

Old Scotch Football Club

CRACKERS CHRONICLES – CLUB COACHES SIXTIES (1961 – 1968)

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 of the Sixties ...

G. J. George Sassella 1961

In 1961, George Sassella, an old Caulfield Grammar boy who had coached our Juniors for five seasons from 1956 – 1960, took over the coaching of our Seniors team from Manson Russel. George came to our club from Old Caulfield Grammarians and Power House to coach our Juniors, getting them into the finals on two occasions. In 1961, George coached our Seniors team into the preliminary final losing to Ivanhoe to finish in 3rd position in B Section, and missing out on promotion back to A Section. At the end of the year, he moved to Perth on business. George died in 1981.

J. F. John Sassella 1962

In 1962, John Sassella took over the coaching of our Seniors team from his brother George Sassella. John had played with Coburg in the VAFA and had served on our Seniors selection committee in 1961 as senior selector. He came to our club after four years playing experience in the country with Howlong in the Hume League, and Albury in the Ovens & Murray League followed by three years with Coburg in the VAFA. In 1962, John coached our Seniors to 4th position in B Section, losing the first semi final at the Kew Cricket Ground to Coburg. John died in 2013.

His son Greg Sassella played 39 games with the Old Scotch Collegians Football Club from 1982 – 1984, debuting in our Seniors on 15 May 1982 and playing in the number "31" jumper.

M. G. Manson Russel 1963

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 Seniors team for three years from 1958 – 1960. In 1963, he again took over the coaching of our Seniors team from John Sassella, coaching our Seniors to 7th position in B Section.

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).

A. J. M. Michael “Mick” Eggleston 1964

In 1948, Mick Eggleston was recruited from Scotch College and initially played two seasons, but later three more seasons with the Old Scotch Collegians Football Club, debuting in our Seniors on 24 April 1948. In 1949, he was our club’s Best & Fairest, before in 1950 playing senior football with Mildura Imperials. Later in 1958, he returned to our club from University Blues where he had played eight seasons of A Section football from 1951 – 1957. From 1948 – 1949 & 1958 – 1960, Mick played a total of 68 games with the Old Scotch Collegians Football Club.

After retiring from playing, in 1964 Mick coached the Old Scotch Collegians Football Club for one season, taking over the coaching of our Seniors team from Manson Russel and coaching our Seniors to 3rd position, losing the B Section preliminary final, and promotion back to A Section, to Commonwealth Bank by only six points. Mick was unable to continue coaching our club in 1965 as he had been appointed coach of the Scotch College 1st XVIII. Mick was a Vice President of our club for four years from 1980 – 1983 and was awarded Life Membership of our Club in 1985.

His elder son Tim Eggleston played 92 games with the Old Scotch Collegians Football Club from 1975 – 1981, while younger son John Eggleston played 64 games from 1976 – 1982. His daughter Jennie Eggleston was our club secretary in 1985. Unfortunately, Mick died of a brain tumour in 1988. He is honoured today by the awarding of the “Cordner Eggleston Cup” for football competition between Scotch College and Melbourne Grammar School. In 2000, Mick was named on the half forward flank in our OSCFC Team of the Century.

D. W. Don Howell 1965 - 1968

In 1965, Don Howell, took over the coaching of our Seniors team from Mick Eggleston. He had first played with the Portland Football Club before moving to St Kilda from 1953 – 1955 playing 29 games, and then transferring to Collingwood from 1957 – 1958 playing 17 games. He then played with Frankston, and later was playing coach with McKinnon and Glenhuntly until 1964. It is reputed that Don was the first “professional coach” to coach our club. Don coached the Old Scotch Collegians Football Club for four years; in 1965 winning our first B Section Premiership defeating Caulfield Grammarians and earning promotion back to A Section in 1966 after five years languishing in B Section; in 1966 to 5th position in A Section, in 1967 to 8th position in A Section and in 1968 to 10th position in A Section relegating our club to B Section in 1969.

A tribute reunion pre-match luncheon for “Red Nut” was held at the home of Old Scotch, the Camberwell Sportsground, on 26 May 2018.

Don’s son Nick Howell played 32 games with the Old Scotch Collegians Football Club from 1989 – 1991.

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

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