



Southern Football Netball League

Hall of Fame



WALLY BECKWITH

FEDERAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

- President of the Federal Football League 1954-73
- Committee member of the Black Rock Football Club
 - VFL Boundary umpire

Wally Beckwith loved his sport, a key drive for this Australian sportsman. Consistently involved with football and athletics, Wally was a keen runner, umpire and joined every committee that would have him.

A well respected, people person, Wally made the list for one VFL game with Fitzroy in 1918. After a career ending ankle injury, the debutant never lost his team's spirit. Decades later he could still be found pre-game in the Fitzroy rooms, often with his young son, John.

There isn't an individual with more dedication to the league and the sporting community than Wally Beckwith.

His passion for athletic running spanned three decades. The 17-year-old Beckwith ran for 30 years in the Victorian Athletic League, sprinting up until 1930. He won a host of handicapped races and placed third at the Stawell Gift in 1915, his best result in Australia's most prestigious footrace.

A life member of the Stawell Athletic Club, Beckwith was no stranger to athletic events in the area. He and the gents would often take several days, sometimes three, to drive to the state's west. Wally said that it was because of the 'bad roads' that made the drive so long, and definitely wasn't the various nightspots that delayed them.

Beckwith always wanted to be involved. The nature of prowess didn't matter – Wally was going to succeed at everything possible. When football wasn't an option he turned to umpiring. His quick feet and running ability made him perfect for the boundary, officiating in the VFL in the winter while running professionally in summer up until 1930.

Turning his attention to his son, Wally followed John to Black Rock in 1946. Part of the Federal Football League, Wally became so involved with John's blossoming football career that he joined the club's committee, sparking his true legacy.

From the committee Beckwith then became the President of the Federal League, which many said he pioneered. He was a true people person, passionate about others and incredibly skilled at record keeping – these were the cornerstones of his success.

His induction to the Hall of Fame is a true testament to his character and work ethic towards the league he loved so dearly.

By James Raknes