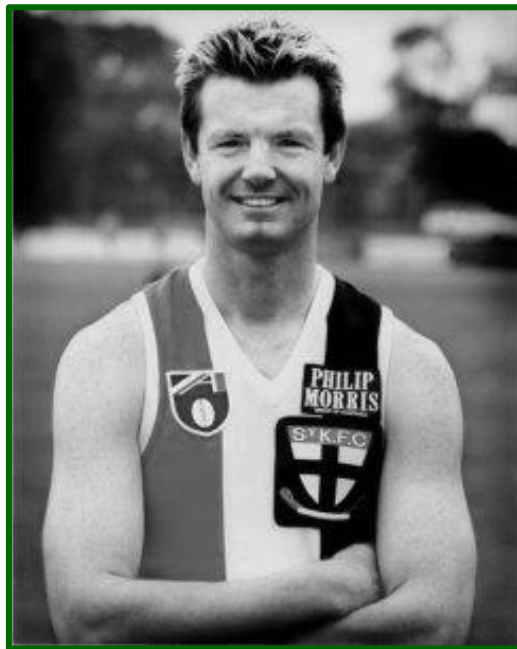


# **2003- A GIANT STEP FROM OUT OF THE SHADOWS**

Reference: 2023/22



Tim Allen, a star at Mornington FC , and who had played with three AFL clubs, made a dramatic impact at Dromana as an Assistant Coach and key forward in 2003.

## **INTRODUCTION- 20 YEARS AGO**

There is no need to revisit the late 1990's in the history of DFNC. It well known that the club had fought desperately for its very existence and to prove the pessimists and detractors wrong.

It was an uneasy time for players and officials; and the scathing comments and verbal backhanders that the club received from various quarters were not only mischievous but vindictive.

Thankfully, by 2002 things had improved on the field for DFC but the club still sat, with Carrum Downs, at the bottom of the league ladder. Carrum Downs FC was also in desperate straits in those years. The Falcons, which had entered the MPNFL (from the Southern FL) in 2000, had performed dismally in 2001 and 2002.

However, while DFNC managed to stay aloft, CDFC could not pull out of its steep nose-dive; and in 2006 the club imploded and was forced into recess. It was disappointing to witness the demise of the Falcons; but many people, at Pier Street, knew how fortunate DFC was not to be in a similar plight.

## **MEASURING IMPROVEMENT IN FOOTBALL**

In modern-day football, particularly at AFL level, there is an overabundance of statistics in measuring a team's match performance. There are also many football fans who 'religiously' pore over the available data trying to make sense of the weekend's results.

However, statistics can be deceptive in reflecting the truth in football outcomes and one of the best and easiest guide, in comparing a team's performance, is to appreciate the concept of team percentage ( % ) .

## FOR YOUNGER READERS- TEAM PERCENTAGE (%)

This information, about team percentage, is actually for our younger readers; and it is not intended to be a mathematics lesson. However, the team's percentage is a good guide to understand the progress made by DFNC in 2003.

The percentage of any football team is calculated by dividing the total points scored during the season by the total point scored against the team; and multiplied by 100 (to translate to percentage). The equation looks like this:

$$(\text{Points for the team} \div \text{Points for the team}) \times 100 = \%$$

As was the case in 1997, the Dromana Senior XVIII was thrashed in every game; and the team's percentage after 18 rounds was a meagre **3.52%**.

In 1997, Dromana scored a season tally of 27 goals and 24 behinds (i.e. a total of 196 points) while the opposition booted 851 goals and 461 behinds (a total of 5567 points)

The percentage of DFNC was therefore calculated by:

$$196 \div 5567 \times 100 = 3.52\%$$

It is thought that 3.52% is the lowest percentage in the history of local football. A percentage of 3.52% actually means that for every goal that the Dromana team kicked, the opposition team(s) kicked approximately 28 goals. It is a staggering statistic; and hard to believe but it is true as the players of that season can confirm.

Thankfully by 2002, things had improved and the team won two games (against Carrum and Red Hill); and had lifted its percentage that season was 55.06%. (i.e. Points for =1271 and points against = 2308).

$$(1271 \div 2308) \times 100 = 55.06\%$$

## THE SENIOR TRIUMVIRATE COACHING PANEL OF 2003

In 2003, the club decided upon a triumvirate (i.e. a trio) to lead the club; and Steve Paris was appointed to the position of coach while Tim Allen and Michael Prentice came 'on board' as Senior XVIII Assistant Coaches.

**STEVE PARIS** had proven to be a skilled, direct and hardened player at Mornington FC; and when he arrived at Dromana his strong brand of play stood out for all to enjoy. There were three about Steve Paris that caught the eye of any observer watching Steve at Pier Street

1. His combative style of play i.e. his unswerving and aggressive approach in winning the ball...a short step was not a part of Steve's DNA.
2. His superb foot skills either passing to a team mate or kicking long. Steve was a powerful and raking kick.
3. His quiet, selfless nature and humble disposition.



**Steve Paris coached Dromana in 2003 and 2004. He was a courageous footballer who gave 'his all' during a game. Steve played a key role in recruiting players to the club; and in his first season at Pier Street lifted the team from eleventh to fifth. In 2003, the Tigers finished one game outside the Final Four with 10 wins.**

**MICHAEL PRENTICE** made a name for himself in local junior (including Southern Stingrays and Teal Cup selection ) and MPNFL senior grade football with Rosebud FC. It came as no surprise when he was drafted to Melbourne (at draft pick 42) in 1994.

Michael played mainly defence for the Demons; and, despite some sparkling displays (e.g. Rounds 12, 22 and 23) in 1994, he failed to gain senior selection. Michael played a couple of games with former Dromana 'young gun' Jeff Hilton in 1994. Jeff was cleared from St Kilda to Melbourne in 1993. A recent tribute to Jeff can be found on this website at Reference: 2023/21

Michael Prentice played AFL Reserves in 1994 and 1995; and later crossed to the WAFL and joined Peel Thunder in 1997. Michael played 13 games with 'Peel' and kicked two goals.

As readers can imagine, it was quite a recruiting coup when Michael sought a transfer to Dromana FC in 2002; and he played 31 games at Pier Street. Michael was a very strong contested mark and was rarely beaten in a pack situation. He was a thoughtful footballer and an extremely popular team leader during his time with Dromana.



**Michael Prentice was a brilliant player at Dromana FC after being with Melbourne and Peel Thunder. Michael gave several awe- inspiring displays for the Tigers in 2003.**

**TIM ALLEN** (see his photograph above) played his first AFL match for St Kilda against Collingwood in Round: 19 in 1991 at Waverly Park in front of a crowd of a huge crowd of 53, 315 patrons. What an experience for young Tim!

Tim was just 20 years of age on debut; and, over the next five seasons, he played 22 games for St Kilda, 17 games with Hawthorn and his last AFL appearance was for Geelong in Round 22 in 1995.

AFL archives reveal that 1992 was probably Tim's finest season as polled five votes in the Brownlow Medal and kicked nine goals (including two bags of three against Essendon and Geelong). In the match against the Brisbane Bears in Round : 14 , Tim gained 26 possessions; and for the season amassed 235 possessions at an average of approx. 14 possessions per game in a most satisfactory season to say the least; and one which indicated his capability at the highest level in Australian football.

Tim was 24 years age when he stepped down for AFL ranks in 1995. It should also be noted that Tim also won the Mornington FC's Best & Fairest award in 1999.

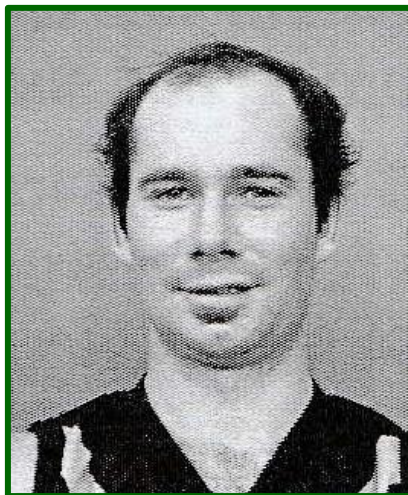
### **THE PLAYING LIST IN 2003**



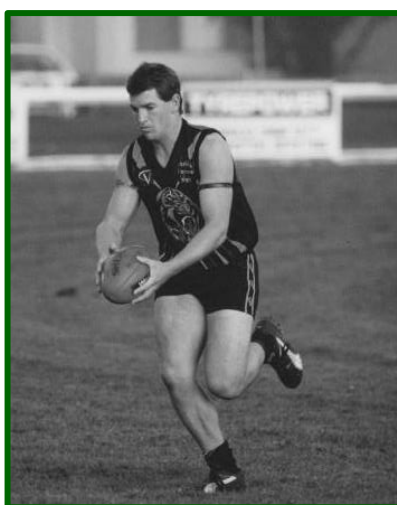
**Brad Allen 'Snowy' received DFNC Life Membership for his longevity and dedicated service to the club. While Snowy received numerous awards for his performances on the field for Dromana, he also played a pivotal role in promoting the club, recruiting players and generating team spirit. 'Snowy' was the classic example of a team orientated footballer.**

Dromana's playing list in 2003 is shown below. The number of senior games, played by each player is also shown in brackets.

Brad Allen ( 18 Senior Grade XVIII games in 2003), Brett Dunn(18), Michael Gillis( 18 ), Heath Laube (18), Clinton Liardet ( 18) Michael Hunter ( 17), Adam Todd (17 ), Craig Corfield (16), Tim Allen (15), Craig Williams (15), Doug Haskett ( 14), Michael Prentice (14), David Barnes (14), Jared Terry (13), Steve Paris (12), Luke Popov(12), Andrew Scott(12), Mark Doyle 12), Dale Minchington (10 ), Luke Donnelly (9), Shaun Lewis (8), Bryce Wilson (8), Dion Reilly (7), Peter Scoble (7), Kaine Nicholls (7), Brett Jackson (6), Dan Jennings (6), Damien Jone (6), John Rush (5), Dennis Nona(4), Paul Minchington (4), Joel Norford (4), Ben Stafford(4), Paul Zaffarese (3), Sean Griffiths (2), Shayne Cull (2), Adam Hunter (1), Chris McVeigh (1), James Osborne (1) and Brad Tait played one game in 2003.



**Clinton Liardet played 18 Senior Grade matches in 2003. During his career at Pier Street he won the Thirds' Best & Fairest trophy in 2001; and in 2004 was awarded the Most Determined player in the Reserves. Clinton received plaudits for his brilliant 'Best-on-Ground' performance in the 2008 Reserves premiership victory over Frankston.**



**Brett Dunn was a quiet achiever and loyal clubman at Dromana. Brett was used across the midfield or in defence; and his level of fitness allowed him to run hard for four quarters of every game. Brett was selected in the DFNC 'Team of the Decade' 1996-2005.**

Other players listed with DFC in 2003 included:

Craig Smith (Coach of the Reserves), Marty Fowler, Matt Breen, Brett Stephens, George Papalas, Andrew Neville, Michael Kotsifakis, Matt Martin, Noel Ormesher, Andrew Burnham, John McGrath, Stewart Shanks, Mark Hill, Vik Samy, Leigh Stokes, Carl Tung, Steven Wolfenden, Matt Killen, Merrick Bradford, Sean Kavanagh, Shane Burgess, Anthony Matthews, Keedan Rotteveel, Rick Eastwood, Damien Christmas, Tony Latesa, Josh Wharton, Daniel Young, David Robertson and Danny Nicholls.

### **THE THIRD XVIII LIST OF 2003**

Paul Jones, who played a most significant role in the development of under-age footballers at Pier Street, was the Thirds Coach in 2003.

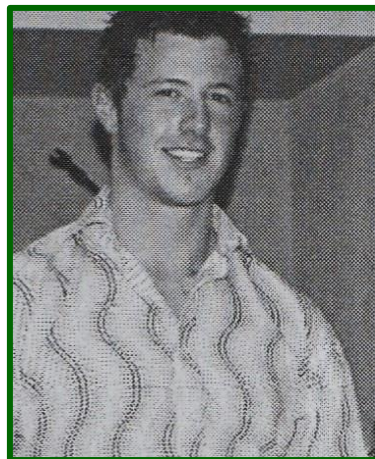
Paul deserves credit for his role in preparing so many local youngsters for the next level of football. Paul later had a stint of coaching at Red Hill FC; and in 2013 guided the Red Hill Second XVIII to the Preliminary Final.



The Thirds (i.e. Under: 18) list at Dromana in 2003 included the following youngsters: Glen Collett, Aaron Coyle, Paul Zaffarese, Brett Whitwam, Dwayne Day, Liam Defreitas, Travis Sheean, Toby Banks, Mitchell Cook, James Fisher, Michael Gerlach, Joshua Robertson, Damien Jones, Lachlan Donnelly, Adam Collett, Tim Elder, Shaun Daniel, Paul McLean-Wilson, Flinn Shiel, Ricky Kent, Matthew Hunter, Mark Crawshaw (Junior) and Nick Scott.

While the role of building a club's playing list, via junior development is fundamental in the life of any football club, there are some who simply pay 'lip service' to its importance. As can be seen below, under-age football is the 'breeding ground' for the future ; and ten of the above-mentioned players, broke into MPNFL Senior XVIII football in that era...

Aaron Coyle (71 Senior XVIII games), Paul Zaffarese (30), Dwayne Day (32), Travis Sheean (45), Mitchell Cook (72), James Fisher(8), Toby Banks (133), Damien Jones (9) and Paul McLean-Wilson ( 73) and Mark Crawshaw ( Junior) played one Senior XVIII game for DFNC.



**Dwayne Day was an excellent example of how junior development played such a part in re-building DFNC in the early 2000's. Dwayne played with the Thirds in 2003 and through his dedication won his way into the Senior XVIII in 2004. Dwayne played 32 Senior XVIII games and won the award for the Reserves Most Improved player in 2005.**



**Travis Sheean was a rare young talent and the recipient of five Best and Fairest awards in junior ranks. He was an innate footballer and could sum up any situation with uncanny judgement. Travis won the Thirds XVIII Best and Fairest in 2005, was Runner up in the Reserves award in 2008 and 2010; and, in all, played 45 senior games at MPNFL level. Travis was another local youngster who made a difference to his town's football club.**

## THE RESULTS IN 2003- THE HOME & AWAY SERIES

### ROUND: 1 HOME DROMANA 12.18.90 DEFEATED BY CRIB POINT 15.12.102

Goal kickers for Dromana: H.Laube 6 B. Allen 3 B. Tait 2 J. Terry  
Best Players for Dromana : T.Allen A. Todd H.Laube M. Hunter B. Allen  
Awards: A. Todd, M. Hunter, H. Laube and T. Allen

### ROUND: 2 AWAY DROMANA 29.20.194 DEFEATED SOMERVILLE 12.10.82

Goal kickers for Dromana: No details  
Best Players for Dromana : No details  
Awards: L. Popov. M. Gillis and J. Terry

### ROUND: 3 AWAY DROMANA 10.9.69 DEFEATED BY PEARCEDALE 22.19.151

Goal kickers for Dromana: H. Laube 4 D.Haskett B.Allen M. Gillis A. Todd  
J. Terry  
Best Players for Dromana : B. Allen S. Paris B. Jackson M. Gillis D.  
Minchington  
Awards: B. Allen and B. Jackson

### ROUND: 4 HOME DROMANA 14.5.89 DEFEATED BY KEYSB'GH 14.12.96

Goal kickers for Dromana: No details  
Best Players for Dromana : No details  
Awards; M. Gillis, A.Todd, D.Haskett and T. Allen

### ROUND: 5 AWAY DROMANA 27.23. 185 DEFEATED CARRUM D'NS 7.3.45

Goal kickers for Dromana: No details  
Best Players for Dromana : No details  
Awards: C. Corfield, B. Allen, C. Liardet and T. Allen

### ROUND: 6 HOME DROMANA 10.6.66 DEFEATED BY SORRENTO 16.18.114

Goal kickers for Dromana: No details  
Best Players for Dromana : No details  
Awards: P. Scoble, M. Prentice, M.Hunter and B. Jackson

### ROUND: 7 AWAY DROMANA 17.11.113 DEFEATED RED HILL 11.5.71

Goal kickers for Dromana: H. Laube 5 S. Lewis 5 D. Jennings 2. L. Popov 2 J.  
Terry 2 B. Allen  
Best Players for Dromana : S.Paris P. Scoble B. Allen S. Lewis C. Corfield  
Awards: S. Paris S.Lewis C. Corfield and P. Scoble

### ROUND: 8 HOME DROMANA 14.14.98 DEFEATED DINGLEY 12.9.81

Goal kickers for Dromana: H. Laube 5 S.Lewis C. Liardet L. Popov J. Terry B.  
Allen D. Barnes C. Corfield M. Prentice A. Scott  
Best Players for Dromana : A. Todd M. Prentice B. Allen P. Scoble D. Haskett  
Awards: M.Prentice, P.Scoble, Todd and B.Allen

### ROUND: 9 AWAY DROMANA 14.7.91 DEFEATED BONBEACH 9.11.65

Goal kickers for Dromana: No details  
Best Players for Dromana: No details  
Awards: D.Haskett M.Prentice S. Lewis and A.Todd

**ROUND: 10 AWAY DROMANA 15.14.104 DEFEATED CRIB POINT 5.12.42**

Goal kickers for Dromana: T. Allen 5 H. Laube 5 L. Popov 2 M. Prentice J. Terry C. Liardet

Best Players for Dromana : D. Minchington T. allen L. Popov B. Dunn M. Doyle

Awards: D.Minchington, B.Dunn Doyle and L.Popov

**ROUND: 11 HOME DROMANA 26.20.178 DEFEATED SOMERVILLE 17.7.109**

Goal kickers for Dromana: No details

Best Players for Dromana : No details

Awards: C. .Corfield M.Hunter, B.Allen and J.Terry

**ROUND12 HOME DROMANA17.11.113DEFEATED BY P'DALE 20.12.132**

Goal kickers for Dromana: No details

Best Players for Dromana : No details

Awards: D.Minchington, Gillis and D.Jones

**ROUND: 13 AWAY DROMANA 19.16.120 DEFEATED KEYSB'GH 15.10.100**

Goal kickers for Dromana: J. Rush 4 M. Prentice 3 T. Allen 3 S. Paris 2 H. Laube 2 B. allen 2 D. Jennings C,. Liardet L. Donnelly

Best Players for Dromana : B. Allen T. Allen J. Rush M. Prentice C. Corfield

Awards: J. Terry, J. Rush and J. Norford

**ROUND: 14 HOME DROMANA 19.11.125 DEFEATED CARRUM D'NS 9.4.58**

Goal kickers for Dromana:

Best Players for Dromana :

Awards: D.Nona, T.Allen, J.Norford, D.Jones

**ROUND: 15 AWAY DROMANA 9.7.61 DEFEATED BY SORRENTO 9.24.78**

Goal kickers for Dromana: T. Allen 2 D. Barnes 2 C. Corfield M. Doyle D. Jones H. Laube A. Todd

Best Players for Dromana : S. Lewis M. Hunter T. Allen D. Barnes C. Corfield

Awards: T. Allen, S. Lewis, M. Hunter and M. Gillis

**ROUND: 16 @ HOME DROMANA 16.11.107 DEFEATED RED HILL 12.6.78**

Goal kickers for Dromana: M. Prentice 4 T. allen 3 B. Stafford 3 J. Nrford D. Barnes D. Jones P. Minchington

Best Players for Dromana : M. Prentice M. Hunter B. Stafford C. Williams B. Dunn

Awards: M. Prentice, B.Dunn, M.Hunter and B. Stafford

**ROUND: 17 AWAY DROMANA 5.13.43 DEFEATED BY DINGLEY 8.13.61**

Goal kickers for Dromana: P. Minchington 2 S. Lewis 2 J. Rush

Best Players for Dromana : M. Hunter P. Minchington C. Williams M. Prentice A. Todd

Awards: M. Doyle, M. Hunter, P. Minchington and C. Williams

Notes on the defeat at Dingley are provided below.

**NOTE: A COSTLY DEFEAT AT DINGLEY IN ROUND: 17**

The defeat of DFC, at Dingley, proved extremely costly in the context of the club's position on the ladder because at the end of Round: 17, both Keysborough and Dromana had won 10 games apiece.



Once again, the importance of team percentage, in the race to the Nepean Division finals, was underlined. After 17 rounds, Keysborough sat in fourth position on the Nepean Ladder with a percentage of **127.24%** while Dromana was fifth with a percentage of **126.01%**.

The disappointing defeat by the Dingoes had jeopardized the Tigers' chances to participate in finals action in 2003. The players knew that also and were most downcast on the drive home from the 'den' (as the Dingley ground was often referred in those days). It was obvious that the game was the 'one that got away'.

As the results in Round: 18 show, Bonbeach whipped Dromana by 19 goals and dashed any hopes of Dromana progressing to the First Semi-final that season. Dromana's brave run to secure a finals' berth stalled at the 'worst possible moment' of that season.

However, it could not be denied that 2003 had seen a dramatic climb up the ladder by the Tigers; and, as time would reveal, the club had emerged from the shadows into a brighter light.

**ROUND: 18 HOME DROMANA 8.12. 60 DEFEATED BY BONBEACH 27.17.179**

Goal kickers for Dromana: T.Allen 3 M. Gillis J.Terry M. Prentice H.Laube C. Liardet

Best Players for Dromana : No details

### **THE 2003 NEPEAN DIVISION LADDER AFTER 18 ROUNDS**

<b>TEAM</b>	<b>PLAYED</b>	<b>WON</b>	<b>LOST</b>	<b>POINTS FOR</b>	<b>POINTS AGAINST</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PTS</b>
<b>PEARCEDALE</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2698</b>	<b>1232</b>	<b>218.99</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>BONBEACH</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2331</b>	<b>1190</b>	<b>195.88</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>SORRENTO</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2079</b>	<b>1375</b>	<b>151.2</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>KEYSBOROUGH</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>1564</b>	<b>128.13</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>DROMANA</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1906</b>	<b>1644</b>	<b>115.94</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>CRIB POINT</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1857</b>	<b>1903</b>	<b>97.58</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>DINGLEY</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1712</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>94.59</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>RED HILL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1465</b>	<b>1945</b>	<b>75.32</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SOMERVILLE</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1059</b>	<b>2565</b>	<b>42.29.</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CARRUM D'NS</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>2790</b>	<b>32.51</b>	<b>4</b>

### **THE RESERVES IN 2003.**

The Reserves formed a most capable and competitive team in 2003 and gave a good account in every game. From the available information, the team won 12 games, with a percentage of 131.01%; and at one stage of the season had sat in the top tier of the competition .

Craig Smith was pivotal to the team's success with 56 goals and Noel Ormesher, Andrew Burnham, Jason Donnelly, Chris McVeigh, George Papalas and Joel Norford had been consistent performers during the season. After 18 Rounds of football, the Reserves Grade Final Four comprised: Pearcedale (1st), Bonbeach (2<sup>nd</sup>), Dromana (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Sorrento sat on the fourth rung of the ladder.

A pleasing feature of the club's season was that the Reserves managed to secure a berth in finals. The First Semi-Final was against Sorrento at Rye on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

Sorrento took charge early in the contest and controlled the midfield; and while the Tiger defence was gallant, without Craig Smith's usual influence and conversion, Dromana struggled to find an avenue to goal and failed to register a score in the vital last term.

**The final scores were: Sorrento 7.8. 50 defeated Dromana 3.4.22**

**Goal kickers for Dromana: A. Neville M. Martin B. Stafford**

**Best players for Dromana: M. Martin J. Rush L. Donnelly J. Norford**

Following the game, Craig Smith said that he was very proud of the manner in which the Reserves had responded to every challenge throughout the season.

### **THE THIRDS IN 2003**

While Paul Jones guided his enthusiastic group of youngsters to the finals in 2003, it had not been an easy year for the team. The team had lost four of the first seven games in 2003; and it was a phenomenal effort to overcome some very talented opposition teams and clinch fourth position on the ladder.

As the season unfolded, two things became obvious to the small group of parents and enthusiasts who arrived early each week (i.e. 10.00 o'clock kick off) to support the boys : (i) The commitment shown by several inexperienced youngsters despite the overwhelming odds in some matches and (ii) The noticeable improvement in skills and teamwork throughout the season.

The fact that the Thirds made the finals in 2003 was a fair and just reward for their lengthy practice sessions work (in semi-darkness in mid-winter) and drive to succeed. The Third VXIII played Crib Point in the First Semi Final and, in summary; a disappointing third quarter where the boys did not 'hit the scoreboard' did irretrievable damage to the team's cause.

**Crib Point: 12.13. 85 defeated Dromana: 7.5. 47**

**Goal kickers for Dromana: G. Collett D. Day R. Kent M. Cook F. Shiel D. Jones A. Collett**

**Best players for Dromana: T. Sheean M. Cook N. Scott P. Zafferese D. Jones**

In his post-match address, Paul was full of praise for the boys who had given so much during the season and to have reached the finals had underlined the dedication of the young group.

### **NEPEAN DIVISION BEST & FAIREST**

Peter Doll of Pearcedale polled 23 votes to take out the George Osborne Medal for the best and fairest in Nepean Division. Enzo Ferraro of Dingley won the Howard Armstrong Medal in the Reserves Grade; and the Under: 18's award was shared by Michael Holmes (Red Hill) and David King of Crib Point.

At the time of writing this article in 2023, efforts are being made to uncover the past voting/ polling details by Dromana players in all grades of the competition. There may be readers who can offer some insight into voting in earlier seasons; and any assistance would be appreciated. Thank you Roger.

## LEAGUE HONOURS: GOAL KICKING AWARD

While Luke McGuinness (Keysborough) and George Gorozidis (Bonbeach) both 'cracked the ton' on the goal kicking table, Heath Laube finished a most creditable fourth with 62 goals; and Tim Allen kicked 55 goals in 2003.

In further evidence of success across the three grades, Craig Smith won the Reserves Grade goal kicking trophy with 56 goals. George Papalas was also in the top 10 with 23 goals that year. George, who had his best season with the club in 2003, proved to be an effective forward who combined cleverly with Craig around goals. George was a most popular and loyal clubman who played in excess of 100 club games with DFNC.

An emerging youngster at DFNC that season was Brett Whitwam. Brett booted 39 goals and finished third on Under: 18 goal kicking table. .

**NOTE:** Briefly, in 2003, Pearcedale won the Senior and Reserves Grade premierships; and in the Thirds Grand Final, Somerville claimed the pennant.

## MOST VALUABLE PLAYER AWARD

In the MPNFL media awards, Brad Allen (8 votes), Tim Allen (7 votes), Craig Corfield (7 votes) and Adam Todd (6 votes) figured prominently throughout the season. Heath Laube (4 votes) and Michael Gillis (2 votes) were also listed in 2003.

## 2003 DFNC AWARDS –IN ALL GRADES



**Michael Gillis (14) in action. During his time at DFNC, Michael won four awards in Senior Grade football: Coach's Award (2002 & 2008), Encouragement Award (2003) and, in 2004, he was presented with the Most Determined Player trophy. Michael is best remembered for his gritty exhibition in the 2008 Grand Final against Sorrento. In a senior career at Dromana, which spanned from 2002 until 2016, Michael Gillis played 139 games.**

DFNC AWARD	SENIOR GRADE	RESERVES GRADE	THIRDS GRADE
BEST & FAIREST	MICHAEL HUNTER	NOEL ORMESHER	DAMIEN JONES
RUNNER UP B & F	TIM ALLEN	MATT MARTIN	PAUL ZAFFERESE
MOST CONSISTENT	MICHAEL PRENTICE	JOEL NORFORD	TOBY BANKS
MOST DETERMINED	BRAD ALLEN	ANDREW BURNHAM	TIM ELDER
COACH'S AWARD	CRAIG CORFIELD	CHRIS MCVEIGH	GLEN COLLETT
ENCOURGAGEMENT	MICHAEL GILLIS	JASON DONNELLY	AARON COYLE
GOAL KICKING	HEATH LAUBE	CRAIG SMITH	BRETT WHITWAM
BEST TEAM MAN	•	JOHN MCGRATH	KEN MYER
MOST VERSATILE	ADAM TODD	•	•
MOST IMPROVED	•	JAMES OSBORNE	JAMES FISHER
BEST FIRST YEAR	•	•	MITCHELL COOK

## IN SUMMARY: THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

In brief, the accomplishments of 2003 actually began some years earlier with an honest assessment, by the committee, that things at Pier Street had to change. Talk is cheap but real reform requires due diligence and united action. Ron Barassi once said, *“Part of character is facing facts ...not avoiding them...”*

The bruising defeats in the late 1990's had been salutary lessons for DFNC; and only genuine renewal could prevent the club's extinction; and, consequently, the club set out to:

- (i) Shore-up and strengthen the playing list.
- (ii) Restore community support and respect.
- (iii) Establish pride in the town's one hundred year- old football club.
- (iv) Encourage the youngsters of the town to play at 'home and not down the road' i.e. a base upon which to build a future.

Targeted recruiting of experienced players, junior development programs, broader sponsorship, revitalized structures and the enlistment of more volunteers were vital in charting a new direction for the club.

However, those who have played football, know that any club's success is based about collective sacrifice, leadership, generosity of spirit and, above all things, united endeavour. Renewal did not happen overnight at Pier Street.

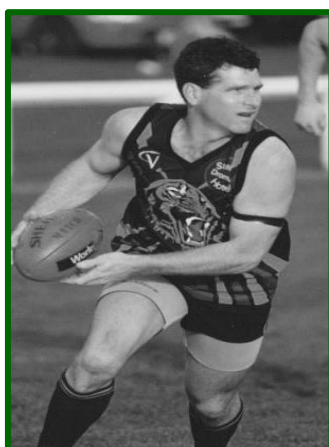
Big projects take time but 2003 was a turning point in the club's history; and, as shown in the following tables, the next chapter in the story of DFNC makes enjoyable reading.

Finally, it is fair to say that the successes of 2006 -2019 were a just reward for the players and officials who had 'stayed the course' and had worked in the belief of 'the process.' **NOTE:** MPNFL Finals seasons are shaded green below.

YEAR	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
PLACE ON MPNFL LADDER	9 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
TEAMS IN DIVISION	10	10	10	10	10	12	11	11

YEAR	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
PLACE ON MPNFL LADDER	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>
TEAMS IN DIVISION	11	11	11	11	12	12	12	12

YEAR	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PLACE ON MPNFL LADDER	9 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	• COVID N/A	NO FINALS - COVID 5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> Finals	? TBC
TEAMS IN DIVISION	12	12	12	10	•	10	10	10



Craig Williams was recruited from Leongatha in 2002 and his experience proved to be of benefit in defence. Craig was a consistent performer, an unflappable character, cool in a crisis and fearless in a contest. He played 28 games before stepping down from football.

### 2003 -A SEASON DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF ERIC OAKES



**DFNC Legend-Eric Oakes 1923-2002**

At beginning of 2002, the Board of Management decided to dedicate the 2003 season to the memory of Eric Oakes who passed away on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2002. It was gesture that was warmly embraced by, not only the members of the club, but by the wider community. Eric's considerable achievements during his tears with the Dromana FNC included:

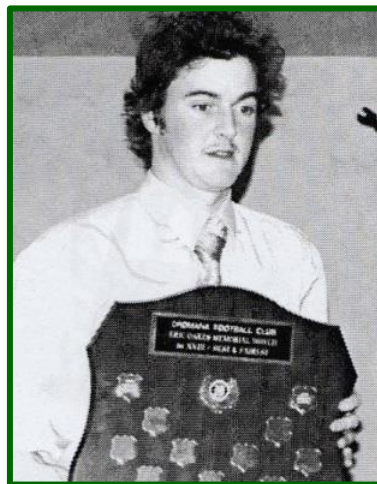
- 26 years as club President.



- Life Member of MPNFL.
- Vice President of the Nepean FL.
- VCFL Service Medallion.
- League delegate for 15 years.
- Australia Medal recipient in 2000.
- Pavilion named in his honour.

## MICHAEL HUNTER- A REMARKABLE CAREER AT DFNC.

As mentioned above, 2003 at Pier Street was dedicated to the memory of Eric Oakes. Some readers may not be aware that Eric is Michael Hunter's Grandfather; and in an amazing concurrence, young Michael won the club's Best & Fairest trophy (which is known as the Eric Oakes Shield) that year.



**Michael Hunter won the Club's Best & Fairest trophy in 2003. It was to be the first of three consecutive Senior Grade awards which Michael added to his Best & Fairest win in the Thirds XVIII's in 2002. Michael was awarded Life Membership of DFNC in 2017.**

1. Michael Hunter was born at the Mornington Bush Nursing Hospital in 1984. From his earliest years at Dromana Primary School, he can remember attending local football matches. Michael played his first game with the DJFC at the age of eight. While being 'dwarfed' by some of the other boys; he showed a liking and natural flair for the game.
2. Michael was part of the 'worst and best of times' at DFC. He and his family have been a key part of helping the club fight for survival, assisting the 'rebuild' and have contributed to strengthening the club to its current status in MPNFL football.
3. Michael was a highly skillful and adept player and his ability to read the play, anticipate/predict other players' intentions and deliver the ball accurately under pressure, made him a stand out defender in MPNFL football. Michael's records, highlights and awards at DFC are stunning:
  - 138 DJFC games and various team and individual trophies.
  - 2001-Michael was selected in the MPNFL team to play in the Victorian U17 Championships at Moama NSW.
  - Starred in the U18 Grand Final v Langwarrin
  - 140 Senior /6 Reserves and 34 Under 18 games.

- Played his first senior game against Pearcedale in 2001
  - 2002 -DFC Under 18 Best & Fairest
  - 2003- DFC Senior Best & Fairest
  - 2004- DFC Senior Best & Fairest
  - 2005 -DFC Senior Best & Fairest
  - 2007 -DFC Senior Coach's trophy
  - 2009 - Players' Player & DFC's Most Consistent trophy
  - 2012 - Member of Senior DFC Grand Final team v Sorrento
  - 2013-Member of DFC premiership team
  - 2013- 'Player of the Finals' Award.
4. Injuries are a cruel part of any footballer's life and Michael suffered two dreadful knee injuries during his career. In 2007, he ruptured the anterior cruciate ligament of his right knee. However, with grim determination Michael fought back to play again. In 2011 he snapped his left ACL. With typical resilience, Michael returned to playing field in the latter part of season 2012.
  5. Michael rates former DFC Captain Dave Jordan (168 games/7 times DFC Captain), his cousin Adam Hunter (150 DFC games/DFC & VCFL Rep, DFC & MPNFL Best & Fairest) and Rikki Johnston (VCFL & MPNFL Rep, ex-Captain of DFC, Best & Fairest) as the players he has most admired in all his years with the Tigers.
  6. In his 318 games with Dromana's junior and senior teams, Michael was never reported by an umpire.
  7. Michael was awarded Life Membership of the club in 2017.
  8. Following his retirement from playing, Michael served for one term on the DFNC Board of Management.

## **IN APPRECIATION OF THE 'MORNINGTON CONNECTION'**

It took a further decade for Dromana to claim another premiership flag (its first since 1971); but 2003 was undoubtedly a turning point in the long trek to the top. It was hardly ever smooth sailing; and there were sceptics, critics and naysayers who persistently decried the club and its players.

However, those local families and supporters who were at Pier Street in 2003 will always appreciate the meaningful contribution made by Joel Norford (\*\*see below), Brad Allen, Steve Paris, Tim Allen, Craig Corfield, Dennis Nona, Michael Gillis, Dan Jennings, Andrew Burnham, Peter Scoble, George Papalas, Luke Popov, Shaun Lewis, Bryce Wilson, Adam Todd and others of the 'Mornington connection' in not only signing-on with Dromana but also stabilizing a problematic situation and helping the club move 'onward and upward.'

## **A TRIBUTE TO JOEL NORFORD**

Sadly, Joel Norford passed away in 2020 but his positive contribution, while at Dromana FC, will never be forgotten. Joel, who originally played with Mornington, was cleared to DFNC in 2002; and his special qualities, amicable manner and rapport with members were exceptional.

Like his friend and team mate Brad Allen, Joel was an unforgettable character in life; and he possessed that rare ability to lift the spirits and vision of those around him. A tribute to Joel can be found on this website at:

<http://www.dromanatigers.com.au/2021/history/joel.pdf>

## CONCLUSION -2003 AND BEYOND

In conclusion, the over-riding message that the club grasped in 2003 was that united endeavour inspires confidence while pessimism is contagious and takes a drastic toll on individual and collective spirit. The trick to Dromana's ascension in MPNFL football was that, even in the darkest of times, the club never stop trying. As Tom Edison once said...

*"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."*

What Tom believed proved to be true; and after 42 years of trying, Dromana FC finally realized an elusive premiership by defeating Sorrento by 79 points. A comprehensive report on the 2013 Grand Final victory can be found at:

<http://www.dromanatigers.com.au/history/2023/2013prem.pdf>



## CONGRATULATIONS ETHAN JOHNSTONE 100 GAME MILESTONE AT DFNC



At the time of writing this brief tribute (August 2023), Ethan has kicked 199 goals in his Senior XVIII appearances for DFNC with more to come in the MPNFL final series.

Ethan Johnstone recently brought up his 100 Senior XVIII game milestone; and all DFNC members join in heartily congratulating Ethan on his sterling performances with the club since arriving for Mt Eliza juniors in 2015.

Ethan's development as a running forward has been rapid; and he currently is regarded as one of the most dangerous attacking players in MPNFL football. In his first season with the Third XVIII at Dromana, under the tutelage of Peter Ball, Ethan demonstrated his uncanny ability to win the ball in congested play and convert from difficult situations and tight angles. In that year (i.e. with the DFNC Under: 19's) Ethan played 13 games and kicked 15 goals.

Who will ever forget Ethan's brilliant performance in the Grand Final at Frankston Park in 2015? In that memorable clash, Ethan and his young teammates dismantled a very talented and highly fancied Rosebud side to claim the pennant.

On that day, Dromana 15.11 (101) defeated Rosebud 9.12 (66). Dromana's best players were: Ethan Johnstone, Bill Quigley, Sam Geurts, Sam Fowler (3 goals), Dean Waugh (3 goals) and Jake Snehotta.



**It is hard to forget Ethan's exciting performance in the 2015 Under: 19 Grand Final against Rosebud at Frankston Park when Ethan gave some indication of his immense potential.**

Current day senior players Dan Marchesani and Reece Wilde were also part of that victorious combine. That premiership triumph not only highlighted the emerging talent of Ethan and other local youngsters but again illustrated the importance of youth development in building a community football club.

Ethan made the transition from under-age football to Senior Grade quite well; and within a dozen or so games, he had won numerous admirers for his shrewd style of forward play.

Ethan is creative and his flair separates him from other running forwards. Ethan and Sam Fowler must cause opposition coaches trepidation as both are impossible to negate or suppress for one hundred minutes in any game.

In life and football, it is a truism that *'you cannot keep a good man down;* and Ethan is rarely held across four quarters; and when he breaks free and is 'off the leash' he is a 'live wire' and a potential match winner.

Another aspect of Ethan's skillset is that he has the ability to capitalize on half chances to gain possession and score from tight situations. A handful of his 199 goals have been nothing short of spectacular.; and several of conversions are best described as 'freakish' ( including his goal at Mt Eliza in Round :14 2019 which resulted in Ethan winning the MPNFL Goal of the Year award).



Ethan was a member of the 2018 and 2019 Premiership teams. Ethan is shown above with his friends and team mates Josh Bateman and Reece Wilde proudly wearing their 2019 MPNFL premiership medallions. The other player (i.e. number 2) is Matt Gahan who now plays for Southport (QAFL/VFL).

### **A SUMMARY OF ETHAN JOHNSTONE'S CAREER AT DFNC**

The following table attempts to summarize Ethan's impressive career at DFNC since 2015. His season in the QAFL in 2022 is also included (shaded green).

<b>SEASON</b>	<b>GAMES</b>	<b>GOALS</b>	<b>AWARDS &amp; HONOURS</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>AS AT ROUND:18 2023</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>NOOSA FC QAFL</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>GOAL KICKING AWARD (28 GOALS)</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>•</b>	<b>•</b>	<b>COVID -19 EPIDEMIC- NO MPNFL FOOTBALL</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>DIVISION: 1 PREMIERSHIP MPNFL GOAL OF THE YEAR</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>DIVISION:2 PREMIERSHIP BALCONY AWARD DIVISION: 2 MPNFL SQUAD GOALKICKING AWARD (54 GOALS )</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>GOALKICKING AWARD (29 GOALS ) MPNFL AFL WORKSAFE SERIES SQUAD</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>EQUAL BEST &amp; FAIREST BALCONY AWARD UNDER:19 AFL WORKSAFE SERIES TEAM</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>UNDER:19 PREMIERSHIP GRAND FINAL MEDAL RECIPIENT 1X DFNC RESERVES GAME</b>

As shown above, Ethan was cleared to the Noosa Tigers in 2022. Overall, he had a satisfying season; and, in 19 Senior XVIII games, kicked 30 goals including 'one bag' of five goals against the combine known as Redland-Victoria Point in the Elimination Final at the Dowling Sports Ground.

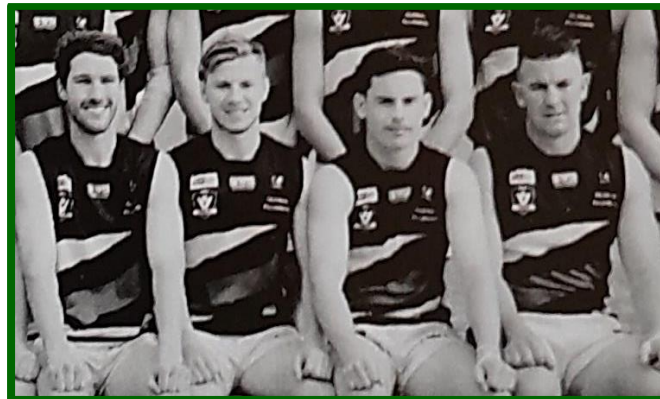




**No: 38 'takes off'; and on the right Ethan Johnstone in action for the Noosa Tigers in 2022.**

In conclusion, one of Dromana's all-time finest players and inspirational team leader, Terry Wheeler, has watched Ethan's development in MPNFL football since 2015 with keen interest and recalls ...

*"One of the earlier games I saw of EJ was the Under:19 Grand Final in 2015. He won the best on ground medal, defeating a Rosebud team that hadn't lost for two years. He has now developed into one of the best small forwards in the entire league. Despite all the incredible goals he has kicked, I will most remember his run down tackle in the 2019 Grand Final."*



The above photograph is part of the image of the 2018 DFNC premiership team. Five seasons later, this talented quartet is still playing important roles at Pier Street as the club prepares for the 2023 MPNFL final series. From the left: Terry Wheeler, Sam Fowler, Ethan Johnstone and the current DFNC Senior XVIII Coach, Matt Price.

## **REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION**

Sources: MPNFL records- DFNC publications and files-Personal records-Terry Wheeler-2003 statistics and match notes-QAFL website-Noosa Tigers website.

Article reference:'A Giant Step in 2003' & Ethan Johnstone Reference: 2023/22

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