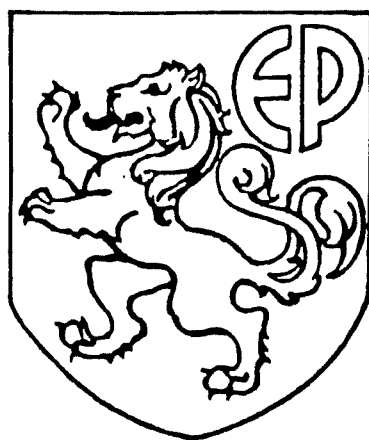


EYRE PENINSULA ZONE COUNCIL



THE FUTURE OF FOOTBALL ON EYRE PENINSULA

*A discussion paper prepared by the
Zone Council Sub-Committee*

9th September, 1987

PART THREE

FINAL PAPER.

FORWARD:

At a Mortlock Shield Conference on 3rd March 1984, a Sub-Committee was formed to examine the future of football on Eyre Peninsula and circularise a discussion paper for Leagues to refer to.

This Committee also released part two of their report on the 18th January 1986. All Leagues supported the release of a further report and the Sub-Committee was asked to re-convene in June 1987 to take further evidence and release their recommendations as soon as possible.

The Sub-Committee comprising Messrs D.P. McSweeny (Chairman), W.J. Flavel and B.S. Trigg have analysed all evidence and submit the following findings for consideration.

SUMMARY:

The following facts have been taken into consideration during discussion on this subject and should be clearly understood by all people involved at all levels of football.

1. The demise of Clubs and Leagues in country areas is not something new and has been happening on Eyre Peninsula for the past 50 years. We quote as an instance Far West Area with Murat Bay and Far West Leagues combining to compete in the 1957 Mortlock Shield. Club names such as Charra, Denial Bay, Goode, Merghiny, Maltee, Mudamuckla, Coorabie and Bookabie all fielded teams at some stage in Far West history and no longer exist. On the lower end of Eyre Peninsula we refer to the Eastern Eyre League which comprised six clubs and is now disbanded with only three clubs left in the area. We believe Eyre Peninsula once supported fifty six football teams and now thirty seven remain.
30 Nov.
2. The decline in population is not solely a product of the rural crisis. Modern farming technology and automation has accounted for the greater part of the decline of numbers.
3. A return to a bouyant rural economy will not result in a significant increase in numbers.
4. When a club disbands or a league amalgamation takes place the domino effect will apply and neighbouring leagues and clubs will be affected and in some way all Eyre Peninsula leagues will suffer a loss of options.
5. In view of this the Task Force has not taken this report lightly. Findings are based on submissions that have been taken from club representatives, private interviews and discussion with former football administrators have taken place, and opinions of current young players have been sought. A press report inviting comment from the public was also made.
6. This report is intended as an independent Eyre Peninsula survey. The Committee recognise the fact that we have no authority to release it "as an instruction" to clubs and leagues.
7. We point out finally that any changes to league structure will require approval of the South Australian National Football League Investigation Committee.
8. A copy of this report has been submitted to the S.A.N.F.L.

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEAGUE AREAS

1. REVIEW

Recommendations should be viewed positively for the betterment of Country Football and all Leagues and Clubs concerned.

All clubs on Eyre Peninsula should examine their futures carefully. Change should not be made for the sake of change or because it is fashionable, however changes that are inevitable should not be delayed to the point where a club may be forced into a decision without any control or bargaining power on the decisions made.

Supporters should be encouraged to carefully listen to the views of the players and officials with an open mind. All Football followers must look further than their own Club or League.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

DEFINITION

For the purpose of reference in this report Area one will be referred to as Western Areas.

Area two will be referred to as Upper Eyre Peninsula.

Area three will be referred to as Eastern Districts.

Area four will be referred to as Lower Eyre Peninsula.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

WESTERN AREAS

1. We strongly recommend that the following clubs, Thevenard - Ceduna - Koonibba - Western United - Streaky Bay - Smoky Bay and Wirrulla be restructured to form a Western Areas league.
2. Wirrulla and Smoky Bay Clubs should carefully examine their futures and discussion should take place on possible amalgamation.
3. A competitive and viable competition in the Western Area would thus be formed and should remain so for a period of at least ten years.
4. A hard line on efforts to diffuse any long standing friction of clubs should be maintained but would benefit from a strong six team competition.

UPPER EYRE PENINSULA

1. We recommend the formation of a league consisting of the following teams, Rovers - Minnipa/Central - Wudinna - Central Eyre - Elliston - United - Kimba No. 1 - Kimba No. 2.
2. The amalgamation of Central Areas and Minnipa should proceed and for the purpose of this report is referred to as Minnipa - Central.
3. The Committee feels very strongly that all efforts should be made to keep Elliston club viable and active. Options that Elliston may have to face include disbanding, however, the Committee see amalgamation with Lock as an option.
4. Rovers draw players from a wide area extending south a considerable distance, for this reason we believe their future should be in this league area, however, we recognise that they could also be located in Western areas.
5. Wudinna will remain to be a viable club for at least the next ten years. Players would benefit from a broader based competition.
6. Central Eyre has been an amalgamation success story, however there are already signs that an active recruiting program will have to be maintained.
7. We believe that the present Kimba league area should be restructured to form two new clubs to compete in the Upper Eyre Peninsula League. Factors which influence our opinion are the present condition of roads linking Kimba with major towns in the Eastern Districts area as opposed to the alternative to travel west on bitumen. Kimba league will not support four teams for much longer and positive steps should be made to structure a competition for the players of the future. The efforts that have been made to retain the present structure of teams in the Kimba league as long as possible has to be admired. We can understand the desire of some to tough it out and hope for numbers to improve in the future but we believe the time has come to accept change.

EASTERN DISTRICTS

1. We recommend that the existing six clubs in the County Jervois league continue to compete as long as possible. The locating of Kimba clubs into an Upper Eyre Peninsula football league could be seen to be leaving the Eastern league a little weak but we believe that the evidence given by most clubs suggest there is no urgency at this stage to make changes. If the decline in numbers continue, we feel a review of the Eastern Districts would have to be made.

SOUTHERN EYRE PENINSULA

1. The two existing leagues Great Flinders and Port Lincoln are not experiencing any real problems of shortage of numbers. Eyre United Club however, is the exception having cleared some 23 players out of their area in season 1987.
2. The Committee therefore do not see any need for club amalgamations at this stage, however some clubs in Great Flinders will need to assess their futures closely and maintain contact with neighbouring club management committees.
3. Lock club has decided that its future is in Great Flinders league but options would include Upper Eyre Peninsula and Eastern Districts.
4. United Yeelanna club has defied the trend and numbers have improved in recent years, however many of the senior players are over 25 and the club predicts problems after five years.

CONCLUSION

1. Committee has endeavoured to structure league areas with a maximum two hours travelling time.
2. Some people who have given a lifetime to football and are justly proud of their present club will find it difficult to accept change, however amalgamation should be seen as a whole new start with name and colours etc. mutually decided.
3. Because of the importance of family involvement being retained netball officials should be consulted and invited to participate in any further discussion.
4. Clubs should look to planning for the present junior competition rather than the existing one where a majority of players are nearing the end of their career.

