



Media Release

Attention:	Sports Editors, Football Writers and Broadcasters
Date:	Tuesday, 27 May 2008
Subject:	Special Category announced – Longford 1957, New Norfolk 1968 and Smithton 1983 recognised as 'Best of Country'.

AFL Tasmania has today announced a 'Special Category' of Tasmanian football for induction into the Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame in 2008 at media conferences at North Hobart Oval, Aurora Stadium and West Park (Burnie).

In 2008, which is also the Sesquicentenary of Australian Football, it has been determined to recognise the 3 best country football teams that have played senior competition level football in Tasmania.

The 'Best of Country' special category will recognise the greatest country football teams from the North, North-west and Southern Tasmania. The teams chosen for induction are as follows:

- Northern Tasmania – Longford Tigers – 1957 NTFA and State Premiership team.
- North West Tasmania – Smithton Saints – 1983 NWFU Premiership team.
- Southern Tasmania – New Norfolk Eagles – 1968 TFL and State Premiership team.

The 'Best of Country' teams join the 2007 Special Category induction of the iconic Queenstown Oval.

The official induction of the 'Best of Country' teams will take place on 4 July at the Hall of Fame gala function at Wrest Point Casino.

Players who were members of the respective 'Best of Country' football teams were in attendance at the media conferences for comment and photo opportunities, including:

- Players and Officials, including: NEW NORFOLK – Trevor Leo; LONGFORD – Don Brooks, Bob Pitt, Len Pitt and Jack Barnes; SMITHTON – Gavin Coombe, Chris Hofing, John Korpershoek.

The attachments provided with the media release include:

- Results and the achievements of Tasmania's 'Best of Country' senior football teams.
- Pictures of respective premierships teams / celebrations / play. Courtesy of players and drawn from Examiner, Mercury and Advocate in some instances.

Next week AFL Tasmania will announce the individuals to be inducted into the Tasmanian Football Hall of Fame for 2008.

Inductees who are to be elevated to Legend or Icon status will be announced at the induction ceremony.

'BEST OF COUNTRY' – TASMANIAN SENIOR FOOTBALL

NORTHERN TASMANIA

The northern midlands town of Longford was transformed as a sporting haven for people from all over the world in the 1950s when the town became the centre of international motor racing. For Tasmania's maniac football followers the Longford Tigers were also to peak in the mid and late 1950s at both the regional and state level under the leadership of ex-Carlton premiership star – Fred Davies.

The Longford Tigers achieved their first taste of NTFA premiership success in 1955, but were to succumb in the State Premiership to the Arthur Hodgson led Ulverstone.

After defeating Launceston comfortably for the 1957 NTFA title the Tigers once again took on Ulverstone, but this time in the State Preliminary Final. After winning that battle the team of local champions were to confront the TFL premiers, North Hobart, who were led by one of Tasmania's greatest ever players in John Leedham.

In the State Premiership Final the Tigers burst out of the blocks and could have taken a stranglehold on the title except for inaccurate kicking. To their credit North Hobart hit back in the 2nd quarter and led at half – time. The Tigers were not to be denied a second time however and prevailed comfortably in the 2nd half to become the first NTFA 'country' team to take the state title.

The Longford Tigers golden era extended to one more premiership in 1958 and numerous more runner up appearances following this triumph. Although there is little argument that the mantle of best country team in Northern Tasmania was taken up by Scottsdale for 2 decades from 1964, the Longford team of 1957 will always be remembered as the pioneers of the cause of country football in the region.

TASMANIAN STATE PREMIERSHIP – 1957 – York Park						
Longford v North Hobart				Date: Saturday 5 October		
Teams	1 st		2 nd		3 rd	Final
Longford	3.8		5.11		10.13	14.16 (100)
North Hobart	0.1		7.4		10.5	12.7 (79)
Best: Longford	R.Hay, J.Fitzallen, J.Barnes, F.Davies, C.Goninon, R.Butterworth, D.Brooks, P.Jago, I.Hayes.					
North Hobart	J.Archer, J.Leedham, P.Cooper, G.Quinn, I.Riley, B.Southorn, D.Eaton, N.Clarke.					
Goals: Longford	D.Goninon 3, E.Bricknell 3, F.Davies 3, J.Barnes 2, L.Pitt 2, C.Goninon 1.					
North Hobart	N.Clarke 3, P.Cooper 3, I.Riley 2, J.Leedham 1, M.Kelleher 1, C.Collidge 1, I.Plunkett 1.					
Umpire	F.Schwab	Crowd	12500 (record)		Gate	£2234 (record)

'BEST OF COUNTRY' – TASMANIAN SENIOR FOOTBALL

SOUTHERN TASMANIA

New Norfolk entered the TFL grand final as a rank outsider in many pundits eyes. They were up against the John Devine led North Hobart, who were hot favourites, having won the 2nd semi final easily and given they were reigning premiers.

The Trevor Leo led Eagles were however on a mission to achieve what no other Derwent Valley team had ever done – to win the TFL premiership and then the State Premiership.

After winning the Club's first TFL premiership the task to defeat Scottsdale to win the State Premiership title was taken in the stride of the Eagles. In a dour struggle the New Norfolk team were able to rally in the last quarter and draw away from a gallant Scottsdale team to achieve the greatest moment of any country senior football team in the history of football in Southern Tasmania.

The New Norfolk team of 1968 is the original and 'Best of Country' from Southern Tasmania.

<i>TASMANIAN STATE PREMIERSHIP – 1968 – North Hobart Oval</i>					
<i>New Norfolk v Scottsdale</i>				<i>Date: 5 October</i>	
Teams	1st	2nd	3rd	Final	
New Norfolk	1.4	3.10	5.11	9.13 (67)	
Scottsdale	1.0	3.4	6.9	7.12 (54)	
Best: New Norfolk	R.Lynch, G.Hill, A.Besier, J.Windsor, G.Smith				
Scottsdale	Taylor, Mounter, Rattray, Leitch, Davidson, Millwood				
Goals: New Norfolk	G.Hill 4, B.Nusteling 2, T.Leo 1, C.Goggin 1, M.Booth 1.				
Scottsdale	Mounter 1, Taylor 1, R.Hall 1, Salter 1, Dent 1, French 1, Millwood 1.				
Umpire	D.Blew	Crowd	11,395	Gate	\$6,618

'BEST OF COUNTRY' – TASMANIAN SENIOR FOOTBALL

NORTH-WEST TASMANIA

The Smithton Saints were invited to enter the highly competitive North West Football Union (NWFU) in 1979. Their first taste of senior Tasmanian football was in the experimental Winfield Statewide League of early 1980. The initial outing for the Saints were not successful, but as the original season unfolded it was apparent that the decision in asking Smithton to join the NWFU was the right one.

By their 3rd season the Smithton combination was playing in the NWFU grand final and by 1983 (their 4th season) the Club was on the verge of achieving their first premiership.

In a magnificent game of football the Saints were paired against the might of the Cooe Bulldogs from Burnie. The Bulldogs were led off field by Coastal coaching legend in Warren 'Putt' McCarthy and started the game strongly. The Saints were essentially a team of farmers and had the colossus from Richmond, Stephen Parsons, as their leader. After trailing Cooe in the first half the Saints faithful had to wait to a magnificent 3rd term to see their team reproduce the sort of form that had brought them this far.

In a classic last quarter the near record crowd were treated to a great contest to determine the champion team of 1983. With two minutes to go the chances of the Saints looked gone. They trailed by 11 points and were kicking into the wind. However, prevail they did and in a magnificent effort the winning goal was kicked with less than a minute to play and by the barest of margins the Saints 'came marching in' to the delight of their many thousands of supporters.

The NWFU Grand Final of 1983 was a classic of the ages for Tasmanian football. The achievement of the Smithton Saints in taking their first premiership in only their fourth season duly sees them recognised as the 'Best of Country' from the North-west Coast.

NWFU Grand Final – 1983 – West Park					
Smithton v Cooeee				Date: 10 September	
Teams		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Final
Smithton		3.3	9.5	16.12	20.17 (137)
Cooeee		6.3	12.6	16.7	21.10 (136)
Best: Smithton		A.Maguire, G.Coombe, P.Korpershoek, C.Hofing, S.Parsons, C.Loring, M.Nicholls			
Cooeee		T.Lee, S.Beaumont, Bourn, J.Mihocek, R.Hislop, K.Beaumont, M.Deverall			
Goals: Smithton		A.Maguire 10, B.Newman 2, P.Korpershoek 2, K.Billing 2, C.Loring 2, B.French 1, G.Coombe 1.			
Cooeee		S.Beaumont 7, K.Beaumont 5, B.Plant 3, D.Shephard 2, K.Beswick 2, M.Dockling 1, M.Templeton 1.			
Umpire	M.Devlin & R.Hart		Crowd	11,722	Gate \$28,573