

The 1978 Premiership Team	With Name Knickname and AFL comparison
<p>John Panioty – Horn – Denis Pagan Moved from centre on Arrival of B&F winners Grimes & Hanlon where his defensive skills were better utilised. Not quick, but hard at the ball and rarely lost his feet in a contest. Very reliable, seldom having multiple goals kicked on him.</p>	<p>Jeff Koelewyn – Joffa – Kel Moore Exceptional full back who (especially when angry), would be a first choice full back by all team mates. Marked everything by being in the right position and kicked a long “torpy”. Quick, hard bodied in the contest and able to hold his ground 1 on 1 in marking duels.</p>
<p>S Harris – Brut – Big bodied, strong mark and lovely kick, verbally intimidating and ruthless in the way he played. Always strong in contests and one of the best 1% support players – high scorer in shepherds, tap-ons and body crashes. So sneaky in the crushes, was rarely caught as the culprit.</p>	
<p>Leo Koelewyn - - Wellman A very early run the lines half back, who was able to win MVP awards for '78 (OFCFC) and '83 (Monbulk) Premierships. A hard running, long kicking, cross the lines half back. Not at his best in the air, he learnt to bring the ball to ground and using strength and pace, clear the ball well beyond his control zone. A back flanker who easily fits the modern image.</p>	<p>Pete Thornton – PT – (Stew Dew on right foot) Short for CHB, but big hipped with a low centre of gravity, huge thighs and big hands, all went to making PT a marking machine. A tall quick or a strong and bulky opponent, it was all the same to him, he took them on and outplayed their playing strength, using his physical strength, skill and agility.</p>
<p>John Graham – Cocko – Eric Guy Remembered for his shortness of kick, his whole game was built on perseverance and strength – he was <u>never</u> pushed off the line of the ball. Not tall and not overly skilled, he was a typical dogged tagger. GF '78 saw him dominate the first quarter with many marks, forcing Coldstream to attack the other side for the remainder of the game. A typical run would see him push the ball 50 metres and then kick it 30!</p>	

<p>Ric Wall – Teddy – Leon Rice Sharing the wings with Stew meant that Ric always got the worst conditions – Rick in the mud to use his strength and Stew the dry to use his pace and skill. Rick was a hard at the ball close contact winger, who could also carry the ball across the lines with dash.</p>	
<p>Danny Hanlon – Starsky – Craig Bradley The original (of very many) Ringwood CC recruit, Danny came to the club as VC and Asst Coach, taking over the centre where 20 kicks was a quiet day. Not quick on the run but always in front of the ball, his finishing would be good in today’s footy, but in an era when a quick kick forward to a contest was all that was required. High quality passing, rarely missed set shots (hungry for goals) and sure hands made him a very dangerous player with the ball.</p>	<p>Stew Gardner – Herby – Gary Lyon One of the ’78 babies, Stew was tall and slippery and showing all the skills he grew into as the legend of OFCFC. Quite the best and most consistent player never to win a B&F, he became in later years a forward pocket marking machine who won the comp goal kicking award. With a better kicking action, he would have doubled his count!</p>
<p>Mick Grimes - - Adam Yse B&F 1978. Returning from Carlton U19s in 1977, Mick quickly established himself as the leading ½ forward in the comp. Slippery on the move and tough in a contest, he regularly did the job when the heat was on. Could also be a little agro and more than once evened up with an elbow. Mick kicked winning goal in round 16, 1978 (see memories).</p>	
<p>Bruce Lowery – Popeye – Al Martello Moved from on-ball to CHF on return/arrival of Milic, Harris and Robertson, he re-invented himself as a key position player. Did not have a major strength, but was a thinking footballer who brought all his skills to bear on all occasions. Strong in the contest and rarely pushed off the line, was able to stand up with the ball in the air, bring it to ground and then assist the flankers take it away. Not a champion player in one sense, but vital to the way the forward line operated. Never allowed a CHB to dominate a game, while creating constant opportunities for his flankers – the first time we saw a forward line team-within-a-team.</p>	<p>Shane Fitzgerald – Junior – John Barnes A ’78 baby, he was tall and skinny, a great mark even then, agile and a good if not long kick. In later years he was to become a legend winning B&Fs at OFCFC and Belgrave, where his ruck play and marking was unbeatable. Went to Belgrave when many at Olinda considered he was “kick bludging as a loose defender.” Today we think he was in front of his time as an attacking defensive ruckman. Have we had a better one?</p>

<p>Ian Jennens – Doc – A '78 baby playing his first senior season, Ian played mainly as a forward pocket relief rover. By 1979, he was club B&F in EFL 2nd division and then gone to medical school by 1980. A close to the ground running type, with good skills still that were still developing in 1978.</p>	<p>Peter Hayne – Mad Dog (woof) – Barry Hall Moved to full Fwd in '77 after R/up in '75 and B&F in '76 as a Ruck Rover. Big bodied and powerful, yet as quick as any over 10 metres, he had great balance and manoeuvrability for a big forward, while being OK in the air – almost impossible to get round on a lead. As likely to kick a goal with a mark in a pack as sidestepping through traffic. As he averaged 5 a game in '78 and had a longer set up time than Matthew Lloyd, many minutes were lost in game-time that year. Had Byron Pickett's ability to lay the perfect shirtfront – and did.</p>
<p>Geoff Roberts – Whale or Bambi-Galloping Gazometre A huge body for the time, who could take a contested mark close to goal, but only on a good day would he kick it from outside 25 mtrs and on a bad day would miss from the square. Despite this, his ability to contest in the air meant that forwards always had the ball in dispute and often the biggest backman was forced to stand him, leaving other forwards better off.</p>	
<p>Peter Milic – Sam – Adam Goodes Multi B&F and 4 time OFCFC premiership player, many believe him the best to play for the club. Enormous spring and great hands allowed him to pack mark while his balance and touch got him kicks at ground level. His laconic nature meant that coaches could never be sure if he was hearing the game plan, but in the end it didn't matter as he would do his own thing and improve the situation no matter what.</p>	<p>Derry Robertson – Cockroach/the silent assassin – Jack Dyer In his younger days, had won a comp B&F in YVMDFL, but by this time was playing a game where body collision was paramount. Opponents tended to leave the path open (and ball), as Derry charged through and collected whatever was there!! As an opponent he was frightening, as a teammate, he made you walk very tall.</p>

<p>Mick Henderson – Hendo- (a heavy) Kevin Bartlett New recruit in 1978, Mick was clear B&F, managing also to kick 60 goals while running all day as 1st rover. His GF last ¼ goal was the sealer, when he chopped off a defensive pass across goal. Low to the ground in the KB mould of throwing the ball out and playing for frees, he averaged 5 frees a game in '78 to completely frustrate opponents who held the tackle. A law change in 1979 was to frustrate him when the free kick count reversed.</p>	
<p>Gra. O'Donnell 20th – Bluey – 1975 B&F winner and at 40 y.o. was our oldest player. Although a 50 game AFL/VFL player, is better known today as the father of well known Australian icon netballers and Essendon superstar Gary who was a regular supporter during these years. Clearly the best ever crumbing receiver at OFCFC, had an uncanny knack of stealing the ball as it left the ruckman or pack. A hard runner who was always at the contest, lovely if not long kick, strong robust and always the team player.</p>	<p>Ian Boulter 19th – Scrubby – hmmmmm Short, nuggety, strong and very fast – but couldn't kick over a cow turd! Despite having a miraculous kicking style, as he was able to get the ball and carry it across a line before kicking, he was able to get the ball deep into the forward line on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Chriss Riddiford (emerg)– Wiz Although just outside the core 20, Chriss was a hard running feisty little bastard on (and off) the field. Although a good all-rounder, he was a little light for his skill level at this time. Many think his later years were his best, when as the 2nd 18 captain/coach, he slowed down with more “size” to become a mid-field ball magnet. Was then and remained one of OFCFC's best ever off field managers.</p>	<p>Rob Koelewyn (emerg)– Skins – Played great footy as a key position backman or flanker. Had pace, good hands and kicked well – in many ways had all the skills his brothers had individually. Remained a little unreliable through his footy years and due to irregular training, missed the GF. Played a significant role in Monbulk's '83 premiership.</p>

Trev Spencer (emerg)-
Tall and mobile with quite good hand and foot skills, his main weakness was he had no significant strength. Despite this, he was a reliable player who could hold down most positions at either end. For that reason, in an era when there was no interchange, he was unlucky not to make the 20.

Some Memories

Some designed to stir an argument

John Graham's first quarter –

John's game was built around carrying (or rather pushing) the ball across lines, eventually picking it up and kicking it another 30 metres. At that time in all games, most kicks went to contests, so John normally had time to hurry back to position.

In the hurly-burly of GF day, while John was playing true to form, the contest on our ½ forward line led to a quick defensive kick back down the wing where John took an uncontested mark as he hurried back to his opponent. So for all of the first quarter, we had John winning contested possession at ½ back and carrying the ball on his tap-and-run OR John out on his own on mid-wing taking uncontested marks.

During the first ¼, John would have won 5 contested duels, followed up by 5 uncontested marks. From being clear best on ground at ¼ time, Cocko barely touched the ball from then on, as they hardly used his side of the ground again.

This led to Leo being the prominent player he was, as all Coldstream attacks went through that side.

The Rd 16 Comeback v. Forest Hill at Olinda.

To come back from 14 points down at the 32 minute mark, was the defining moment of our season. From that win, we all knew we could win the year - we were believers. And remember, we lost the first 4 games of the season and several more in between. This match was vital to making the 4!

The run started with a free to the FF just out of the square, after the full back went sniping. The goal was kicked and everyone ran towards the centre. The back pocket decided a second snipe on the FF was acceptable, but was caught by the umpire who was running backwards to the centre at CHF. Time on, no restart and second shot from about 30 metres.

Back to the centre, five in the centre square, a Peter Milic long bomb –which carried the half forward line and BOUNCED (!!!), where Mick Grimes swooped and snapped over his shoulder. 3 goals in less than a minute to put us 4 points up. Forest Hill never recovered.

Minor Premiers – big deal.

Forest Hill were minor premiers that year with 1 loss only. They lost both finals.

Two years later, they were minor premiers for the 3rd year straight and went out in straight sets for the 3rd time.

The club were completely demoralised and it all started from an impossible win. Moral – Never give up.

The Sides Adaptability. (This was Derry's main skill as a coach- 1st class management of this group)

One of the keys to the '78 side was the blend of age and youth.

4 were around 20 and 10 were 28+

But also, many were playing in positions they had not made their name in, but were showing that if you want to be in the team, you have to find a spot that fits. With 8 Ruck Rovers, someone had to go somewhere.

Bruce Lowery at CHF and MadDog at FF, had been a ruck rovers all their lives;

Horn moved from Midfield to defence;

Joffa had mostly played CHF or FF before 1976 and became a super FB;

Robbo had been a centre square ruckman, rarely going forward;

Brut had rarely played in defence because of his goal skills.

Junior Fitz, was a ruckman and had never played Fwd Flank.

Sam, Derry, Robbo, Mick Grimes and Brut did all the mid field following. The rest could please themselves.

How Does it Compare?

Comparing era's, has always been a minefield. But remember:-

- Bluey played VFL and although 40 in 1978, was very fit, playing super footy still and yet sat on the bench.
- Stewie played in '88 premierships alongside Mick Scott who still plays today. Difference between them? Both great players. The comparison is that Mick in '88 was Stew in '78 and Mick today was Stew in '88.
- Although the game plan was “old-fashioned” by today’s standards, the skill levels were not. The main difference was in the ball delivery – fewer players could kick at today’s average standard. Despite this, Hanlon, Harris, Henderson, Grimes, O’Donnell and Hayne could all pass the ball at today’s level; Joffa, Thornton, Harris, Leo, Milic and Robertson all had length in their kicks; and as far as shooting for goal goes, this side was quite accurate.
- Obviously the same things can be said in reverse, but the majority of the '78 players, one off, would make today’s team. A few may struggle due to poor kicking technique – but as a contest was what it was about then, outside players today would struggle in that period when in and under was everything.
- Through traffic skills – Hanlon, Grimes, Jennens, O’Donnell and Stewie were as good as anything today – (even if I like the Wanger pivot in '88 GF a little better).
- And as for contested marking – none were or are better than Milic or Junior on the leap, Robbo or PT in a pack or Derry, Maddy and Joffa 1 on 1. They would all mark the same way today.

What does all this mean? Bugger all. Except that a premiership is something the '78 players have and wouldn't trade for anything else we don't already have in footy – (blimey, Milic has 4!!!).