

CRACKERS CHRONICLES – CLUB COACHES POST-WAR (1946 – 1960)

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 club coaches immediately after the War and the Fifties ...

A. A. Allan Hopkins 1946 – 1947

From 1925 – 1934, Allan Hopkins was a *Footscray Football Club* player, playing 151 games and kicking 205 goals. He was a brilliant centreman and played in their 1923 & 1924 VFA premiership teams. In 1930, he coached the *Footscray Football Club*. In 1931, he was awarded *Footscray's* Best & Fairest. In 1935, he captained and coached *Yarraville Football Club* to their 1935 VFA premiership. In 1989, he was retrospectively awarded the Brownlow Medal for his 1930 season. After the War, in 1946 when the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* reformed, Allan was appointed coach of our team. He coached our team for two seasons. In 1946 he coached our team to be A Section runners up to *University Blacks* and in 1947 to 7th position in A Section. Allan died in 2001.

L. A. Gus Dobrigh 1948 - 1949

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. In 1925, he was coach of the *Northcote Football Club* and in 1926 & 1927, coach of the *Preston Football Club*.

Later, Gus coached the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* for seven years in 1933, 1935 – 1938 and 1948 - 1949.

After the War, in 1948 he again took over from Allan Hopkins coaching our team for two more seasons; in 1948 to 4th position and in 1949 to 3rd position in A Section. He also coached our Juniors in 1954.

Gus was awarded Life Membership of our Club in 1961. Gus died in 1982.

N. T. F. Norm Hillard 1950 - 1951

From 1933 & 1936 – 1937, Norm Hillard was a *Hawthorn Football Club* player, playing 32 games and kicking 57 goals. In 1938, he played with the *Camberwell Football Club*. Then from 1939 – 1946, he was a *Fitzroy Football Club* player, playing 94 games and kicking 12 goals. He played at centre half back in *Fitzroy's* 1944 premiership team. Later, he was coach of *Fitzroy's* Seconds, Chairman of Selectors and Vice President. In 1950, Norm took over coaching our team from Gus Dobrigh. Norm coached our team for two seasons, in 1950 to 6th position and in 1951 to 5th position in A Section. Norm died in 1986.

C. B. Cliff Geer 1952

In 1938, Cliff Geer an old boy of *Scotch College* joined the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* and went on to play ten seasons with our club from 1938 – 1940 & 1946 – 1952, playing in the number "27" jumper. In his last playing season 1952, taking over from Norm Hillard, he also coached our Seniors to 5th position in A Section. Cliff died in 2018.

P. W. Percy Sitch 1953

In 1953, Percy Sitch a successful coach of amateur football club *Melbourne High School Old Boys Football Club* took over coaching of our Seniors team from Cliff Geer, who had retired as player and coach at the end of season 1952. Percy also had a great deal of organising experience in the VFL with the *Melbourne Football Club*. Unfortunately, the team only won two games finishing bottom of A Section and for the first time in the club's 28-year history was relegated to B Section in 1954. Percy died in 1966.

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P. D. Peter Joseland 1954 - 1957

1953 was disastrous financially for our club and only the generous help of the *Old Scotch Collegians' Association* made it possible for an optimistic start to be made to season 1954. It was obvious that no fee could be afforded for a coach, so a sufficiently qualified old boy was sought.

The club obtained the services of former old boy champion player Peter Joseland as honorary coach. In 1939, Peter Joseland had joined the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* from *Scotch College*, debuting in our team on 17 June 1939, and playing five seasons from 1939 – 1940 in the number “23” jumper & 1946 - 1948 in the number “13” jumper. In 1948 he was our club's Best & Fairest.

In 1954, Peter took over the coaching of our Seniors team from Percy Sitch, and coached our Seniors for four seasons from 1954 – 1957. In 1954, he coached our Seniors to 8th position in B Section.

However, in 1955 he coached our Seniors to be runners up in B Section to *Coburg*, earning promotion back to A Section in 1956. In 1956, he coached our Seniors to 6th position and in 1957 to 4th position in A Section. Peter died in 2000.

M. G. Manson Russel 1958 - 1960

In 1948, Manson Russel was recruited from *Scotch College* where he was Captain of Football in 1948, but played three senior games whilst still at school. He then went on and played a then record 235 games with the *Old Scotch Collegians Football Club* from 1948 – 1962. In 1950, he was our club's Best & Fairest and the VAFA A Section Best & Fairest. Later he was named our club's Best Team Player in 1953, 1955, 1956 & 1957.

He was our club's leading goalkicker from 1949 – 1954 & 1956 – 1959, totalling over 400 goals.

Manson captained our club in 1953, 1954 & 1957 – 1960.

He was a Victorian State Representative in 1952, 1953, 1956 & 1959.

During his playing career, Manson was also our tenth Secretary of our club in 1955 & 1956.

Manson first coached our club for three years from 1958 – 1960, taking over the coaching of our Seniors team from Peter Joseland, and in 1958 coaching our Seniors team to be A Section runners up to *Collegians*, in 1959 runners up again to *Collegians*, but in 1960 to 9th position, unfortunately being relegated to B Section in 1961 for only the second time in our club's 35-year history. He managed to play in our 1961 Reserves premiership team coached by John Gifford.

In 1963, he again took over the coaching of our Seniors from John Sassella, coaching our Seniors to 7th position.

Manson was awarded Life Membership of our Club in 1970, having also played 200 games for the club back in 1961.

From 1949 – 1971, he acted as the club's VAFA delegate, becoming a member of VAFA Executive from 1963 – 1983, then later VAFA Chairman from 1971 – 1977 and VAFA President from 1978 – 1980. Manson was elected a Life Member of the VAFA in 1978, awarded an *Australian Football Foundation* Merit Award in 1979, and made a Patron of the VAFA in 1984.

Our annual award to a senior player for “Most Sacrificial Acts” is named after Manson.

In 2000, Manson was named as deputy vice-captain in the forward pocket of our *OSCFC Team of the Century*.

He was made a “Legend of the Big V” in 2008 and Patron of our club in 2015.

Manson is the father of former OSCFC player Tim Russel who played 53 games (1984 – 1995).

Next week we will look at club coaches of the Sixties ...

I welcome any feedback to gmccracken@oldscotchfc.com.au