



Southern Football Netball League

Hall of Fame



NEIL LOCKHART

SOUTHERN FOOTBALL NETBALL LEAGUE

- Chelsea Heights Football Club President for 18 years 1997-2014
- Chelsea Heights Football Club Committee Member for 29 years
 - Chelsea Heights Football Club Life Member
 - Chelsea Heights Football Club Hall of Fame Member
- Southern Football Netball League Interleague Chairman of Selectors

Nobody encapsulates the spirit of the Chelsea Heights Football Club more than Neil Lockhart.

For more than three decades, Lockhart bled navy and red and established the Heighters' standing as one of the premier clubs in the SFNL over the last 15 years.

A full forward/centre half forward, Lockhart joined the club as a player in 1981 back when they were part of the South West Gippsland Football League and he topped the competition's goalkicking in 1982.

But when a spate of shoulder injuries curtailed his career, Lockhart decided to make his mark off the field. He joined the football club's committee in 1985 (while he was still playing) and assumed the Presidency in 1997. With the exception of a year off from the club in 1992, he remained in both roles until the end of last season.

During his time he has seen the club go from strength to strength. Among the highlights were senior SFNL premierships in 1995 (Lockhart was runner that day) and 2000, which saw the club ascend from Division Three to the top grade.

Lockhart was also instrumental in initiating and facilitating the redevelopment of the amenities at Beazely Reserve. Such is his standing at the club they named these new facilities in Lockhart's honour.

"We (built) brand new rooms about seven years ago. They were fantastic, on the wing," Lockhart said proudly.

"A terrific facility, we went from the old rooms to, you know, electronic scoreboard, new cricket nets... so it's a pretty good complex."

Along the way Lockhart has earned almost every accolade the club could afford him, including life membership and induction into the club's Hall of Fame.

Lockhart's longevity at the club is remarkable. But as the old adage goes, behind every great man is a great woman, and he credits his wife with helping him stay at the club for so many years.

"The wife was a big help. She was in the canteen for about 20 years. So she was on board so that was sort of our life," he said.

Although Lockhart's affiliation with the club has ended in an official capacity, his love for the club hasn't diminished one bit. He can still be found down at Beazley Reserve on Saturdays pitching in where possible.

"(It's hard to walk away from the club) because I've been involved for so long," Lockhart admitted.

"I go down to games and help them where I can."

By Will Hunter