



Southern Football Netball League

Hall of Fame



JOHN BENNETT

SOUTHERN FOOTBALL NETBALL LEAGUE

- East Brighton Football Club Premiership Player & Coach 1990-99
 - Heatherton Football Club Coach 2002-10
- Heatherton Football Club Premiership Coach 2006 & 2009
 - Heatherton Football Club Vice President 2011-Present
- Heatherton Football Club Football Manager 2011-Present
- Southern Football Netball League Media Team 2009-14

There is no doubting that John Bennett is larger than life.

He cut an imposing figure on the field during his playing days at East Brighton and he is a wonderful character off it.

After a taste of top level footy with St Kilda and Footscray in the 1980s, he then joined Sandringham and won their goal kicking award in 1987 and 1988.

Bennett then returned to his junior club East Brighton in 1990 and dominated for the next decade as playing coach, in the process becoming one of the greatest players the SFNL has seen.

Standing at full-forward the powerfully-built Bennett was an unbeatable goalkicking machine. But he was also versatile enough to have a run in the guts and booted 60 goals in one season playing out of the centre.

"I was captain coach – I could play where I wanted to!" Bennett joked.

After two premierships at the Vampires, he took over the reigns as coach of battling second-division club Heatherton in 2002 where he has been a revelation.

In Bennett's eight-year stint in charge of the Tunnors he led them to two flags, before stepping aside to take up roles as Vice President and Football Manager – positions he still holds. And his influence in turning the downtrodden club around cannot be overstated.

Over his 17-year SFNL coaching career, Bennett finished with four premierships from seven grand finals, earning him selection as the coach (he was also picked as a player at full forward) of the SFNL's team of the past two decades.

The popular Bennett was also a member of the SFNL's radio team for five years until he gave it away at the end of last year. This was something he really enjoyed, and has not ruled out a return to the airwaves down the track.

"I loved the radio show it was great fun," Bennett said.

"I tried to make it more than just people listening to scores and that... just trying to have a bit of fun with all the clubs without making it too serious.

"That's what footy's all about – having a good time."

In such high esteem is Bennett held by the SFNL they have named the Division Two Senior Grade Best and Fairest medal in his honour and his induction into the Hall of Fame is another just reward for one of footy's great characters.

By Will Hunter