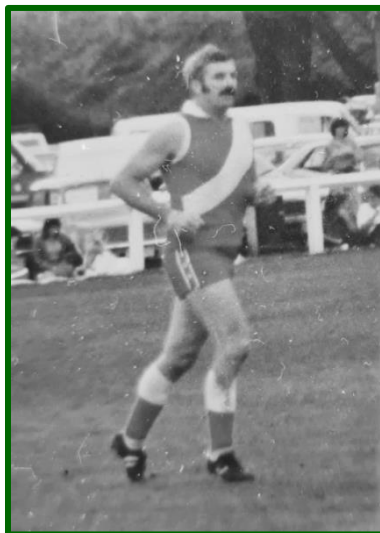


A TRIBUTE TO GARRY EVANS

'A CHAMPION OF COUNTRY FOOTBALL'

Ref: 2021/16



SAD NEWS REGARDING A FORMER DROMANA CHAMPION

DFNC members were saddened by the recent news of the passing of one of the greatest players in the history of the club, Garry Evans. Garry died on July 1st at the Gympie Hospital in Queensland. He was aged 74 years.

Garry Evans played 55 games with Dromana and also coached the club in 1984. As an indication of the impact he made at Pier Street, Garry was chosen as Captain of the Team of Decade (1976-1985); and was also a member of the DFNC Team of Era (1946-2015). Those who saw Garry Evans, in action at Dromana, will never forget his uncompromising attack on the ball, strong overhead marking, powerful kicking and, most of all, willingness to take on 'all-comers.'

In all, Garry played 271 games of MPNFL football; and it is hoped that the following tribute to Garry will do justice to a local champion and one the best country footballers of his generation.

THE DROMANA FNC TRIBUTE TO GARRY EVANS.

Garry Evans was one of the real 'journeymen' of suburban and country football; and it is known that he played 536 games of senior grade football and also represented the QFL in interstate football.

Garry gained prominence in metropolitan junior football; and was lured to Hawthorn Under: 19's from Ferntree Gully FC in 1968. So began a long and meritorious journey of playing football in VFL Third XVIII's, Gippsland, Central Victoria, Queensland and the Mornington Peninsula that lasted more than twenty seasons.

Garry was another of country football's 'wandering stars' who seldom let the 'grass grow under his feet' as he sought out a new challenges in football. Gary's name was well known in VCFL football circles; and with such standing as a key defender or forward, there was never any shortage of clubs seeking his signature.

In 1973, Dromana's coach Peter Oakes encouraged Garry to join the 'Hoppers'; and his reputation in the Nepean FL burgeoned to such a point that he became a 'wanted man' by other clubs. . He was coaxed to Rosebud in 1975; and then he moved on to Rye FC before heading to North to play with Wycheproof FC for four seasons.

During his stint with Wycheproof FC, he was runner-up in the North Central Football League's Best and Fairest voting (known as the Keith Chalmers award) in 1982. Garry was a 'man on the move' and he packed his bags and left Wycheproof and arrived back in Dromana FC in 1983.

On his return to Pier Street, Garry performed brilliantly. His skill and versatility were of untold value to the team as he could either play the role of an intrepid lockdown defender or, at the 'drop of a hat', become a rampaging forward. Garry was a match winner as he proved that on several occasions.

John Aldridge (ex-VFA) was the coach in 1983; and Dromana performed creditably and played in the final series that season. John was a forceful and inspiring on-field leader but, for reasons best known to only a few, he coached for just one season and returned to the city. Consequently, Garry Evans was appointed coach in 1984; and although the club achieved success under his leadership, DFC faltered once again in the 'home straight.'

"He (Garry) remembers with great fondness the people of Dromana with good players like Brian Cairns, Steve Matthews, Mick Berwick, John Whitwam and Darren Guest were some of the stars of the team." 'MPNFL Record' April 3rd 2010 Page: 5.

In 1983-84, Dromana was a strong combination, laden with brilliant individuals and, it is agreed by many, a real chance to win a flag 'went begging' in those two seasons. The following year, Garry Evans attained his 50th game milestone with the club; but once again, driven by a strong wanderlust, he applied for a clearance to Rosebud FC at the end of the 1985 season.

Garry sustained his individualistic brand of direct and 'no-nonsense' football at Olympic Oval. By that stage of his career, Garry was in the 'veteran class'; but as a hardened footballer, he knew all the 'tricks of the trade' and could 'still find the ball.' There was something in Gary's DNA that kept him playing competitive football when other 'mere mortals' had 'hung up their boots.' Although it seemed that his travelling days were over, he surprised onlookers (again) when he accepted an attractive offer to play with Sorrento FC and, consequently, said 'farewell' to Rosebud .

In 1988, Gary, at the age of 41, steered Sorrento in the MPNFL Second Division First-Semi Final against Carrum; and, in a game where both sides went 'toe-to-toe' for four fierce quarters, the match ended in a thrilling tie. In the ensuing replay, Sorrento was victorious; only to be knocked out of the 'finals race' the following Saturday by YCW in the Preliminary Final by 31 points. Garry Evans kicked two of Sorrento's ten goals that day.

Garry was appointed Senior XVIII Coach of Sorrento again in 1989 and celebrated his 42nd birthday that year. Sorrento reached the 'final four' once more but stumbled at the 'first hurdle.'

Ron Barassi once wrote that 'consistency of performance' is the most telling factor in defining a champion. On that basis, there would be little argument that Garry Evans was a champion (in the true sense of the word) of country football. He will never be forgotten at Pier Street.



Garry Evans 1947- 2021
A true champion of Pier Street.
R.I.P

A NOTE OF CLARIFICATION TO OUR YOUNGER READERS

For younger readers, Garry Evans should not be confused with Barry Evans who coached DFNC in 1987 and 1988. Barry Evans had a son (aka Barry Junior) who also played a handful of games with Dromana when his father was the Senior XVIII Coach. Barry Evans (Jnr) played two AFL games with Collingwood in 1981.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION

Sources: DFNC records- Roger Dunkley Sorrento FNC- Wycheproof FNC website. - MPNFL archives- Personal files & DFNC history collection.

Article reference: 'A Tribute to Garry Evans' (Ref: 2021/16).

Researched and written for DFNC by: Roger Spaul - July 2021

DFNC website administrator: Graham Stelling. DFNC Secretary-Board Member.

Email contacts: historian@dromanaticgers.com.au. OR admin@dromanaticgers.com.au