

WHERE ARE THEY NOW!

Clayton Lewis (Lewy)

Where were you born?

- Mount Lawley, Perth WA

Where did you play your junior footy?

- I played for the Mirrabooka Junior Football Club in the Nollamara area, which is in the northern suburbs of Perth.

What was your playing number as South Bunbury?

- 17

Regarding football in general - who were the most influential people for you?

- My dad, he was an inspiration to me. He played in the WAFL 1964 Claremont Premiership team.
- My mum who was a great support for me in everything I did.
- My junior football coaches at the Mirrabooka Junior Football Club.

How did you get to South Bunbury?

- I played footy with and against Gerry McNeill (South Bunbury Coach in 1984 & 1985) in the early 1980's and we became good friends. I was a bit of a tearaway then and at the end of 1983 Gerry said he was going to coach South Bunbury in 1984 and asked if I'd like to join him. I went down to Bunbury and shared a house with Kevin Williams and Vic Peos.

At South Bunbury who were the most influential people for you?

- Arthur Buswell – loved him. He was always straight with me and good to me.
- Others like Barney McNally, Bob Hannah, Greg (Goog) Mason and Trevor Rose. All those guys and everyone else on the committee at the time all made me feel welcome at the club.
- All the players like Watto (Wayne Watterson), Cocky (Gavin Thornton), Lethal (Leigh Wright), JR (Ray Ewan), Cowboy (Wayne Hardie) and the legend Pinga (Peter Upson).

What are some of your Football Highlights outside of your time with South?

- After juniors although Mirrabooka was in the West Perth zone I went to Claremont under the father son rule.
- 1976 - Won WAFL Colts Premiership with Claremont.
- 1977 - Won WAFL Reserves Premiership with Claremont.
- 1978 - I played my first League game for Claremont and in a few games changed on the ball with Jimmy Krakouer.
- In an Escort Cup game Claremont played at Waverly against North Melbourne and I lined up on a wing on AFL Legend Wayne Schimmelbusch.
- 1980 - Kicked two goals in WAFL 1st Semi Final Claremont V East Perth at Subiaco.
- 1981 – Moved to Albany to play with Railways and we won the premiership.
- 1981 – Won B Division Best Player with the Southern Districts team at the Westfarmers Country Championships and also A Division later in the eighties with the South West.
- 1982 to 1983 – Moved to East Perth in the WAFL. Changed on the ball with Peter Spencer in a few games.
- 1983 – Won WAFL Reserves Premiership with East Perth.
- 1983 – Won the Prendergast Medal as the Best Player in the WAFL Reserves competition.
- 1987 - Won a flag in the Goldfields Football League with Railways FC. Represented WA State Country against Victoria in Albury, Victoria.
- 1987 onwards - Played with Darwin FC (Buffaloes) a couple of seasons over the years.
- 1990 – Back to Perth and got a cadetship with ABC Radio in Perth. George Grljusich (Media & Football Legend) was there and took me under his wing. He was a great guy and we had a lot of fun.
- 1990 – Did a full circle and played for the Nollamara Amateurs under their coach Mick (Stinga) Rae who I played against in the 1984 SWFL Grand Final.
- RETIRED
- 1991 – I was in Alice Springs doing the ABC Regional afternoon radio show in the Northern Territory. Willie Roe (Ex East Perth & South Fremantle) was coaching and talked me out of retirement and we won the flag with Federals Football Club.
- 1991 – Won the Fairest & Best Association medal in the Central Australian Football League. I actually came third in the voting but the first two place getters had been suspended and were ineligible...thank you very much! Also played in the Central Australia combined team against Glenelg from the SAFL and in their team was Ross Gibbs (former West Perth WAFL) who I played with in the same Mirrabooka Junior team with all those years ago.
- RETIRED - Again

- 1998 – an old mate of mine (Des Hedland Snr.) saw me at a Brisbane versus West Coast Eagles AFL game in Brisbane. He was playing 3rd Grade Amateurs and asked me down to play. The coach during the year spat the dummy and they asked me to coach. I coached them for six games and we won all six games but they sacked me! They said I was running them too hard. They still stir me up over that!
- RETIRED – FOR GOOD!

What are some of your Football Highlights at South Bunbury?

- Playing in the 1984 (undefeated) & 1985 Premiership teams.
- Watching some of the younger players like Mick Grasso, Brad McDougall and others go onto bigger and better things.
- Playing in winning SWFL Westfarmers Country Championship teams.
- Captaining the SWFL Westfarmers team in 1989.
- Winning the A Division Best Player award at the Westfarmers Country Championships in 1989.
- The good times we all had together as a team – we had just as much fun off the field as we did on the field.

What is your greatest achievement at South Bunbury?

- Runner-up Fairest & Best at South Bunbury in 1984.
- Runner-up in the Hayward Medal in 1984.
- Dual Premierships 1984 & 1985

The infamous 1985 SWFL Grand Final – what are your memories?

- The big brawl - my philosophy was one in all in. I received an 11 week suspension which I copped sweet and I accepted the penalty.
- What happened to Wynnne (Keith Wynne) on the half forward flank near the Collie bench was the lowest act I've seen in football to this day. Great support from the Club and the Committee to Wynnne and the players that day was really appreciated.
- Colin Beange coming in to support the players during the brawl.
- Best of all though we won the game.

Any funny stories you can share?

- I was disappointed to miss out on playing in the winning 1988 Grand Final team due to a broken jaw I received in the Qualifying Final just before three quarter time. I copped an elbow going in hard at the ball. At the three quarter time huddle Peter Hodyl (playing coach) and a few of the players told me to play on in spite of my jaw hanging down and swinging around. So I played on and after the game went to hospital, where they kept me in for a week!
- Always enjoyed our end of year and overseas trips but what happens on those trips stays on those trips...
- Our bus trips away to play at Collie, Margaret River, Busselton and Donnybrook and coming home in the bus, enjoying winning a hard game with the boys. The comradery was great and then kicking on at the club when we got home.

Who is the best player you played with at South Bunbury & why?

- Gee there were so many – JR (Ray Ewan), Macca (Brad McDougal), Pinga (Peter Upson), Leigh Wright, Watto (Wayne Watterson) & Peter Old come to mind.
- But I'll have to go with Cocky (Gavin Thornton). Gun centre-half forward who was reliable, attacking and dynamic. As a mid-fielder/on-baller it was great to break out from the back line and see the Cockatoo on a lead. If he didn't mark the ball he'd swoop in, pick it up, run around on this big arc and more often than not kick the goal and take all the pressure off. It was great to have a team-mate who could break the opposition's heart like that.

Who was your toughest opponent in the SWFL?

- I reckon I had them all covered.

How many games did you play for South Bunbury?

- I played 3 seasons so maybe 50 or 60

Where are you now?

- Morawa which is 120 km south east of Dongara south of Geraldton. I've been living in the area over the last 15 years or so but with the recent illness and passing of my father located to Morawa. It is the heart of my dad's tribal country, we are the Widi people.

What do you do now?

- I'm semi-retired by choice and living a quiet country life and maybe I'll get back into bee keeping. I still do a bit of farm work and rousting in sheep yards. I also work with the local Unemployment Office bush planting using my horticulture experience.

- I'm currently working with a few others at the Karara Iron Ore Mine heritage surveying and scoping new areas for development and identifying culturally significant sites.
- I also do a bit of landscape painting and hope to have an exhibition at some stage.

Do you have an interest in footy at the moment?

- I was offered the coaching job at Morawa for 2020 but couldn't due my dad's illness at the time and then COVID-19 hit. Footy will always be a part of my life but right now I'm happy to do different things.
- I do watch my AFL team play on TV – West Coast Eagles.

Who will win the 2020 AFL Premiership?

- West Coast Eagles have a chance with Richmond the obvious threat.

Do you like how football is played today?

- I don't like the defensive tactics. Holding possession and playing 'keepy off' is a bit boring. Playing negatively has taken things like the big hang, torp out and long goal mostly out of the game. Gifted and exciting players today are 'coached out' of their natural attributes and are more robotic rather than being given the freedom to play on their instincts and use their natural skills. Richmond is probably the exception there.

Any other things you'd like to share with South Bunbury members?

- Enjoyed my years at South and always maintain an interest in the club from afar.
- Encourage everyone to show their true colours in these challenging times and support the club in any way they can and look forward to catching up with everyone when I'm down in Bunbury.

Note: Some of the dates (and maybe even some of the facts) in the above article may not be 100% accurate as time and age has affected the memories of both Lewy & Oldy