

In footy's 150th year, we pay tribute to the clubs and leagues that are the heartbeat of country Victoria

GOULBURN VALLEY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ROCHESTER

Founded: 1874 Nickname: Tigers

Premierships: 1908, 1909, 1910, (Northern District FA); 1914 (Goulburn Valley Football League); 1921, 1922 (Rochester District FA); 1944, 1945, (Campaspe FL) 1958, 1959, 1962, 1963 (Bendigo FL); 1992, 1999 (Goulburn Valley FL)

VFL/AFL players (include): Kevin Barrett (Collingwood, South Melboure), Bruce Edge (Melbourne), Barry McIntyre (St Kilda), John Williams (Collingwood, Essendon), David Williams (Melbourne), Ashley Watson (North Melbourne)

Short history

The remarkable story of the club began on June 8, 1874, at Tidy's Hotel, now the site of the Murray Goulburn Co-op. In 1877, it was a founding member of the Victorian Football Association and sent delegates to Melbourne to discuss rules and logistics of the game. In 1913, it entered the Goulburn Valley District league, which became the GVFL in 1914. Paddy Mills, Carlton's centreman on Saturday and Rochester's captain on Wednesday, was coach. The club wore red and black in the Bendigo FL from 1915 until its acrimonious split with the league in the early 1970s. Rebadged in yellow and black, the Tigers were forced by the VCFL to sit out the 1972 season as punishment for leaving the BFL, but have played in the GVFL since.

Golden run

Rochy's grand era came with the appointment of Melbourne star Noel McMahen as coach. McMahen had captained Melbourne to its 1955 and 1956 VFL flags, and success followed him north with Rochester triumphant in 1958 and '59. After two narrow losses to Kyneton in 1960 and '61, Rochy resumed its mastery with two more flags – under coach Con O'Toole – in 1961 and '62.

Club legends

Super names such as Doyle, Gregory, Barrett, Knight, Copeland, Major, Aitken, Watson, Moon, Williams, Anderson, McCarty, Oliver and Rasmussen all contributed to the club's success. After his AFL career with Melbourne and Richmond, David Williams returned home to coach for 16 years from 1992-07. Anthony 'Tank' McPhee, recruited from Bamawm in 1988, became the first player to reach 400 senior GVFL games this year.

SHEPPARTON SWANS

Founded: 1928 Nickname: Swans

Premierships: 1937, 1938, 1940 (Goulburn Valley FA); 1959, 1960, 1970 (GVFL)



VFL/AFL players (include): Paul Bell (St Kilda), Roy Eliason (North Melbourne), Barney McKellar (Footscray), Gary Hamer (Geelong), Charlie Stewart (Footscray), Lloyd Burgmann, (Melbourne), Wayne Delmenico (Melbourne), Lally Bamblett (Melbourne, Footscray)

Short history

The club was founded as Lemnos, the name taken from a Greek Island because the district was settled largely by soldiers who had served in the region during World War 1. The club played home games at Lemnos until it moved to Shepparton in 1932 and became the Shepparton Swans in 1999. The club has played in variations of the GVFL since its inception. The Swans lost to Seymour last year in their first grand final since 1983.

Great eras

The Swans played in seven grand finals between the late 1950s and early 1970s, winning three. Former Geelong premiership star Doug Palmer was playing coach in the Swans' 1959 and 1960 flags, with Robbie Orrman the league best-and-fairest in '59. Former North Melbourne player Roland Crosby coached the 1970 premiers, a year after Ron Cobbledick was the league leading goalkicker with 76 goals when the club lost the grand final.

Club legends

Robbie Orrman is undoubtedly the best player to have played for the Swans without having gone on to the VFL. Orrman, a six-time club best-and-fairest winner, is the only Swan to have won the league's Morrison Medal more than once. Orrman won the league's B&F in 1951, '54 and again in '59. The rugged Metty Selman holds the club's games record with 267, while Jeff Willson and Wayne Ford are the only other players to have played 250 games. More recently, Damien Yze, brother of Melbourne star Adem, won back-to-back league goalkicking titles in 2003 and 2004.

All details are provided by the clubs. Contact Amelia Harris: harrisam@heraldsun.com.au or phone (03) 9292 1269

