

WHERE ARE THEY NOW!

DARREN KOWAL

Where were you born?

Bunbury, St John of God

Where did you play your junior footy?

- Played for Glenpadden (SBFC) with training sessions at good ol' Hay Park. Special mention to Doug Pryor and Chris Trantham for their time as coaches during those years.
- Also played junior footy for Newdegate FC, so also gave me my first taste of senior football.

What was your playing number as South Bunbury?

- 33 initially before securing number 7 (My father Oly's number) much to Coyley's disappointment (thanks mate 😊).

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

Can't put it down to just one or two:

- The old man, hands down – all I am as a player and person I owe to him.
- Jason Ninnette – best mate growing up and phenom footballer who loved playing just as much as me. Still remember taking 'hangs' on small trees in his front yard. Ninny, powered a low torpedo during one of our sessions that went like a tracer bullet from across the road and pierced a perfect hole in one of Pat and Athol's low front windows – amazing!
- Any member of the Tigers 80/81 teams – idolized each and every one of them!
- Ric Evans and Grant Dorrington as state football coaches.
- Gerard Neesham – incredible football mind.
- All Melbourne FC coaches and players- can't help but learn (good and bad) in such a positive environment as the Dees.

How did you get to South Bunbury?

- Dad playing for the Tigers and then into junior football when I was about 8.

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

- Again, Oly is number one.
- Peter Old and Ian (Sherriff) Peter Old and Ian (Sheriff) Cahill helped to guide me when entering senior footy as a 16-17 year old.
- Pretty much anyone involved with SBFC during the late 70' early 80's from Doc Manea to Colin Buswell who I worked with outside of the club.

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

- Premierships with Newdegate FC and Claremont FC
- State age footy experiences – School Boys and Teal Cup
- Time at Melbourne FC
- Captaining Claremont FC
- Coaching at Claremont and Perth FC's

What are some of your Football Highlights at South Bunbury?

- Training with the senior as a 10year old and doing some running races across the square. Pancho Buswell still curses at me when it comes up in conversation.
- 'Watching' dad play on Sundays at Hand Oval – actually involved more running around with mates like the Cruikshank brothers kicking the footy and climbing in the tea trees on the western fence. Post game we'd play some games outside the clubhouse amongst the bench seats before having a burger in front of Drew Morphett and 'The Winner'.
- Winning premierships with my idols in '89.

What is your greatest achievement at South Bunbury?

- 89' Premiership.
- Beating Pancho comes a close second 😊

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

- We had left for Newdegate mid '83. Colin West shared some footage of the game not too long ago; my God, what a bloody disgrace! Some pretty low acts from a desperate mob. Way to stick it up 'em Tige's.

Any funny stories you can share?

- Prior to the '83 Colts Grand final which Dad was coaching until mid year before leaving for Newdegate, Graham Bassett, who took over from Dad, had a bonding night and BBQ at his place. After some dinner and shenanigans the boys settled in around the TV. I experienced two firsts that night:
 - First FA Cup and I have followed Tottenham ever since that win; and,
 - First x rated film (and my last mum) 'Emmanuel' I believe – the boys all thought the kids were asleep 😂😂😂.

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

- Peter Old – what a leader! Such will and fortitude.
- That said, there was a string of them from his era.

Who was your toughest opponent in the SWFL?

- Memory doesn't serve me too well these days but I remember getting a good lesson from Austin letto out at Harvey on game. Learnt a lot from it.

How many games did you play for South Bunbury?

- Don't actually know. Two seasons – '89-'90, with a couple of injuries thrown in.

Where are you now?

- Residing in Perth with my lovely wife Annie, and two children Olivia and Jaxon.

What do you do now?

- Have been teaching at John XXIII College in Mt Claremont for the past 16 years. Absolutely love it! Have been doing some assistant coaching roles in previous year both at Perth FC and Claremont FC.
- I have been coaching and coordinating my sons football team at the Mt Hawthorn JFC (The Cardies).
- Also still manage to have a run and giggle playing AFL 9's with the mighty Northstar Doughnuts.

Do you have an interest in footy at the moment?

- Still like to develop young footballers skills and knowledge of the game.
- Of course, for those that know me know that I love a hit of golf. Great times getting out to Capel GC and enjoying all the banter that goes on between the old Tigers, Panthers and Bulldogs gents that frequent the fairways there.

Who will win the 2021 AFL Premiership?

- Don't care really; just enjoy watching the footy. However, I'm still hoping that the MFC are able to find some form.

Do you like how football is played today?

- Love to see a good contest. The tactics involved have certainly changed over the past couple of decades. Personally, it's good to see the players health being looked after and the pace, skill and physicality remain key aspects of our great game; the most complete game on earth.

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

- To all the players and members; thank you! Every interaction whilst being involved with the SBFC has been a positive one. Such an amazing club and one that has helped inspire my own football career. Weather it was playing in a premiership winning side, listening to cockatoo calls from old Doc or dressing in the red and white footy gear each Sunday just in case there was a game to play in at the half time break. Cede Nullis

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