

Old Scotch Football Club  
CRACKERS CHRONICLES – VFL/AFL FORMER OLD SCOTCH PLAYERS

Welcome back to “**Crackers Chronicles**”. This week we trace some of the history of the Old Scotch Football Club by recounting the contributions of an Old Scotch Football Club player who went on to play VFL/AFL football.

### **Rupert Wills**

Rupert Wills was recruited from *Scotch College* in 2013 and in 2013 played 5 games in our seniors and 15 games in our reserves. The next year 2014, he played 11 games in our seniors and one game in our reserves, for a total of 32 games.

“Rupert chose London over football. When he finished school, he wasn’t thinking about playing TAC Cup or in the VFL. He was too small, he thought, and, besides, he wanted to see the world.

“I went to London and lived away for a year, and just did some coaching in cricket and soccer with the kids, and helped with some boarding house stuff,” Wills said.

By the time he returned to Melbourne, he was 10cm taller and his growth spurt helped him transition from backpacker to powerhouse ball-winner.

“I used to be tiny,” Wills, 23 said. “When I was 14, I was not that inclined to get in and under because I was so paranoid about blokes being so much bigger than me.”

“I would get so down about it. I was playing small forward and couldn’t get a kick in school footy.”

This year (2016) Wills, who is 191cm and 88kg, has been compared to Carlton bulldozer Patrick Cripps for his stoppage work, and set a record for the most tackles (11) by a debutant for Collingwood against West Coast in Round 19.

“I remember walking out on to the MCG in the warm-up and looking up at the stadium and just saying to myself, ‘Wow, this is really happening. I’m really here. I’m not playing out at Camberwell any more’.”

The way the Pies unearthed Will was a thing of beauty.

He could not have been further off the AFL radar when he started out in the Old Scotch reserves in 2013, not exactly in peak condition after his year in London. But he had enjoyed his growth spurt and had a nose for winning the ball.

He began to chip away in the Old Scotch seniors in 2014 and got a call from Magpies’ VFL football manager Luke Gatti to trial for the top-up squad for 2015.

In six games, the pies saw enough in Wills to draft him.

Then, just as his form in the VFL started to lift last year, he suffered a severe concussion.

A heavy hip and shoulder sidelined him for almost two months, as headaches and dizziness lingered.

“I kept playing for a bit afterwards but I was pretty dazed, and I don’t remember going to the bench”, Wills said.

He said the symptoms were scary. “I was just feeling not right and I was pretty paranoid about it (concussion) with all the media attention on it,” Will said.

“But it was just frustrating because you want to prove yourself, and that could have been my only chance.”

A hamstring injury on his return ended his season, and maybe killed interest from other clubs, but the Pies drafted Wills with pick No.63 on the strength of his VFL form.

After two senior matches, Collingwood wants to ensure his final three games count.

“I’m 23 but my footy age is younger, I think, because I never played any TAC Cup or Vic Metro and then went overseas and have never played more than 11 games in a season,” Will said.”

**Author: Jay Clark, *Herald Sun*, 12 August 2016**

Next week we will look at a potted history of the highlights of Old Scotch Football Club ... I welcome any feedback to [gmccracken@oldscotchfc.com.au](mailto:gmccracken@oldscotchfc.com.au)