

CRACKERS CHRONICLES – CLUB COACHES PRE-WAR (1921 – 1940)

Welcome back to this week's edition of "**Crackers Chronicles**".

Each week in this column we will trace some of the history of the *Old Scotch Football Club* by recounting the contributions made by some of our great club coaches.

This week we focus on our coaches before the War ...

**R. C. Clive "Cocky" Heatley 1921 – 1925**

An old boy of *Scotch College* where he had played in the School 1<sup>st</sup> XVIII from 1911 – 1913 and had been Captain of Football in 1913, Clive Heatley, better known as "Cocky", played four games for *University Football Club* in the VFL in 1914. He later captained the *University Football Club* in the MFA in 1914 & 1915. After WWI, in 1919 & 1920 he captained *University A (Blues) Football Club* in the VJFL.

However, upon foundation of the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* in 1921, he was recruited to our club from *University A (Blues) Football Club* to both captain and coach our team, which he did for five years from 1921 – 1925. In our first season 1921, he coached our team to 7<sup>th</sup> position. In our second season 1922, he coached our team to 6<sup>th</sup> position.

"Cocky", a centreman, was said to combine considerable all-round football ability with mastery in the art of 'staging' for free kicks. In 1923 under Cocky, *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* won our **first A Section premiership** defeating *University B (Blacks)*, and again in 1924, won our **second A Section premiership** defeating *Hampton Amateur*. Allan Staley stamping himself as the MAFA's best ruckman of the period, the McLorinan brothers marshalling a watertight defence, and the likes of Gordon Law, Harold Staley and Clive Fergie (ex-Fitzroy) giving the side unmatched strength through the middle. In his last coaching season 1925, Cocky coached our team to be runners up in A Section to *Elsternwick*.

Cocky played seven seasons with our club from 1921 – 1927, was the club's Best & Fairest in 1921 & 1923, premiership captain and coach in 1923 & 1924, as well as the club's leading goalkicker in 1924. **Cocky was awarded Life Membership of our Club in 1972**, but died in 1973.

In his *Team of the Best Old Scotch Players before the War*, Hec Ingram named Cocky in the centre and as captain & coach of his team.

**C. A. Clive Fergie 1926 - 1930**

In 1926, Clive Fergie an old boy of *Scotch College* where he had been in the School 1<sup>st</sup> XVIII from 1912 – 1914, and had been Captain of Football in 1914, joined the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* in 1926 from *Fitzroy Football Club* at the age of 30, after having played 67 games for *Fitzroy* and kicking 42 goals in five seasons from 1920 – 1924, and having played in their 1922 premiership team. He then played with our club for another five seasons from 1926 – 1930, both captaining and coaching our team. After slipping to runners up to *Elsternwick* in 1925 (despite being Minor Premiers), the side quickly resumed its supremacy with two more flags. Clive played in our 1926 & 1927 A Section premiership teams in the number "1" jumper. He was our club's Best & Fairest in 1926.

In 1926, Clive took over the coaching of our team from Cocky Heatley and both captained and coached the club, in 1926 winning our **third A Section premiership** defeating *Elsternwick*, and in 1927 winning our **fourth A Section Premiership** defeating *University B (Blacks)*. He then continued to both captain and coach our team in 1928 to 4<sup>th</sup> position, losing the semi final to *University B (Blacks)*, and in 1929 to 3<sup>rd</sup> position, losing the semi final to *Old Melburnians* (despite being Minor Premiers). In 1930, he just coached the team to 4<sup>th</sup> position in A Section, losing the semi final to *Old Melburnians*. Clive died in 1960.

In his *Team of the Best Old Scotch Players before the War*, Hec Ingram named Clive on the half-forward flank and deputy vice-captain of his team.

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**J. H. Jack Petchell 1931**

Jack Petchell was an old boy of *Scotch College* who played in the School 1<sup>st</sup> XVIII in 1922 & 1923, and played one season with the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club*, playing in our first premiership team of 1923 whilst still at school. From 1924 – 1926, he played for *University A (Blues)* on a half forward flank or as a rover, and was a Victorian State Representative in 1926. Then from 1927 – 1929, Jack was a *South Melbourne Football Club* player, playing 35 games and kicking 36 goals. In 1931, Jack took over coaching our team from Clive Fergie. Jack coached our team for only one season in 1931 winning our **fifth A Section premiership** defeating *Elsternwick*. Jack died in 1968.

**L. Lou Bols 1932**

From 1927 – 1930, Louis “Lou” Bols was a *Fitzroy Football Club* player, playing 27 games and kicking four goals. In 1932, Lou took over coaching our team from Jack Petchell who had won the 1931 A Section Premiership. Lou coached our team for only one season in 1932 winning our **sixth A Section premiership** defeating *State Savings Bank*. Much later in 1950, Lou coached *Ormond* to an A Section premiership. Lou died in 1957.

**L. A. Gus Dobrigh 1933 & 1935 - 1938**

From 1914 – 1921, Gus Dobrigh was a *Collingwood Football Club* player and premiership player in 1917, playing 88 games and kicking 33 goals. From 1922 – 1924 he was a *Port Melbourne Football Club* player. Later, in 1925 he was coach of the *Northcote Football Club* and in 1926 & 1927, coach of the *Preston Football Club*.

Gus coached the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* for seven years; in 1933 taking over from Lou Bols, who had won the 1932 A Section premiership in only one season; and again in 1935, for a further four seasons, taking over from Vic Belcher, who had won the 1934 A Section premiership in only one season.

In 1933 under Gus, the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* won our **seventh A Section premiership** defeating *University Blacks*. In 1935, he coached our team to be runners up to *University Blacks*, in 1936 to 6<sup>th</sup> position, in 1937 to 4<sup>th</sup> position and in 1938 to 7<sup>th</sup> position in A Section.

After the War, he again took over from Allan Hopkins for two more seasons in 1948 and 1949. He also coached our Juniors in 1954. **Gus was awarded Life Membership of our Club in 1961**. Gus died in 1982.

**V. G. Vic Belcher 1934**

In 1934, Vic Belcher took over as coach of our team from Gus Dobrigh. Gus had coached the team to our 1933 A Section Premiership but unfortunately had to relinquish his position. His place was taken by Vic Belcher, a well-known former *South Melbourne Football Club* player and coach. For fourteen years from 1907 – 1920, Vic had played 226 games with the *South Melbourne Football Club* kicking 62 goals. Prior to that he had played briefly with *Coburg* in the VJFA and *Brunswick Football Club* in the VFA. He captained *South Melbourne* from 1913 – 1917 and again in 1920. He also coached *South Melbourne* for four years during the War from 1914 – 1917. He played in *South Melbourne*'s 1909 & 1918 VFL premiership teams. Later he coached the *Fitzroy Football Club* for six years from 1922 – 1927, coaching *Fitzroy* to their 1922 VFL premiership, second place in 1923 and third place in 1924. Our team commenced the 1934 season in a very unconvincing fashion losing two of its first three matches due to a lack of proper coaching. However, with the late appointment of Vic as coach, his methods soon produced results, in 1934 under Vic, the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* won our **eighth A Section premiership** defeating *University Blacks*. However, Vic only coached our team for one season before handing the role back to Gus Dobrigh for seasons 1935 – 1938.

In 1996 Vic was inducted into the *Australian Football Hall of Fame* and in 2003 was named in the *Sydney Swans* Team of the Century. He was the last survivor of their 1909 Premiership team. Vic died in 1977.

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**W. E. William “Bill” Pearson 1939 - 1940**

In 1931, Bill Pearson was recruited from *Scotch College* and played eight seasons with the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* from 1931 – 1937, and again after the War in 1946 for only three more games, debuting in our Seniors in 1931 at full forward and playing in the number “3” jumper. He was an A Section premiership player in 1931, 1932, 1933 & 1934, our club’s Best & Fairest in 1934, 1935 & 1937, and our club’s leading goalkicker from 1931 – 1937, kicking 1,023 goals in just seven seasons:

• 1931	95 goals
• 1932	126 goals
• 1933	168 goals
• 1934	220 goals
• 1935	138 goals
• 1936	121 goals
• 1937	<u>155 goals</u>
	<u>1,023 goals</u>

During his time with our club, Bill played in 101 wins (kicking 845 goals for an average of 8.36 per game), 33 losses (kicking 164 goals for an average of 4.96 per game) and 2 draws (kicking 13 goals for an average of 6.5 per game). At one stage during 1932 and 1933, Bill played in sixteen successive wins to which he contributed 132 goals at an average of 8.25 per game. From Round 14 to Round 18 in 1934, Bill kicked bags of 15, 30, 10, 11 & 17 goals. He is the club’s most prolific goalkicker.

He was also a Victorian State Representative in 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936 & 1937. Bill also kicked 57 goals in interstate games with a highest total of 16 against Tasmania.

After he retired, in 1939 he took over the coaching of our club from Gus Dobrigh coaching the team to 3<sup>rd</sup> position, losing the Preliminary Final to *Ormond*, and in 1940 to 10<sup>th</sup> position after Round 9 when the competition was abandoned due to the War. Bill died in 1987.

In his *Team of the Best Old Scotch Players before the War*, Hec Ingram named Bill as full-forward of his team.

Our annual “Most Valuable Club Person” award is named after Bill.

Next week we will look at club coaches immediately after the War and into the Fifties ...

I welcome any feedback to [gmccracken@oldscotchfc.com.au](mailto:gmccracken@oldscotchfc.com.au)