



# *Southern Football Netball League*

## *Hall of Fame*



## MARK SEYMOUR

### SOUTHERN FOOTBALL NETBALL LEAGUE

- McKinnon Football Club Player 1971
- Bentleigh Football Club Player 1980
- Bentleigh Football Club Committee Member 1981
  - Bentleigh Football Club Secretary 1982-83
- Southern Football League Board Member 2009
- Southern Football Netball League Chairman 2010-15
  - Cheltenham Football Club Life Member
- Led several key strategic League initiatives including; rename and rebrand of Southern Football Netball League, introduction of netball, diversify League revenue, increased League resources and the acquisition of seven new senior clubs

The Southern Football Netball League has undergone significant change in the last decade that has seen it emerge from difficult times to enjoy phenomenal growth.

And one of the driving forces behind the League's remarkable transformation has been former Chairman Mark Seymour, a man with a great passion for community sport and an immense love for the SFNL.

A junior footballer with McKinnon in the Federal league, Seymour decided that sports administration was his calling following a less than auspicious senior football career that lasted all of one game with Bentleigh, then in the Eastern Suburbs Churches competition, in 1980.

His decision to hanging up the boots turned out to be a wise one. The following year Seymour sat on Bentleigh's committee before he was later roped into becoming club Secretary in 1982 by fellow SFNL Hall of Fame inductee Garry Matlock at the club's AGM.

Although initially reluctant to take on the role, Seymour nevertheless held the position for two seasons, even after he was transferred to Morwell for work at the end of 1982.

He later assisted in the development of a strategic plan for the Bentleigh Football Netball Club, which has been critical to the club's recent success.

Seymour has also had a big impact on football in Gippsland. Notably, he helped drive Traralgon's ascension to the VFL competition as CEO between 1995-97.

He also had a keen interest in broadcasting, hosting a weekly Sunday sports program, 'Sportzfan Radio', for six years on 88.3 Southern FM. He also sat on the station's Board for nearly five years, serving one term as President.

And it was at Southern FM where Seymour was persuaded to join the SFNL Board by Stephen Barnes.

After initially resisting Barnes' repeated overtures due to time constraints, Seymour finally relented – a decision he has never regretted.

"I have done many things and had many accomplishments in my life both in employment and in sport, but my time at the SFNL is by far the single most pleasing and satisfying thing I have done," Seymour said.

Seymour joined the League Board in December 2008, and succeeded David Andrew as Chairman the following year.

The League was going through a difficult period when Seymour came on board, but his vision and expertise has been instrumental in building the SFNL brand over the years.

Undoubtedly Seymour's biggest legacy has been overseeing the introduction of a netball competition in 2012, and the inclusion of 'Netball' into the old Southern Football League moniker to become the SFNL.

In addition, Seymour has helped facilitate the growth of the football competition through the SFNL's acquisition of clubs from other leagues.

Specifically, Seymour was the driving force behind his former club Bentleigh's return to the Southern league after a stint in the VAFA, as well as the transfer of Keysborough from the Casey Kardinia competition.

Further, four new start-up clubs have also entered the SFNL under Seymour's Chairmanship – Endeavour Hills, Hallam, Carrum Patterson Lakes and Lyndhurst.

Seymour stood down as Chairman at the end of 2015 and vacated his position on the Board mid-way through the following season to concentrate on his business. However, the legacy he has left behind is enormous and the League would not be where it is today without his significant contribution.

***By Will Hunter***