

Ken

A few recollections of Syd McGain's involvement with SFC.

Ken Eddy rang to enquire about his interest in coaching a proposed new club in the EDFL under 17 competition..

Other names from that time include Bob Adams, Arthur Mason, Alf Pearce, Ken Bussell (not sure)

Syd had a long conversation with Dan Minogue, his former coach at Fitzroy about coaching. There was a public meeting called and the club was soon up and running. Mr Eddy died quite young, I'm not sure when, but my impression was that he was a very capable organiser and leader.

The coaching appointment was initially a joint arrangement with Syd and Bob Adams sharing the role. This didn't really work and it was soon made a single arrangement.

The Cross Keys ground was shared with North Essendon Methodists.

The selected team was written up on a blackboard which I had to carry up to the chemist shop in Napier St on a Friday – I think Mr Sevastas – Syd liked the traditional look of the board but it was enormous and on windy days it was a battle to stay on the ground. Eventually it was decided that a piece of paper in the window would do the job. No doubt digital communication has replaced this chapter.

At home games there was always a mob of kids there to support the under 17's. Syd put out the word that he'd run a coaching clinic at 8:am for any who were interested. The emphasis was on teaching skills, sportsmanship and enjoyment of the game. There were many willing helpers in whom he instilled his ideas and it took off like wild fire. They came from everywhere including one family from Glen Waverly. Once the age group matches started the umpires were instructed to make sure every kid got a kick and was kept involved. An approach to the Essendon FC resulted in the first match at half time. It was well received and others followed. Graham Donaldson ex Carlton player worked for the State Bank and came to discuss setting up the Little League – I think it's a reasonable conclusion to place the start of Auskick back at the Cross Keys

When an open age team was established Syd, then in his forties, but still very fit for foot running took on the role of captain coach. He had a few injuries and retired from playing and when the club appointed Bill Gray the caretaker at the Cross Keys as the coach for the next season Syd was happy to concentrate on the "midgets" as his mission.

Syd believed team work was the foundation for success and he had it in abundance from Alf Pearce, Bill Wilkinson and the many great supporters who formed part of the Strathmore Football Club .

Ian McGain

Ken,

Your letter of June 7th mentioned gaps in the historical records.

If there is a list of missing items I'd be glad to have a look and contribute what I can.