

## OUR ROOTS #3

by Gary Bartholomeusz



The West Australian Country Football League, led by president **Arnold 'Bud' Byfield**, held a forum in Narrogin on November 13, 1990, with the Central Great Southern, Eastern Districts, Southern Districts and Upper Great Southern football leagues as well as the Avon and Ongerup football associations to discuss the future of football within its regions. Through this meeting the Central Great Southern (which boasted five clubs at the time) and Southern Districts (six clubs) were encouraged to consider a merger. The SDFL met at Frost Park in Mount Barker a fortnight later and put the idea to its clubs before getting together with the CGSFL in Katanning on December 2. Both leagues thereafter met again, this time in Cranbrook on December 13, and formed a steering committee. WACFL executive member **Clem Bray** chaired the meeting and SDFL secretary **Pat Ballantyne** was acting secretary. President **Fred Wolfe**, **Jim Hull** and **Kevin Broom** were chosen as Central Great Southern's representatives on the steering committee alongside Southern Districts' president **Alan Barnett**, **Harry Reeves** and **Barry Panizza**.

The leagues next met in Cranbrook on Sunday February 10, 1991, to decide on recommendations of the steering committee - mainly (1) that an amalgamation takes place on a two-year trial basis; (2) it be governed by directors, rather than club delegates; (3) its meeting headquarters be the Cranbrook Hotel and (4) each club be levied \$1000 to begin the new league's finances. These proposals were all accepted and the Great Southern Football League was launched with inaugural directors being CGSFL's **Murray Gibbs**, **Jim Hull** and **Rick Wilson** (with Kevin Broom a proxy director) and SDFL's **Alan Barnett** and **Harry Reeves** (with **Fred Mountford** a proxy director) plus ex-Ongerup Football Association identity **Maurice McLennan**.

The initial directors' meeting was held on Monday February 18 when Alan Barnett was appointed the League's first president and Fred Mountford was promoted to his director vacancy. By its March 5 meeting, Murray Gibbs resigned as a GSFL director after committing to coach Kojonup and clubmate Kevin Broom also became unavailable - which opened the opportunity for **Gary Beckett** to also become a director. **Peter Sheridan** was Great Southern's first secretary / treasurer / registrar and **Darryl Carpenter** the inaugural umpires' advisor. The League colours was chosen as blue and black, a combination of the two former leagues - CGSFL (red & blue) and SDFL (red & black). **Rowland Sprigg**, a dual **Charlie Punch** medallist in the CGSFL, sponsored the GSFL's first set of jumpers.

Alan Barnett announced at the March 25 meeting that Denmark is unable to field a club in 1991. The Club never resurfaced under the same name! Season one of the GSFL catered for seven clubs with a league, reserves and colts team - being Katanning Australs, North Albany, North Mount Barker, Albany Railways, Albany Royals, South Mount Barker and Katanning Wanderers. Kojonup and Tambellup were unable to field a colts side but Saint Andrew's College of Katanning nominated a team in this grade. Kokerin / Dumbleyung, a CGSFL club in 1990, opted to join neighbouring Upper Great Southern Football League. The new League sprung into action after five months of organisation and its opening round of matches came on Sunday April 7. Both former leagues competed in the 1991 Great Southern Football Council carnival as separate identities (in the league and colts) for the final time but under the GSFL banner at the Annual Country Championships in Perth later in the season.

Maurice McLennan moved, and **Arthur Todd** seconded, "that the Great Southern Football League be officially endorsed" at the November 8 annual general meeting the same year. The vote was carried unanimously. Those at the meeting also decided that all money in the former CGSFL and SDFL accounts be evenly divided between its clubs and that life members of both leagues will be recognised as life members of the GSFL. Other significant changes since then include...

1993 North Mount Barker disband post-season	1994 Mount Barker joins as a new GSFL club
1995 GSFL is incorporated on May 24	1997 Tambellup in recess
1998 Denmark / Walpole joins as a new GSFL club	2000 Australs' disband post-season
2003 Wanderers join Upper Great Southern	2004 South Mount Barker disband post-season
2006 Tambellup disband post-season	2008 Kojonup joins Lower South West
2008 GSFL Sharks colts team formed	2009 GSFL adopts an Under 17s competition
2012 Albany Football Club fields all four grades	2016 GSFL Under 17s changes to Under 16s
2017 City of Albany opens new Centennial Stadium	2020 GSFL celebrates 30 years. #

\*When initials are used and you know the christian name, please notify me on 0428 514 605 or [gjbartholomeusz@westnet.com.au](mailto:gjbartholomeusz@westnet.com.au)

Albany Football Association 1897 - 1941

Recess 1914 - 1918 and 1942 - 1944 due to War



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Southern Districts Football League 1945 - 1990

Great Southern Football League 1991 - current