and he won the clubs 1991 Under 18 Best & Fairest award. Darren had a short stint with Southern Districts when he first arrived in the Top End before switching to Nightcliff. He made his NTFL debut in 1992/93.

Darren won Nightcliff's 1993/94 Reserves Best & Fairest award before cementing a regular spot in the senior side. -His consistent form and team orientated style of play resulted in his appointment as Nightcliff Vice Captain in 1995/96. Although Darren has spent most of his NTFL career playing in defence, he readily admits to particularly enjoying the occasional run further up field where he can have a kick for goals.

### **Robbie Cooper**

Tiger utility Robbie Cooper became the first player in the history of the NTFL to officially play 250 League games. Robbie commenced his career with Darwin colts, winning the NTFL Under 18 leading goal kicker award in 1972/73 with 73 goals, and 1973/74 with 111 goals.

Robbie played his first League game in 1975/76 at 18 years of age. He won the Club's Best & Fairest award in 1978/79. He was a member of Darwin's 1975/76 and 1979/80 Premiership teams, and also their 1983/84 Grand Final team. Robbie was Darwin's leading goal kicker five times (1975/76 to 1978/79, and 1981/82 to 1982/83).

Robbie transferred to Nightcliff in 1984/85 winning the Club's leading goal kicker award in 1984/85 and 1985/86. He was a member of Nightcliff's 1984/85 Grand Final team.

Robbie's 476 goals are second only to Dennis Dunn's 578 goals. Robbie represented the Northern Territory against the Australian Amateurs in 1979. He was awarded NTFL Player Life Membership in 1990 (200 NTFL games)

NTFL Playing record:	Game	Goals
Darwin:	162	325
Nightcliff:	87	151
Total:	249	476

## **Tony Dragun**

In his first season as a coach, Tony Dragun had some success he lead them to their first ever Carnival win. He also won an award for the most consistent player in the Umpires Carnival.

Brought up with North Innaloo in the Subiaco Junior Football District, Tony was lured to West Perth Thirds in 1968. That season they won the WANFL Thirds premiership. Season 1969 was the highlight of Tony's football career. He became a regular member of the League side and played in the Grand Final in front of a crowd of some 50,000 people.

Since 1969 Tony has been travelling throughout Australia and has not played a lot of League football. His tally with West Perth is 53 games.

Tony arrived in Darwin in 197\*\* and was recruited by Nightcliff and played in the losing 1973/74, 1978/79 and 1985/86 losing grand finals after 111 games and 34 goals. He represented the NTFL against South Fremantle in 1973 (Darwin), Queensland in 1974 (Brisbane) and the Australian Amateurs, as captain, in 1979 (Melbourne).

## **Trevor Sutton**

The most freakish phenomenon of Victorian country football of the past decade was prolific goal kicker Trevor Sutton. Sutton broke goal kicking records all over Australia.

A West Australian, who excelled in every ball sport, boxing and aquatics, he kicked more than 4000 goals in 19 years, in the last 15 alternating between VCFL and southern interstate clubs and Darwin's NTFL with Nightcliff in the southern summer. Sutton's career climaxed in 1982 when, as captain coach of Deniliquin in Murray League, he kicked 248 goals in 18 home and away fixtures and two finals, including 24 in a match against Colleambally (which included Richmond ruckman David Honeybun before his recruitment to the VFL).

This eclipsed Bill Pearson's 1934 record of 220 goals in the Victorian Amateurs as the record number of goals for an Australian senior football league. Later records, when well into his 30s, included 163 goals for Robinvale in 1984 Sunraysia League season and 140 for East Wagga-Koorringal in 1986 Riverina league

season. Sutton, a true football nomad like no wanderer before him, with inclusion of representative State matches for New South Wales and Queensland taking him to the ACT and to Tasmania, played football in every State and Territory of Australia.

He emerged from Albany, WA where Carlton's 1964 Brownlow Medallist Gordon Collis coached him as a teenager. His subsequent clubs were East Fremantle (under Alan Joyce), Footscray reserves (Bob Rose), Cooparoo, North Shore, Claremont (Verdun Howell and Mal Brown), Kedron, Karatha North, Norwood (including 1978 SANFL premiership under Bob Hammond), Sandgate, Deniliquin, Lake Bega, Robinvale and East Wagga-Koorringal. Sutton, 186 cm and 90 kg, was an athlete in the mould of Gary Ablett, extraordinarily gifted, with uncanny judgement, strong hands, amazing acceleration and leap, of equal and prodigious facility with either foot or hand yet he lacked the indefinable quality to go to the top.

With Nightcliff, Trevor played 41 games and kicked a staggering 239 goals of which 103 were kicked in 1979/80 and 99 in 1982/83. Between 1979 and 1983, Trevor kicked 7 or more goals on 17 occasions with tallies such as 17, 12, 9, 8 and twice 7 in 1979/80, twice 11, 9 and 7 in 1980/81, 10, 9, 8 and three times 7 in 1982/83,

He was a very lazy trainer but never failed to perform in games.

### **Costa Karaolias**

Costa began playing for the NFC in 1971 in the under 17 grade. Initially, Costa was going to attend Darwin Football Club training and he was to be picked up by DFC players who were attending Darwin High School together (Jacko Angeles). The car carrying the DFC was full and did not stop to pick Costa up. At the bus stop that day going to NFC training was Darryl Melville and "Sad sack" who played with Nightcliff and as the bus was approaching Costa hopped with them.

Costa began playing primary school football with the Darwin Primary school in 1966 and continued when he moved to Ludmilla Primary School in 1968. There he met Jacko Angeles and the great Benny Vigona and in 1968 was selected in representative primary school squad.

Costa played under 17 football until 1974 and then "B" grade until 1980 and was a member of the 1975 Nightcliff DFA grand final squad.

However from 1974, he began as water boy for the NFC league side and progressed to runner until 1980 when joined the committee and became manager for the League side under Bill Bennet. In 1986, Costa took on the secretary position until 1988/89 however remained on the committees until 1999/2000.

In 1988 Costa was appointed Assistant manager NTFL representative team against North Melbourne and the 1988 Biennial State of Origin and Division two Championships in Adelaide. From 1988/89 he became manager of the NTFL representative team and held that position until 2001 and was also appointed liaison officer for the Sydney Swans Ansett Cup match.

Costa was bestowed life membership in 1985/86 and NTFL Life Membership in 2002.

## **Frank Griffin**

### **Paul Bleile**

Paul came to Darwin in 1988 from Broome and immediately offered to volunteer at the Nightcliff Tigers Football Club. He was thrown into action organising team jumpers each day for not just the A's, but the B', the under 18's and the under 16's and this just continued throughout the years until someone else put their hand up (which as we all know, is rare). He was the team manager for the 88/89 season for the reserves straight up from joining the club. Paul has been the team manager for many of the teams since 1988. He was the league manager from 1991 until 1995 and then from 1996, was the league and reserves team manager up to 2007.

Paul looked after the organising of the water, organising of the jumpers (both washing and getting ready for all games), lodging of the time sheets and negotiation of car parking to drop everything off. He has always organised the jumpers, the towels and the runners jumpers to be washed and dried and ready for the next game. He has helped with the set up for home games since 1988, marking the oval, cut the boundary lines each home game and taking equipment back to the rooms for storage. All of this was done in his own time while struggling with a very demanding full time job within the shipping industry but he did it – often late at night or in between ships.

Paul also sat on the committee for 10 years giving input towards building the club up to where it is now.

Paul was awarded Life Membership of the Nightcliff Football Club in 1994 and has received many awards from the club. He has received the Mabel Griffen award for volunteering 4 times which is an award held in very high regard within the club. He has also been awarded the Eye of the Tiger Award 3 times which recognises volunteers within the club. He has also won the volunteer of year award from the Nightcliff Sports Club which supports many sporting fraternities.

Paul organises sponsorship for the players and the club, sells books and books of raffle tickets to his business contacts far and wide. He also runs water for both the Reserves and the A's, then following the games, he picks up the jumpers and sundry for washing, loads them into his car, cleans the change rooms and eventually manages to come and join the throng for a beer usually when the presentations have finished.

Paul also ran the canteen for many years organising raffles for home games. His mum has repaired the ripped and torn jumpers since 1988 and still does to this day. He has accommodated players from far and wide both short and long term. He has organised functions, he has organised food to be available after footy training and commandeered helpers to buy the food, cook the BBQ (thank you Chicky Hood) to make sure these boys eat a good, decent and healthy meal. He has done this for years.

He is so appreciated around the Nightcliff Tigers, he will be sorely missed now he has a job that won't allow him to spend so much time around the club.

Paul has seen the various coaches through the club from Steve Abala, Greg Turnbull, Greg Allard, Mark Motlop, Michael McLean, Craig Williams, Steve Easton and Ray Buckley.

Paul is seen by the players as their best mate. Paul fixes everything for them, gets them jobs, takes them home after far too many drinks, treats everyone with the same respect...Paul IS the Nightcliff Football Club. He lives for the day that the boys can bring a flag back to the club and when that day comes (and it will), Paul will be there and will make sure the drinks will flow, the esky's are full, there is food for everyone and make sure everyone is comfortable and wont drive a car when they have had too much to drink.

Paul (aka Beach Ball, Blinky to name a few nick names) is a true volunteer who gives his spare time for his club and expects nothing in return. He has always been humbled in receiving the awards he has received but will always mention that the players are the club, he respects each and every one of them and he just wants to see a flag!

### **Sharon Knight**

Sharon commenced association with the NTFL in 1986 as a voluntary Head Trainer with the Nightcliff Football Club. She has maintained this exceptional unbroken record with the Nightcliff Football Club for 22 years to date.

As Head Trainer Sharon has played a key role in recruiting others to the critical support role, coordinating arguably the best & longest serving medical support group in the competition.

In 1989 Sharon became involved with the NT Senior Representative teams firstly as a Trainer and then from 1994 as Head Trainer. Interestingly her initial involvement at the "elite" level actually began in 1988 as a support Trainer with the NT opposition of that year, North Melbourne as the NT team had several long serving officials reluctant to step aside for newcomers.

From 1998 until 2003 Sharon was involved as a Trainer & Head Trainer with the Northern Territory Thunder Talented Player program. She was recognized in the Year 2000 for this association with the awarding of the Administrators Medal for voluntary service.

The essential factor recognized by the Administrators Medal was the level of commitment required of team officials providing their expertise out of season and most often without the motivation of weekly matches.

Forced by the workload of her University studies and family commitments in 2004-05 Sharon has reduced her involvement with the Talented Player program whilst maintaining the NTFL club, NTFL representative and AFL team support roles.

Once Sharon moved on from the Northern Territory Thunder Talented Player program, she volunteered her services to the Nightcliff Rugby League Football Club and has been involved on a voluntary basis for this club. She has also been involved as a trainer with the Northern Territory Senior Titans from 2004 - 2008 and last year was selected as the Head Trainer for the Australian Affiliated States Senior Rugby League Squad that traveled to Fiji and Tonga to play tests against these countries

Sharon has been bestowed with a life membership of the Nightcliff Football Club and in 2006 also received an AFLNT Honorary Life Membership. Sharon is a truly deserving recipient of both these memberships.

Furthermore, Sharon was recently presented with an AFL Merit award which is a National recognition of her special voluntary service to the code.

Amongst all her outstanding volunteer contributions, Sharon maintained full time work, ranging from a lawyer's assistant to a qualified nurse, the profession she is involved in currently.

Sharon was also married and had three children of which one has a disability. More recently as a single parent, Sharon has brought up her three young children on her own in between her love for sport and full time work.

The Nightcliff Football Club has no hesitation in nominating her for Volunteer of the Year.

## **Dave Fuller**

## **Mike Crawshaw**

## **Allan Oates**

## **Chris Lyndon**

15th Oct 1979 arrived in Darwin.

Commenced association with Nightcliff FC in 1990 and between 1990/91 and 2003/04 played 80 games with the reserves. Kicked 27 goals. Played in finals in most years the reserves participated up to 1998 but never in a grand final.

Between 1990/91 and current season have acted as water boy and part-time runner for reserves when not playing.

## **Norm & Pam Watson**

Approx Total 400 Senior Games (never played reserves with exception of Hawthorn) Approx 200 games coached.

Norm and Pam both arrived in Darwin in 1973. Norm had previously played for Hawthorn in the VFL from 1962 to 1964 playing 15 Senior Games during the 1962 VFL season.

Norm played with the club in the 1973/74 season culminating in the classic Grand Final game against Waratahs which we lost by a few points.

The family took up residence in Darwin and Norm continued to be a major player for the club before the 1974/75 season was cut short by cyclone Tracy. Norm was a member of the Tigers team that competed in the 1975 Darwin Football Association competition (a once only post cyclone competition) where the tigers beat Darwin in the grand final. Pam was a staunch supporter and was always involved in club functions and forever giving of her time.

In 1973 Norm represented the NTFL against South Fremantle and in 1974 was in the team that travelled to Queensland and beat Queensland in Brisbane. In the 1970/80 season Norm coached the NFC U19 team. Unfortunately records are not available advising number of games played for the club.

The Watson's then left Darwin (Norm winning the Wimmera League B&F during this time) and returned to join the committee in 1998/99 and have remained ever since.

Norm was President during the 2005/06 and 2006/07 seasons. Norm was an exemplary President with tremendous administrative skills. He took on many tasks beyond what this office required

Norm was a Chairman of Selectors and assisted Coaches in his time at the club. Pam was on the fund-raising committees from 1973 until they left and when they returned she too joined the committee in 1998/99. From 1999/00 to 2004/05 Pam served as Club secretary. Pam was also involved with Nightcliff Sports Club and is a former NSC President.

Both Pam and Norm continue to serve on the current Committee. The service to the NFC provided by these two people is exemplary, particularly since Norms' retirement they have both worked tirelessly in club administration and fund raising. Pam is a "tiger" at fundraising and has spent many an hour 'flogging' raffle tickets and chasing up sponsors. Not a bad cook either as many of the players will attest. They have given up their home on many occasions to take in footballers. They represent the true spirit of the Tiger.

### **RICHIE BRAY**

The name of Bray is a sporting byword in Alice Springs and in Australian Rules football nobody has represented the family's great tradition better than Richard "Richie" Bray.

But if it hadn't been for a peculiar medical condition Richie's sporting career my have developed not in Australian Rules, but with Sydney rugby league club, Balmain.

Richie and two other Territorians, John Mayo and Lionel Butler, were recruited by Balmain from the Darwin competition in 1958. Unfortunately for Balmain, but fortunately for SA league club Port Adelaide, Richie was allergic to something in Sydney's water. When a bad rash developed, and his hands swelled, Richie packed it in and went to Adelaide.

From there a career with Australia's most successful Australian Rules club took off.

Richie was born in Alice Springs in 1938, the third youngest in a family of seven brothers and four sisters. He began his education at the Alice Springs primary school, but when he was nine years old Richie was sent with his young brother, James, to the St Francis Anglican Boys Home in Adelaide.

It was a school which produced some great Territory sporting champions and Richie stayed there for six years, completing his high school Intermediate Certificate year in 1953. During that time Richie played several sports, but excelled in the football codes of rugby league, soccer and Australian Rules.

When his father died in 1954 Richie returned to Alice Springs and over the next few years he worked in various odd jobs as a railway porter, laborer and brick factory worker. He also joined the Pioneers football club and immediately began to make an impact on the Alice sporting scene.

Richie played A-grade from 1955-57, winning the Mail Medal in 1956 and the Minahan Medal in 1957. It was then off to Darwin for the 1957-58 wet season competition with works and Housing in the NTFL.

While in Darwin Richie piggy-backed Australian Rules with rugby league where he showed great promise as a five-eighth. From there came the offer to trial with Balmain, and with his co-recruits he set off for Sydney. When the mysterious allergy struck and he was unable to work, Richie headed for Adelaide. An old mate in Alice Springs, Stuart Arms publican Laurie Rourke, organised him a job at ICI, and Richie joined the Exeter football club in

In 1958 he made the SA amateur team for the Australian Championships in Melbourne and after a brilliant carnival was selected in the All-Australian team.

In 1959 Richie decided to try his luck with the strongest league club in SA, Port Adelaide. It took him a couple of seasons to become a league regular but Richie stuck at it, eventually playing 77 senior games (mainly as a wingman/half-forward), kicking 65 goals, and playing in the 1962 and 1963 premiership sides.

This was one of Port Adelaide's finest eras and Richie looks back on those years with great pride. It is also worth recording that while another Territorian, David Kantilla, was playing outstanding football with South Adelaide during the same period, it was arguably much' harder to crack a game at Port Adelaide.

Richie's career ended in 1966 when he was left unconscious for nearly two hours after a heavy clash at Alberton oval in a game against South Adelaide. Warned about the dangers of continuing his career, Richie wisely decided to toss it in.

Richie stayed in Adelaide after his retirement from football and continued to work with ICI. He was there for nearly 30 years, until a first division win in Tatts lotto in 1988 gave him the nest egg to retire.

Richie only makes the occasional trip to the Territory these days. He is married to Cynthia and has two children. Richie's last word after his interview was to pay tribute to Laurie Rourke, the Alice Springs publican who got him his start at ICI. "He was a great friend to everybody at Pioneers, and I hope people remember that."

### **Rohan Helyar**

NTFL games 48 no goals.

NTFL Representative 1988 against North Melbourne, member of the successful Bicentennial Carnival team. NFC Best & Fairest 1982/83.

Norwood FC (SANFL) 101 games, represented SA.