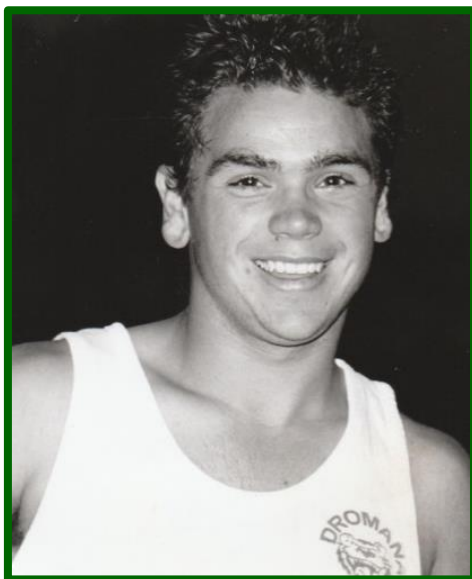


1998- A RAY OF HOPE BACK FROM THE BRINK

Reference: 2022/15



Dale Minchington- One of the emerging young stars at Pier Street in 1998.

1998 CLUB RENEWAL-THE LONG HAUL BEGINS

There is no need to retrace the disappointments and frustrations of the late 1990's at Dromana FC. Enough to say, that they were desperate years as the club fought 'tooth and nail' to stay alive, be competitive, repudiate pessimists and find a way through the mire.

The club was in diabolical trouble with virtually no supporters in attendance at some games. Younger readers would be shocked by the infinitesimal crowds that attended home games in that era; and, with a scarcity of volunteers (e.g. medical/training staff), the match day and training night duties were burdensome for those volunteers in those years.

Those who have read about the early years of Hawthorn FC (e.g. Bert Mills, Ted Pool and Bob Sellers) will appreciate that loyalty is paramount in building a football club and Dromana FC learnt such lessons via bitter experience. During that unproductive period, many 'fair weather friends' took flight and left the survival of the football club to a handful of local families and friends....

"... the strength of a family, like the strength of an army, is in its loyalty to each other." Mario Puzo.

The rescue and rejuvenation of DFC was a formidable task; and it tested the patience, allegiance and resilience of the volunteers. There were several major steps in saving and rebuilding DFC; and, in 1998, the committee set out to revitalize the club by:

1. Seeking new sponsors, building finances and membership.
2. 'Targetted' recruitment of experienced and proven players.

3. Developing local junior talent and encouraging the Third XVIII players to 'stay and play' with DFNC and not to 'drift away' from the club and the game of Australian Rules.

The coach of 1997, Guy Kellett, stepped down; and the club appointed Steve Scagliarini, a well-known personality in MPNFL football, as the Senior XVIII coach for the 1998 season. Steve approached the task with enthusiasm; and his determination to raise the fitness levels of all players and recruit experienced players to the club (e.g. Luke Lawlor and David Labbozetta) were his major priorities in the pre-season build-up that year.

DROMANA DEFEAT SORRENTO IN ROUND : 2 1998

THE MATCH REPORT AS PUBLISHED IN 'THE LOCAL'

Wins were few and far between in that era but the club claimed a 'scalp' in April 1998 with a 48 point victory over Sorrento. It was the club's first win for two seasons; and it gave the sceptics and 'naysayers' something to think about. The victory underlined the importance of 'staying the course' and being positive that the future could/ would bring change and rewards.

The following match report of the game will give readers some idea of the game and the importance of the triumph in Round: 2 in the 1998 season .



"Some 34 matches have elapsed since Dromana's last win in 1996 but the Tigers broke through to defeat Sorrento on Saturday. It was a big match for Dromana and despite losing four key players because of injury , the boys were determined to put the Tigers back on the winners list.

Dromana made errors and the game was never a certainty at any stage but Dromana's young team was hard at the ball and deserve praise for being able to 'come back' in the second half. The club's experienced players Damon Quigley and Jeff Hilton were in good form and made great contributions to the win.

Dave Jordan played his 101st game for the club and most supporters gave him the 'nod' for the best player on the ground. He is a local champ and his tough, fearless work in the crushes makes him one of the best on-ballers in the competition.

Chris Veale (50th game), Brett Dunne and ‘Bomber Trigg were solid team players; and new recruit Denis Oates was impressive with his thoughtful play and marking skills.

One of the real surprise packets in the game was Craig Compton at full forward. Craig led well , marked strongly and booted four majors. After the match, DFC President, Graham Stelling, said that the win was a great reward to all those who had stuck by the club during last year’s horror season.

Coach Steve Scagliarini summed up the win as ...”terrific and it was pleasing to see the boys play four hard quarters.” The team belted out the new club song and toasted the win with both relief and satisfaction.”

MATCH DETAILS

THE FINAL SCORES:

Dromana 14.12. (96) defeated Sorento 7.6.(48)

Goal kickers for Dromana:

Compton 4 Quigley 3 Jordan 2 Nicolle 2 Landrigan Oates and Hazeldine

Best players for Dromana:

Jordan Hilton Veale Trigg Oates Morrice Leah and Quigley



DFNC champion David Jordan played his 101st game for Dromana that day. David was an adept and distinctive player who enjoyed the ‘heat of battle’ and never shirked a physical contest. David was Captain of the Senior XVIII for seven seasons and won three Best & Fairest awards (1994-99-2000). He was chosen in the DFNC ‘Team of the Era’ 1946-2015.



Chris Veale played his 50th Senior XVIII for Dromana that day against Sorrento. Chris was a disciplined and highly skilled footballer who rarely wasted a disposal by hand or foot . He made his senior debut in 1989 and went on to play 67 games. Chris stepped down from Senior football in 2000 and then assisted in rebuilding the Reserves as a team leader/co-captain in later years. Chris was selected in the 'Team of the Decade' 1986-1995.



Jarrett Leah played 15 games in 1998. He was a spirited and promising young player who had won the Third XVIII Best & Fairest award in 1997. Jarrett (32 Senior XVIII games) generally played on the wing; and his courage in contests and long blonde locks created comment by the onlookers.



Damon Quigley photographed with current DFNC team leaders his son, Billy and Sam Geurts . In the match against Sorrento in 1998, as reported above, Damon kicked three telling goals and was named among the best players for Dromana. Damon was recruited to Dromana from Melton in 1995 and played 33 games before crossing to Red Hill. As a tall utility, Damon could be used with effect in the ruck , attack or defence. Several of his finest performances, for DFNC, were at centre half back . Damon also coached the Third XVIII in 2010. As is well known, Billy Quigley is a genuine star in local football and cricket; and Damon's other son Jackson, played 154 club (Senior/ Reserves /Third XVIII games) at Pier Street. Billy and Sam have both played representative football for the MPNFL.



Jeff Hilton played one of his best games for Dromana against Sorrento that day in 1998. It is fair to say, that Jeff was one of the most enigmatic players in DFNC's history. He was an innate junior player with Dromana; and there were those who thought the 'sky was the limit' when he was drafted to St Kilda. He had just turned 19 years of age when he made his debut with the Saints. Jeff's later career was hampered by injury; and in 1997 he crossed to the WAFL. The following extract summarizes Jeff's AFL career,

"Jeff Hilton was a utility player, recruited to St Kilda from Dromana. He only managed to break into the seniors at St Kilda six times and switched clubs in the 1992 National Draft, selected by Melbourne at pick 99. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Hilton_-_cite_note-2 In his first season with Melbourne he was restricted to the reserves and was a member of their premiership team. He was, however, regularly selected in 1994, making 19 appearances, three of them in finals. In 1995 he also played 19 games but he added just five more games in 1996 and was delisted. He went to Western Australian club Peel Thunder in 1997."
Source: Wikipedia.

RESERVES GRADE RESULTS

Dromana 12.13 (85) defeated Sorrento 5.9 (39).

Goals for Dromana: Steve Miller 4 Andrew Neville 2 Mark Hill 2 Paddy Baker
Darren Romp Robbie Thoday Andrew Scott

Best players for Dromana: Steve Miller Tim Hepner Colin Geisler Andrew Neville
Peter Robertson Andrew Thoday

THIRD XVIII RESULTS

Sorrento 28.24 (192) defeated Dromana 1.4 (10).

Goal for Dromana: Adam Garry

Best Players for Dromana : Jarman Minchington Roach Boyd Bond Robertson



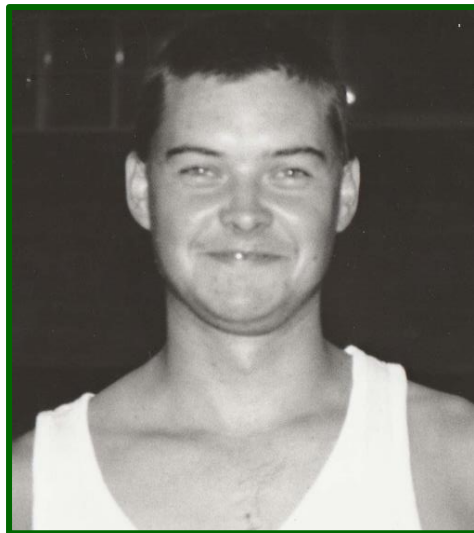
Sam Robertson played with the DFNC in that era. A story of Sam's interesting career in sport (including his time with the Western Bulldogs and his active role in building the DFNC Third XVIII) can be found on this website.

FOOTNOTE REGARDING DALE MINCHINGTON

Dale Minchington was an emerging young talent at DFNC who had made a name for himself in junior ranks. Dale went on to win the Most Consistent Player award in the Senior XVIII in 2000 and was Runner-up in the Best and Fairest (to former Melbourne FC player Michael Prentice) in 2002.

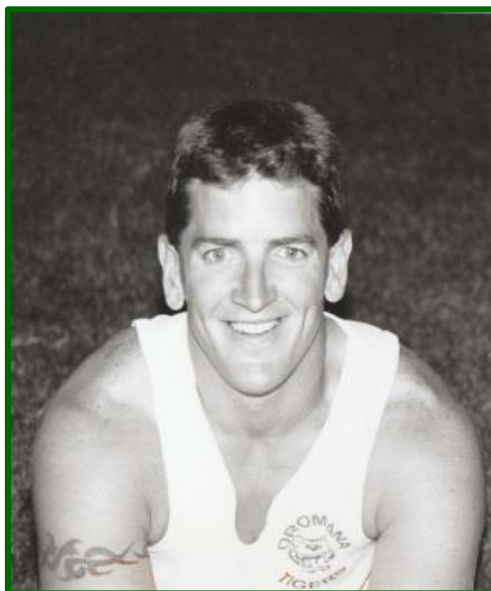
Dale Minchington was a humble champion, an archetypal individual to coach; and, those who saw him play will never forget his dauntless attack on the ball and strong body work. He was a free spirit in a match situation; and amassed 70 senior games before stepping down because of chronic injuries in 2004. As is often the case in football, injury curbs the blossoming careers of young players; and Darren was the classic example of a footballer forced to retire 'before his time' because of recurring injury.

Darren was one of five brothers who represented Dromana FNC.



Aaron Jarman (above) was a popular and energetic youngster who was instrumental in resurrecting the Third XVIII team in that era. Aaron was a diligent captain who played with resolve , fostered comradeship and generated team spirit. Aaron played 23 Senior XVIII games (1997-2001). His positive attitude was 'infectious' within his team.

THE SENIOR PLAYING LIST FOR 1996



Brett Dunne was a 'Jack-of-all trades' with the ability to play in defence, midfield or forward. Brett played 88 games (1993-2005) and was selected in the DFNC 'Team of the Decade ' (1996-2005). Brett won the Most Consistent Player award in 2001. Brett's family is still involved in the club.

The following players represented DFNC in 1998. The number of Senior XVIII games played that season is indicated by brackets. .

Daniel Nicolle (18) Luke Lawlor (17) Matt Breen (16) Brett Dunne (16) Andrew Rowler (16) Chris Veale (16) Simon Morrice (16) Troy Parker (15) Jason Sullivan (15) Jarrett Leah (15) Dave Jordan (14) Brendan Trigg (13) John Walker (13) Dustin Douglas (13) Andrew Scott (13) Colin Geisler (12) Jeff Hilton (10)

Robbie Thoday (9) Damon Quigley (9) Andrew Neville (9) Ben Boyd (9) Tim Hepner(8) Anthony Hazeldine (9) Denis Oates (7) Brett King (7) Andrew Thoday (7) Anthony Matthews (7) Darren Romp (6) David Labozzetta (5) Chris Monk (5) Glenn Kendall (5) Adam Klan (4) Steve Miller (3) Dale Minchington (3) Noel Ormesher (3) Craig Compton (3) Phil Reeves (3) Steve Kerr (2) Casey Landrigan (2) Ben Hutchinson (2) Peter Robertson (2) Sam Robertson (2) Tyson Cunningham (1) Jeremy Gardiner (1) Aaron Jarman (1) Tim Lanyon (1) James Osborne(1) Graham Potts (1) Dave Ritchie (1)



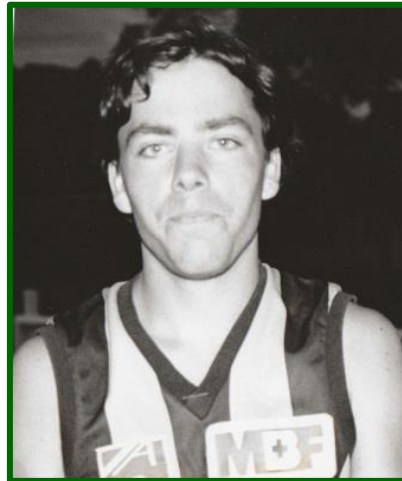
David Labozzetta was recruited to DFNC from Frankston YCW in 1998 but could only take the field in five games that season because of injury. In 1999, David played 13 games and his on-field leadership and robust brand of football underlined why he had been listed with St Kilda in earlier years. David was one of the stars in YCW's thrilling three point victory over Mornington in the 1997 MPNFL Grand Final.



Dustin Douglas, recruited from **DWWW (i.e. Devon-Won-Wron-Welshpool FC) played 51 senior games and was selected in the Team of the Decade (1996-2005). Dustin made his debut for Dromana in 1998; and was a genuine 'surprise packet' in the way in which he cemented his place in defence that season. His quiet and unassuming manner gave little hint of his tough and straight-through style of play; and by the end of 1999 he had won the admiration of officials , teammates and the 'fans in the hill.' ** To be verified.



In the above photograph, Dan Nicolle (centre) is seen sitting with his friend and team-mate Luke Gallimore and the intrepid DFC trainer Alex McPhail. Dan Nicolle kicked two important goals in the victory against Sorrento (above); and he was another young footballer who gave 'his all' to Dromana. Dan played a significant part in the reformation of the Third XVIII and was a former captain of that team. There are those at the club who can still remember Dan playing in three games on one Saturday at Crib Point. From 10.00 am until 4.45pm, Dan was in his football boots and doing his best to lift the Tigers. It was one of the bravest efforts seen that season; and, as can be imagined, Dan was exhausted by day's end.



Adam Garry was Runner-up in the Third XVIII Best and Fairest award in 1998.

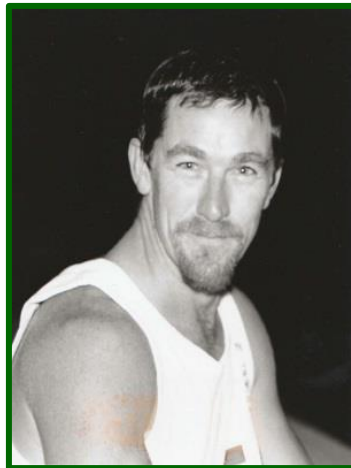
A VALUABLE HISTORICAL FIND - 24 YEARS AGO

Recently, a well-worn and crumpled page, from a local newspaper, was discovered; and 'lo and behold' it was somewhat of a 'nugget' in DFC history. The article, written 24 years ago, underlined the value of press cuttings and other memorabilia when researching club history. The page was indeed 'prized history' as it carried the voting details in the club's Best & Fairest player award. The article also provided some long lost facts about 1998; but it also revived memories of players who had donned the club colours that season.

Andrew Rowler won the club's Best & Fairest award in 1998. The following extract, which was published in the 'Southern Peninsula Local', stated...

"Veteran utility player Andrew Rower has won the club's 1998 Best and Fairest award. Andrew Rowler, who is regarded by life-long supporters as one of the greats of the 100 year-old club, polled a massive 114 votes.

Dave Jordan was runner up with 78 votes. Both players have been the backbone of the team in the second half of the season and; while it was expected that both would poll well, they were warmly applauded for their outstanding efforts..."
Source: 'The Local' September 1998.



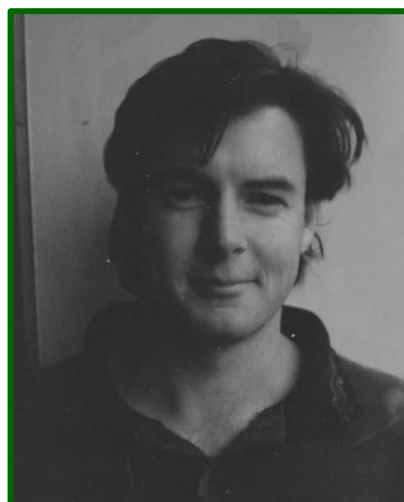
Andrew Rowler won the club's Best & Fairest award in 1998.

THE RESULTS IN DFNC VOTING FOR 1998 WERE:

- Andrew Rowler-114 votes
- Dave Jordan-78 votes
- Matt Breen-39 votes
- Jeff Hilton-36 votes
- Andrew Scott-33 votes
- Brendan Trigg -24 votes.

In the Reserves XVIII voting, Chris Trigg claimed the award with 41 votes. Others to poll well were: Ben Boyd (36), Adam Klan (32), Robbie Thoday (32), Colin Geisler (30), Noel Ormesher (29) and Graham Potts received 26 votes.

One of the hardest hitting and skilful players in the league that season, Dale Minchington (see notes above) won the Third XVIII trophy with 73 votes. He was a standout across the entire competition and opposition coaches often remarked upon his brand of football. Other young players to poll strongly in 1998 were: Adam Garry (68), James Osborne (62), Aaron Jarman (51), Chris Monk (39) Leigh Boyd (32) and Sam Robertson polled 30 votes.



Matthew Breen played 16 senior games in 1998. Matt, who had been cleared from Rosebud in 1995, went on to play 57 Senior XVIII games at Pier Street. He was a creative forward who also played across the midfield when required. Matt, who had captained the team on several occasions, was chosen in the DFNC 'Team of the Decade' (1996-2005).



An 'unsung hero' for Dromana in defence in that era was John Walker. John first played Senior XVIII in 1991; and went onto play 80 games. John was selected in the back pocket the DFNC 'Team of the Decade' (1996-2005). Many local supporters are unaware that John is the son of former VFA champion forward John (Senior) who won the goal kicking award at Preston from 1964-67; and he booted 116 goals in VFA Division:2 in 1965. He also won the VFA (Division :1) the 'Frosty Miller Medal' in 1966 and 1967.

The club's leading goal-kicking awards that season were presented to:

- Seniors: Dan Nicholle
- Reserves: Steve Millar
- Thirds: Mark Ipaviz**

****NOTE:** Mark Ipaviz was part of the Third XVIII leadership group and tried valiantly each game to set an example for his teammates. Mark is the brother of current TV personality Dean Ipaviz. Dean played 34 Senior XVIII games with DFNC (2001-2005); and won several club awards during his time at Pier Street. In 2007-2010, he played 28 games with Swan Districts in the WAFL.

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION:

Sources: DFNC statistics and records-MPNFL archives -Personal files- photographs & newspaper cuttings and match reports.

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Compiled and researched for DFNC by: Roger Spaul -June 2022.

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