

Sandi Geddis

1980-1984



After playing all my junior and early senior football in the Victorian Metropolitan Leagues (primarily as a goalkeeper), I was sent by the Department of Education to

commence my secondary P.E. teaching career in Wangaratta in 1979. To my surprise Wangaratta City football club were just commencing preseason training under a new player coach and BCAE old boy Chris Ricketts. Together with another BCAE alumni Dave Bolton, I had an enjoyable year playing on the left wing or midfield for the first team and occasionally turning out for the reserves in goals. I remember distinctly being able to score a few goals by relying on Chris to jump for the ball and not heading it but distracting the defence sufficiently for me to feed off the scraps. I could never work out how someone so tall couldn't / wouldn't head the ball? As Chris says in his profile, at times it was hard to get a pass from some of the younger local lads in the team, so much so that training was fun when you got the chance to go through them with a "well timed" tackle when they hung on to the ball way too long.

Halfway through the 1979 season I was sent to teach at Rochester High School approx. 2 hours from Wang so training during term time wasn't an option. I finished the season at Wangaratta and on the recommendation from both Chris and Dave I transferred to College for the 1980 season. The first bloke I contacted was Bob Seviour. Little did I know that this would be the start of terrific five-year association with College which would generate some life long friendships and enduring memories.

I can't remember too much about the specifics from the 1980 season apart from being welcomed into a group of mostly like-minded people with a great sense of humour and comradeship. From memory the football was good too. I really enjoyed playing with Siggy, Bob, Marty, Albert as well as others and, when available, the mercurial Mick Roche. As a player with limited "on ball" skills I seemed to have found various roles within the team that suited my skill set. Not sure why but I seemed to play most of my football on the left side (not my strongest) either in midfield or upfront and, on occasions, at full back, or as a backup goalkeeper. Others in the team must have had a weaker left foot than me? I remember on one occasion Siggy asked me to do a "midfield tagging role" on the main forward in a strong Colts team (can't recall his name but he was a good player and I think the league top scorer that year). Needless to say, I failed miserably. I could run with him all day and mostly kept him out of the game, but from his solitary 2 touches that day he scored twice. That was the last time I was asked to do that role.

1981 we were strengthened by a fully fit Mick Roche and Paul Ayre among others, as well loud Scottish central defender who introduced me to the deeply entrenched animosity between the Scots and the English, this fitted in well with my Irish heritage. I really enjoyed that season, from memory playing alongside the prolific Greg Hall up front and even managed a couple of goals myself along the way. On one occasion I managed to score a brace (a rarity for me) in a 2-1 cup win and was then subbed off in the second half. I remember standing next to someone from the opposition camp who said to me - "that was a great first goal scored by that Marty Hurst!" WTF? And he was way shorter than me!

As mentioned by others we had a very successful season, capped off by a rather raucous league presentation evening where I am reliably told we embarrassed

ourselves greatly. Just to clarify another story that has been greatly embellished by Stuart Gibson and Mick Roche. I only was very late with the shirts once! Although, it is true that on that occasion the team was warming up shirtless and "Spider Webb" had threatened to book the whole team if we didn't get the strip before scheduled kick off. It's a bloody long drive from Melbourne!!!

The 1982 season was one to forget for me. After sustaining a minor knee strain early in the season, which kept me out for a few weeks, I did the job properly later that year and buggered my knee completely, requiring a full knee reconstruction. What really pissed me off was that someone in the club had just organised a bulk purchase of new Patrick boots which I wore for the first, and last time that day. The other enduring memory of that year was my wedding celebration which was attended by several teammates, where the afore mentioned Mr. Hurst "pushed" a former girlfriend of mine into a fountain whist leading a rather exuberant conga line.

1983 I spent overseas (where we met Siggy and Heather in London) and doing rehab. On returning in 1984 I coached the first team for at least some of the season. I can't recall how we finished that season although from memory I think we won more than we lost. I do remember getting the first and only red card of my career that season whilst playing a game in goals, for supposedly swearing at the referee. For the record I didn't, but I did question one of his decisions rather loudly.

It was becoming increasingly difficult to field both a first and reserve team each week as some of the longer-term players had moved on and recruits from the student body were few. Not sure if College fielded a team in 1985 but I had decided to retire by the end of the 1984.

I was coaxed out of retirement by Stuart (who had returned to Bendigo) and Mick Bracey (Clive's brother) to play for Spring Gully in the 1985 season before "doing" my other knee which required a second reconstruction halfway through 1986. By that stage training was becoming more enjoyable than playing so the writing was on the wall anyway.

In 1988 we moved to Northeast Victoria where, I was fortunate to be able to return to playing indoor football and then Futsal in the early 1990's in Beechworth with a brief flirtation with over 35's football during that time. This included participation in the World Master's Games in Melbourne in 2002 and the Australian Master's games (Futsal) on three occasions. Beechworth indoor football has now endured for over 25 years, but we now play social walking football once a week. The group includes three over 70yo including one with a quad by-pass. My goal was to play until 60, then 65, now 70 is a possibility.

Other enduring memories from the College days were the end of year presentations at either Siggy's or Ray Gill's house. Siggy went to much trouble to provide everyone with a team photo and occasionally a trophy. My "Linesman Award" from 1981 is the only trophy that remains on permanent display somewhere in my house (see photo below).



I also recall an after game BBQ at the house I was renting about 20 mins west of Rochester. That famous wine maker the late Ray Gill brought along a batch of his "fig wine". Most of us knew better but my house mate Rod didn't. To this day he says he has never been sicker in his life.