

Premiership Outrage

Community sport is never short of controversy, which is no surprise given the time and emotional investment that locals put into it. But arguably the biggest row of all involved our Club.

It happened in 1932 when the ageing but still powerful Ferny Creek team defeated Boronia in the Grand Final. However in a post match debacle Boronia lodged a protest which was partially upheld by the Mountain District Football Association.

The story raised eyebrows throughout the Victorian footy community and was covered by The Age and The Herald newspapers.

Lets put it into context-for some Ferny Creek players the 1925 Grand Final loss to Fern Tree Gully had been the signal that it was time to retire.

This is the magnificent group that had taken Ferny Creek to five grand finals in five years, but a few years later , in 1928, the Club collected the wooden spoon. As Ginko might say "after climbing Everest they died on the way down".



Ralph Jones from Olinda played in the 1924 and 1932 teams. He was later captured by the Japanese in Singapore but survived and played a key role in the post war club.

Fast forward a few years and Ferny Creek was back in business dominating the 1932 season, at one stage kicking over 30 goals against Belgrave a week after thrashing Gembrook 16.20 to 1.2

Predictably the boys pushed through to another grand final , this time against Boronia (which itself had only just ended it's amalgamation with Bayswater).

Ferny Creek was a small but vibrant community and the football club drew in players from Olinda down to One Tree Hill. Dorothy Dodd remembers the games were well attended but the after match dances at the Ferny Creek Reserve hall were even more popular.

On grand final day in 1932 Ferny Creek was ahead 9.8 to 8.12 when the bell rang and the local boys and their families decamped to the Middle Hotel to celebrate.

The club even presented our best player with the match ball.

However behind the scenes Boronia was protesting that the bell had been sounded too early. Ferny Creek later conceded that there was a "technical error" which was the fault of both clubs.

But the MDFA was having none of it and ordered a replay of the game at Lilydale.

Ferny Creek balked at this. We are not certain if that's because many of the boys were required to work or if they adopted an attitude of the "league can shove". The truth ,as always, is probably somewhere in the middle.

Consequently the MDFA awarded the flag to Boronia. The Age newspaper reported on Saturday 15 October that discussions at the hearings had been "heated".

However the MDFA wouldn't change it's mind and, according to The Age "Ferny Creek committee now intimates that the flag pole on which they were to have flown their first premiership flag is up for sale."

Of course this report is not wholly accurate because Ferny Creek had won it's first flag in 1924. But the

report does capture the emotions spilling over at the time.

Things were never quite the same at the great Ferny Creek club after that. Boronia went on to win the flag the following year while Ferny Creek disbanded and was reborn as Olinda.

However as time passed Ferny Creek was to have the last laugh- the Club is widely acknowledged as the 1932 premier on MDFA lists. From OFCs perspective we have always counted "1932" as a premiership year.



1932 premiership team- they couldn't get their hands on the flag so they took the pic with the 1924 flag in the background !!