

FEDERAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION 1909 - 1981

The Federal Football Association was formed early in 1909 following a meeting in the offices of Small & Edwards, Mentone attended by Messrs. H. Peterson, F. McCart and E. Looker. The meeting was instigated to discuss the ways and means of forming a Football Association representative of the bayside districts. The first President, Secretary and Treasurer elected were Cr. F. T. LePage, Mr. H. Peterson and Mr. E. Looker respectively.

From the early 1890's clubs around the South eastern bayside area had played in the Commonwealth Association as well as the Brighton – Moorabbin Junior Football Association along with an assortment of others. The decision was taken at that meeting to affiliate the newly constituted F.F.A. with the Victorian Junior Football Association and play under its rules, as far as possible.

The following clubs that competed in that first year, all senior First Grade were; Mordialloc, Moorabbin, Glenhuntly, Cheltenham, Ellindale (Bentleigh), Frankston, Mentone and Elsternwick. All of which with exception of Elsternwick were on the Caulfield-Frankston rail line.

By 1911 the First Grade had been reduced to four clubs Carrum, Cheltenham, Moorabbin and Victoria Brewery. As a result an under eighteen grade (B grade or Junior Section) was formed with six clubs, Mordialloc, Cheltenham, Mentone, Windsor, Moorabbin and Westbury (East St.Kilda). A handful of clubs in the first two seasons had been importing 'professionals' or 'has beens' from senior Leagues 'up town' and paying them for their services. It was also discovered that the Association had likewise offered inducements to some of these players not only to increase the Associations stature but also improve the standard of football. These actions upset many clubs and as a result refused to field senior teams until assurances were received that the practice would cease. The clubs felt that this sort of thing was unfair on local players and would eventually damage their clubs. The F.F.A. offered their assurances that the practice would cease and as a gesture sacked their Honorary Treasurer!

The First Grade was increased to six clubs in 1912 with the admission of Camdentown (South Caulfield) and the return of Ellindale. The junior section age limit was raised to nineteen and under.

The Victoria Brewery Football Club, having won the Premiership in 1910 and 1912 were offered and accepted the victors prize-money. They were also offered the F.T.LePage perpetual premiership trophy which they could retain permanently on the proviso that they never again played in the competition. They agreed and never returned to the F.F.A. They were renowned for fighting, kicking, elbowing and anything else, legal or not.

Little change occurred during the 1913 and 1915 seasons with clubs more in favour of underage football and as a consequence a number of clubs came and went. World War One, 1914-1918 saw the competition split into two divisions 'A' and 'B' with promotion and relegation of the bottom two with the top two. There is very little information available through the newspaper archives during this period and I suspect that competition was held on an informal basis. Football at all levels was all but forced into recess during wartime and the reporting of young healthy men enjoying their pastime pursuits was frowned upon as it was the opinion of many that if they were healthy enough to play games then they should enlist in the armed forces. It is therefore difficult to ascertain whether or not the Grades were open age. A grade could have been open age and B under 21 or perhaps, A grade under 21 and B grade under 18. I very much doubt that both grades could have been open age. This format continued through 1919.

The F.F.A. 'reformed' in 1920 returning to the format of one senior grade. The competing clubs were Heatherton, Brighton District (Formerly Middle Brighton now Brighton V.F.A. reserves), Bentleigh (Ellindale), Glenhuntly, Moorabbin Park, Black Rock, Chelsea, Sandringham, Cheltenham, Hampton, Mentone and Mordialloc.

The Association and its clubs had for many years been strongly supported by people from within the local Racing industry with tracks at Mentone, Epsom (Mordialloc) and Aspendale Park. There were many players, administrators and supporters connected in some way to the Racing Clubs. It's fair to say that betting on local footy games was not unusual. Where you find gambling you sometimes find people who tend to bend, if not break the rules.

The regulations in regard to player registration, clearances etc., were very clumsy and there were weekly protests by club against club accusing each other of playing unregistered, suspended, overage, uncleared players, the use of false names and so on. There was even one club accused of playing a recently escaped felon! The protests were not always laid by the losing side. On occasions the winners would protest against losers for playing an unqualified player, usually from another competition snuck in to bolster the chances of the losers to not only win on the scoreboard but to increase the thickness of their pocketbooks.

In 1920 a pre-season practice match was arranged between Chelsea and Mordialloc to be played at Chelsea. Supporters from both clubs and probably the players organised a fifty pound each wager, winner take all. A huge sum of money in those days. Mordialloc had heard that Chelsea were going to bolster their side with the inclusion of three players from the tough and highly regarded Wednesday Industrial League. In retaliation Mordialloc engaged three players with V.F.L. experience and eventually winning what was described as a 'physical encounter'. A police escort was summoned to ensure a safe journey to the local rail station and then home for the supporters and players from Mordialloc.

The following season, 1921 saw the departure of Benteigh, Chelsea (expelled), Sandringham and Hampton (both to the Amateurs), to be replaced by Edithvale and Murrumbeena. New rules were brought in to curb kicking in the ruck and kicking in danger! The season was marred by continual bickering amongst the clubs and from within the association. The new kicking rules were not always enforced and a number of local umpires freely condoned elbowing and punching with little or no restraint. Betting and brawling amongst players and spectators was commonplace.

Chelsea were expelled early in 1921 following a number of incidents that occurred in a match against Moorabbin Park. During the game a number of Moorabbin players had been laid out as a result of punches and kicks behind the play. The local umpire had warned the Chelsea secretary that if the rough play did not stop he would abandon the match. In the second half a heated discussion ensued between the umpire and a number of Chelsea players who thought he was very biased against them. The umpire was then punched in the mouth whereupon he abandoned the match

reporting the whole club. He was struck again trying to leave the oval and then a third time off the ground. A huge melee and all in brawl occurred requiring the police to restore order, which they did but were then required to provide an armed escort for the umpire and the players back to Moorabbin. Not to be deterred the Chelsea 'crowd' followed in hot pursuit and it took many hours for them to be dispersed despite a number of arrests.

The F.F.A. acted immediately by expelling the Chelsea (senior grade) club and handing down life-time bans to three of its players. As a consequence Chelsea took out a Supreme Court injunction against the Association which allowed them to play the following week against Heatherton. The game went off without incident however as the other clubs had made it clear to Chelsea that they would no longer play at their ground without police protection they had no choice but to withdraw the injunction and disband for the remainder of the season. Further none of its players were permitted to play with any club in the F.F.A.

Black Rock withdrew from the Senior Grade for the 1922 season electing to play in the re-formed under 21 section. The senior teams were; Chelsea (re-admitted under strict conditions), Brighton District, Cheltenham, Mordialloc, Edithvale, Carrum, Glenhuntly, Mentone and Moorabbin Park (withdrew to the underage section). Rough play again marred many matches which was to continue into the following season which saw Black Rock field a senior side, Glenhuntly withdraw and Benteigh return.

The competition was expanded for 1924 with the admission of Aspendale, a new club and the return to senior ranks by Moorabbin. New rules were introduced to ensure that all players wore their correct club uniform. After a three week settling in period clubs were fined one shilling per player for those considered to be not in their Clubs colours.

In round six a Cheltenham player was charged by police with assaulting an umpire, found guilty and sentenced to three months jail. All the clubs and the Association banded together to raise funds for his appeal, which was successful having his penalty reduced to a ten pound fine. He was not reported by the offended umpire and the Association took no action against him. They and many others thought that the police action was an extraordinary reaction to a trivial offence as the player only pushed the umpire lightly in the chest in a friendly

sort of manner and had never struck him. It came to light later that one of the Police Officers concerned had a private grudge against the player charged. The press reports caused a sensation at the time and did nothing to enhance the Associations standing in the community. Typically the later successful Appeal received no press.

The Grand Final that year was played at Cheltenham between Mordialloc and Mentone and the match was considered to be of so much local significance that the Mordialloc shopkeepers agreed to close their shops between 2.30 and 5.30 pm. A crowd of 2,500 spectators saw Mordialloc win an entertaining game by 21 points.

Mentone caused a stir in 1925 by announcing their intention to charge admittance to their ground for its home matches. Being one of the very few grounds to be totally enclosed it was initially thought unfair, however most clubs very quickly arranged to have their grounds enclosed. Clubs would otherwise raise their entrance monies by using collection boxes and so on. It was pleasing to most people that Mentone, although having a good year were knocked out in the semi-finals.

A tightening of the F.F.A. rules in 1926 saw for the first time that when players were reported they were to be told of such immediately following the alleged infraction. Previous to this new rule only the club Secretary was told of any reports at the umpire's earliest convenience. Players were also required to sign a team sheet to be handed to the opposition at half time.

Prior to the Page System being introduced in 1932, the team which finished on top of the ladder were declared the 'Minor Premiers'. Finals were played, however if the top team was defeated they had the right to challenge whatever club that had won its way through. Such was the case in 1926 when Mordialloc had finished on top. The second semi-final saw Mordialloc (first) defeated by Mentone (third). The first semi-final had been played the week prior with Moorabbin (fourth) defeating Cheltenham (second). Moorabbin then defeated Mentone in the Final (Preliminary). Mordialloc, as was their right under the rules exercised their 'right of challenge'. Moorabbin won the deciding match by thirteen points. This type of result was very rare and had occurred only once before. During the game which was played at Cheltenham, several fights erupted in the final quarter with one Moorabbin player being carried from the field

unconscious causing an all in brawl between players and spectators from both clubs. The attending local Police took some time to sort out the huge melee. Although there were no reports or Police action the F.F.A. took the unusual step of holding an 'open' tribunal hearing which was open to spectators and club officials from all sides. A Thomas Cockram from the Mordialloc club was charged by Moorabbin club officials with punching one of their players unconscious. They charged that player Cockram firstly punched their player to the ground. Not being satisfied with this player Cockram then punched the man again when he rose to his feet, knocking him out cold. Cockram had, over the years become a regular at the tribunal and as a consequence of his poor record and his latest infraction received a life time ban from the Association. In evidence the field umpire stated that he had not seen the incident in question and then very promptly left the hearing. The 'open' tribunal appears to be the first real effort by the F.F.A. to stamp out what at the time was called 'rough play'.

The following three seasons 1927, 1928 and 1929 saw a great deal of turmoil amongst the clubs as well as from within the administration of the Association itself which had lacked continuity and suffered from a lack of strong leadership. In 1927 players were allowed to receive 'out of pocket expenses' for the first time officially. A system that was thoroughly abused. Many of the decisions handed down by the Association seemed to have a strong bias dependent upon which clubs the administrators were aligned with.

A Best and Fairest trophy was instituted in 1927, the 'Federal Trophy' and was awarded by tallying the votes awarded by the field umpire at the conclusion of each game. Only one 'best' player was nominated for each game.

In an attempt to curb the Associations increasingly poor reputation an independent tribunal was introduced in 1928. A new rule was also introduced in an attempt to curtail 'professionalism'. The only paid player allowed for each club had to be the coach and no player could receive more than five shillings to cover 'expenses'. Further steps were taken the following season with the introduction of a rule restricting the clubs from registering no more than three senior players, defined as having played four or more games in the current or previous season with any V.F.L., V.F.A. or recognised league outside the Metropolitan area.

By 1929 the problems the Association were experiencing almost caused its collapse. The senior grade was reduced to six clubs and despite concerted overtures to the clubs that had withdrawn little interest was shown by them to re-join. Wells Road had been expelled after round thirteen and Brightonvale had given a number of walkovers. Mentone, Mordialloc and Cheltenham had also been approached by the V.F.A. to field a District team in its ranks for the 1930 season but declined.

Competing clubs for seasons 1927, 1928 and 1929 were:

1927 Senior Grade: Chelsea City, Mentone, Wells Road, Aspendale, Middle Brighton, Moorabbin, Edithvale, Bentleigh, Cheltenham, Carrum, Mordialloc, Heatherton.

Junior under 21:

Mentone, Ormond, Brightonvale, Cheltenham, Moorabbin, Chelsea Juniors, Brighton T.S.O.Bs., Parkdale.

1928 Senior:

Moorabbin, Heatherton, Mordialloc, Edithvale, Mentone, Bentleigh, Aspendale, Wells Road, Cheltenham, Chelsea City.

Junior under 21:

Moorabbin, Sandringham, Cheltenham, Chelsea Juniors, Brightonvale, Ormond, Mentone, Parkdale, Mordialloc, Brighton T.S.O.Bs.

1929 Senior:

Mentone, Mordialloc, Brightonvale, Wells Road, Chelsea City, Edithvale.

Junior under 21:

Ormond, Mentone, Brighton T.S.O.Bs., Cheltenham, Mordialloc, Moorabbin, North Brighton, Chelsea Juniors.

Note. The two Moorabbin teams were separate with Moorabbin (Park) a senior club and Moorabbin playing in the Junior Grade. A third club Moorabbin City was formed later from the Moorabbin junior side and competed in the C.O.D.F.L. One club emerged following WW2 eventually entering the V.F.A. as Moorabbin. Wells Road was a breakaway club from Chelsea who added 'City' to its name following the split. Chelsea Juniors although part of Chelsea City were administered separately.

Middle Brighton was the former Brighton District club. Brightonvale was the junior side for its Amateur Association Senior team and Brighton T.S.O.Bs. eventually fielded a senior team also with the Amateurs in 1930 winning the premiership. Note. The Brightonvale 1929 senior team was a second string side to its main Amateur team made

up from the old Middle Brighton club plus an excess of over 21 players from the previous year. North Brighton was a junior club, the first to play at Hurlingham Park. Formed in 1920 it originally played in the local junior league then went to the Prahran Y.M.C.A. under 21 competition where it was unbeaten in 1922, 23 and 24. A number of the players then went on to the senior Brighton clubs as listed reforming in 1929. At that time Hurlingham Park was geographically in North Brighton with East Brighton actually where East Bentleigh is today. Hurlingham Park was home to Brightonvale F.C., Brighton T.S.O.Bs., North Brighton Junior F.C. and the Brighton Soccer Club.

The F.F.A. must have been jolted into action as 1930 saw the return to senior ranks of Cheltenham, Moorabbin and Aspendale and also the entry of three new clubs Dandenong, Glen Waverley and Parkdale. Sandringham, Highett and Murrumbeena also entered teams in the junior section.

Black Rock were expelled from the Amateur Association and readmitted to the F.F.A. in 1931. Aspendale and Edithvale merged to form Regents Park. The withdrawal of Dandenong after one year and the suspension of Chelsea again early season was balanced by the entry of East Burwood.

Changes in 1932 saw the competition name altered from 'Federal Football Association' to 'Victorian Football League Federal District', or 'F.D.L.' In 1965 the 'District' was dropped and 'Federal Football League' was adopted. The 'Page Finals System' was adopted and four playing quarters of 25 minutes introduced. Caulfield and Carnegie were re-admitted whilst Glen Waverley departed. The following year Chelsea were re-admitted having repaired its rift with those that joined Wells Road for a short period at the expense of Parkdale who could not field a team.

By 1933 the 'Great Depression' had taken its toll on many senior and junior clubs as people were often forced to journey far and wide in search of employment. Weekend employment was taken when it became available.

On a number of occasions during the 1930s informal discussions were held with V.F.A. officials as to the possibility of the Federal Association entering a club or a new team into its competition. Although flattered by the thought no real interest was shown by the Federal executive or by any of the clubs.

The 1934 season brought a whole new system to the League. The junior grade was eliminated and two open age sections 'A' and 'B' introduced. In 1935 the 'A' section became the 'open' section and 'B' the 'District' section to promote players from the local areas. Then from 1936 to 1940 yearly promotion and relegation between the grades. This system remained in place until the end of 1940 with many clubs coming and going such as Vermont, Dandenong, Darling, East Burwood and Mt.Waverley.

The standard of football in the Federal was considered to be just below the V.F.A. and was an attractive option to those clubs wishing to play in higher competition. Some clubs played a reserve team in B Grade whilst others entered their senior team in that grade only as they felt they would not be competitive in A Grade. Regents Park became Edithvale-Aspendale and Camden reappeared.

From 1942 to 1944 no senior football was played due to WW2. The junior under 21 or B grade was re-introduced to keep the Association afloat.

Senior football re-commenced in 1945 with the following clubs:

Senior:

Camden, Mordialloc, Moorabbin, Chelsea, Cheltenham, Aspendale, Black Rock, Highett. (Aspendale reverted back to Edithvale-Aspendale in 1947)

Junior under 18:

Black Rock, Highett, Camden, Mordialloc, Chelsea, Moorabbin, Cheltenham, Aspendale.

The 'FDL' continued to grow and stabilise over the next five years until in 1951 Moorabbin departed for the V.F.A. which was a body blow to the League. Dandenong entered covering the loss somewhat however it also eventually left for the V.F.A. in 1958.

A questionable restructure in 1953 saw the junior grade abandoned and seniors and reserves only introduced. This was to change again the following year with the introduction of an Under 16 or C Grade which ran through to 1964 then becoming D Grade.

Senior and Reserve Grade teams for 1954 were:

Chelsea, Cheltenham, Dandenong, McKinnon, Black Rock, Highett, Mentone, Clayton, Mordialloc, Camden, Edithvale-Aspendale and Caulfield.

The departure of both Mordialloc and Dandenong to the V.F.A. at the end of the 1957 season was another blow to the standard of the League and was met with a great deal of animosity. There were a few officials who now regretted not entering a team in the V.F.A. despite being courted on many occasions over the years to do so. By entering their own team they may have been able to pick the cream of the players from its participant clubs and not necessarily lose any clubs to the V.F.A. thereby maintaining the F.D.Ls. high standard. A bit of finger pointing and blame games I suspect.

An Under 18 Grade was introduced in 1961 becoming C Grade with the under 16, D Grade. By 1964 the F.D.L. had recovered from the loss of three of its strongest clubs and had become the third strongest football league behind the V.F.L. and the V.F.A. Whilst the Victorian Amateur Association was usually considered of a higher standard it, along with others for many years had considered the F.D.L. a 'rogue' bayside competition.

The introduction in 1961 by the V.F.A. of a second division into its competition at that stage did not appear to be having much effect on the overall standard or the popularity of the F.D.L.

Teams for 1964 fielding Seniors, Reserves, Under 18 and Under 16 were;

East Malvern, Bentleigh, Oakleigh Districts, Black Rock, Springvale, Glenhuntly, Highett, Parkdale, Mentone, Cheltenham, McKinnon, Clayton, Noble Park, Caulfield.

The F.D.L. was drawing huge crowds to its fixtures, many of which were now being played on Sundays. The games tended to be rougher and more colourful and a large number of the players were locals or had been recruited from the two higher levels and were well known. Being unaffiliated with the V.F.U. clubs were free to recruit players without the concern of a clearance as such. Player mobility within the V.F.L. was severely limited, and had been since the introduction of zoning in 1915 and the establishment of the V.F.U. in the 1930's. Once a player signed with a V.F.L. club only with the permission of the club Committee could a player be allowed to play elsewhere. Along with the V.F.A. many suburban Leagues refused to join or opted out of the V.F.U. A player could leave a V.F.L. club without a clearance or permit to join an unaffiliated competition but the threat of up to five years ban should they wish to join an affiliated competition was threatened though rarely used. Monies being offered to Coaches (usually playing)

and to other 'senior' recruits was very good. At least the equal of many V.F.A. and/or V.F.L. clubs. So if a player was approaching the twilight of his career the threat of being banned was of no consequence.

The F.D.L. and many of its clubs had for many years maintained a close relationship with the local business communities which had provided a constant cash flow in particular through the 1950s and 1960s. Couple this with the interest shown by members of the 'racing fraternity' (read as SP bookies) large sums of money were available to many clubs. Fast Forward 10 years and many changes had occurred. V.F.A. matches were now almost entirely played on Sundays and from 1967 the First Division match of the day was broadcast live on Chanel 0/10. The broadcast also included some Second Division finals. This had a dramatic effect on F.D.L. clubs' gate takings, sponsorships and their overall income nosedived. At one stage in the early 1970s Chanel 7 entertained the possibility of broadcasting Federal matches in direct opposition to Chanel 0/10. The costs involved and monies offered to the Federal and its clubs was not sufficient for the project to get off the ground.

With the V.F.A. keen to expand East Malvern was approached in 1970 to transfer. The close proximity of V.F.A. clubs Prahran, Caulfield and Oakleigh and without any real Council support the offer was declined by the club.

The reputation as a tough and rough competition had not improved either, if anything was becoming worse with many nasty and sometimes very violent incidences occurring both on and off the ground. The 1968 Senior Preliminary final saw fifteen players reported.

The following clubs folded at years end (for financial and other reasons):

Black Rock 1972, East Malvern 1973, Glenhuntly 1976, (East)Caulfield 1975, McKinnon 1977, Bentleigh 1978. From 1979 to 1981 the clubs that remained were: Oakleigh Districts, Highett, Parkdale, Mentone, Cheltenham, Clayton, Noble Park, Moorabbin and Springvale.

The South-East Suburban League had been 'negotiating' with the F.D.L. for a number of years in regards to a possible merger or the 'putting on the table' an invitation to its member clubs to transfer. During the 1980 season the Mentone club was suspended following an incident in a game against Parkdale. The club was eventually re-

instated however the Leagues administrators all resigned in protest throwing the entire competition into turmoil. Three of the remaining clubs had already signalled their intention to leave so it became inevitable that the competition would fold or be forced into recess, which it did, that is went into recess.

Springvale were accepted into the V.F.A. for the 1982 season just pipping Noble Park. Parkdale and Mentone (the two other clubs) went into the Second Division S.E.S.F.L., whilst Cheltenham, Clayton, Noble Park, Oakleigh Districts, Highett and Moorabbin went into the First Division.

As the Federal Football League was actually in recess a number of clubs considered that it should disband thereby being able to release the monies held by it for distribution to the former F.F.L. clubs. The argument went on for many years and I do not know exactly (with proof) what the outcome was.

Senior Grade participating clubs 1909 – 1981:
Ellindale, one of the original clubs played on a ground owned by Mr. W. Ellin opposite the McKinnon Hotel from 1909 to 1914, before going into recess due to WW1 and appears to be the fore-runner of the Bentleigh Football Club. The Bentleigh Reserve was opened for the 1915 cricket season and a new pavilion named after Mr. William Burgess was added the following year. A Bentleigh Club played in the Federal 1920, 1923, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28. The Burgess pavilion burnt down in June 1928 and a new Grandstand with much better facilities was opened in March 1930. I suspect that due to a lack of facilities the club transferred to the Amateurs where they stayed until 1937, then moving to the C.O.D.F.L. In 1957 the club transferred back to the Federal where they remained until folding/merging in 1979. The C.O.D.F.L. fixture book for the 1953 season states that in its early days the Bentleigh club also played on a padock to the west of the Bentleigh Railway Station.

Mordialloc, also an original club played from 1909 to 1957 before entry into the V.F.A. where they remained until 1988. Due to financial problems they were forced to transfer to the S.E.S.F.L. a few weeks into the 1988 season. The Ben Kavanagh Reserve has been their home base for many years.

Press reports up to the early 1920s often, but not always had match reports using the name Moorabbin 'Park' which was the original name of

that club with the nickname 'The Gardeners', playing or using as its home ground the Dane Road Reserve. From 1932 to 1934 another separate junior Moorabbin club played at the Sir William Fry Reserve. A new club, Moorabbin City was formed in 1935 which played in the C.O.D.F.L. at the Sir William Fry reserve and the Jasper Road McKinnon park until 1940. This new club wanted to distance itself from Moorabbin as its reputation in many regards was very poor.

When senior football resumed in 1945 it appears that these two clubs joined forces by deleting 'Park' and 'City' to become the Moorabbin Football Club, the 'Magpies' which entered the V.F.A. in 1951. The new Linton Street Oval was not ready for the clubs first season and home games were played at Cheltenham. The St. Kilda F.C. moved to the Linton Street oval in 1964 under the guise that the new V.F.L. club would be called St.Kilda-Moorabbin. The V.F.A. acted swiftly and suspended Moorabbin. The club gave restricted clearances to many of its players, at least ten of whom went to Brighton-Caulfield. In 1979, Bentleigh and McKinnon, who had gone into recession the previous year merged to reform the Moorabbin Football Club, playing in its original colours at the McKinnon Reserve. The new club played in the Federal League until 1981 then the S.E.S.F.L. in 1982. Admission was granted into the V.F.A. in 1983 playing its first year at the Linton Street Oval. The club then moved to McKinnon for 1984 then in 1985 moved again to the Bentleigh Reserve. In 1987 they played its first two matches then forfeited the next two after the coach resigned and many players walked out in support. The V.F.A. suspended the club for not being able to field a team in all three grades, went into recession and ultimately folded.

The original Caulfield Football Club was based in Caulfield Park. Established around 1895 it played in the Amateurs until 1915 and for some time used the main oval which they had fenced in enabling them to charge entry fees for their games. Recommencing after WW1 their application to re-join the Amateurs was refused as prior to the recess their reputation was 'intolerable'. Being forced to remove their perimeter fence they then played in many local under age and junior leagues and moved to the East Caulfield Reserve then joined the Sub-Districts League in 1926. Two years prior in 1924, another club Caulfield City also based in Caulfield Park played for a few years in the Amateur Association as well as the C.O.D.F.L. until it joined the E.S.F.L. in 1932 at which time they moved to the Princes Park, South Caulfield

Reserve. The Caulfield club left the Sub-Districts and joined the Federal League in 1932 where it remained until 1970 then changing its name to East Caulfield eventually disbanding at the end of 1976. The original colours were black with a yellow sash which were changed in 1932 to a dark maroon jumper, navy blue collar and yolk with a white monogram

There was considerable interest shown in 1925 and for a number of years following by the V.F.A. to have in their competition a club from the suburb of Caulfield. Discussions with Council between all parties concerned were promising and councillors were keen to have a senior grade club in their district. The decision of where to play was always going to be a problem. The options were confined to Caulfield Park, East Caulfield Reserve and the newly constructed Princes Park, South Caulfield. Another problem was that the two major clubs that would make up the side to enter had very little time for one another. From the press reports of the day the council was reluctant to make a decision that would appease both clubs and the ratepayers as the costs involved in bringing any facility up to V.F.A. standards was quite substantial. Council appeared to be sitting on their hands a little which pushed discussions into the Depression years and the talks were put on hold. The topic was raised again in 1935 when the Caulfield City club applied for entry into the V.F.A. Their application was accepted on the proviso that their chosen ground and facilities were up to the required standards. The main oval situated in Caulfield Park was the preferred option put forward by the football club.

The Caulfield Cricket and Lacrosse clubs as well as local residents strongly opposed the idea as they had been long term tenants of the main oval for over forty years. The possible interference with the gardens and the vista of the park were major considerations and the Council once again dilly dallied and by the time costings were done etc. World War 2 broke out.

Camdentown was the original name of the area now known as South Caulfield and the club played for two seasons 1913 and 1914 on the grounds of the Camden Town Sporting Club near the Glenhuntly and Hawthorn Roads intersection and used the London Hotel in Hawthorn Road as its headquarters. Camden then joined the Federal League in 1939 playing in Princes Park, sharing facilities with the Caulfield City club which resumed in 1946 transferring to the C.O.D.F.L. The

South Caulfield Football Club played in the Amateurs from 1925 to 1941, then in the C.Y.M.S Association 1946 to 1956 using one of the ovals in Princes Park. Once again in 1950 Caulfield City applied to the V.F.A. for entry and were accepted again with the same proviso as in 1935. All that needed to be done was the building of a perimeter fence around the main oval in Princes Park to enable the club to charge admission which would have been shared with the V.F.A. Once again Council could not or would not make a decision. In 1957 Camden merged with South Caulfield C.Y.M.S. to become South Caulfield in the Federal and continued to share with the Caulfield City Club in Princes Park. At the end of 1958 Caulfield City disbanded with some players joining South Caulfield and others playing for the 1959 season only in the C.O.D.F.L. Reserve Open section.

There had been talk for a number of seasons that the Brighton V.F.A. Club, which was performing very poorly was also basically bankrupt as it owed the Brighton Council a substantial sum of money in back rent as well as outstanding player payments and other monies to the V.F.A. Once the players realised the situation they deserted very quickly. Their application to the Brighton Council for the use of Elsternwick Park for the 1961 season to was not accepted and it appeared likely that the club would fold. Offers of support came from Sandringham F.C. and St.Kilda F.C. as a stop-gap but following one year at Sandringham the decision was made to merge with South Caulfield to become the Brighton-South Caulfield allowing them to continue in the V.F.A. The alliance was accepted by the V.F.A. and the Caulfield Council erected a perimeter fence around the main oval in Princes Park. This arrangement lasted from 1962 to 1964 when in 1965 the Brighton was deleted from the name and the Caulfield Football Club entered the V.F.A.

You have to give the people involved with the Caulfield City club ten out of ten for perseverance. Forty years is a long time to wait. The virtual merger with South Caulfield in 1959 was a clever one as it got both clubs what they wanted. The new V.F.A. Caulfield jumper was that of the Caulfield City club, blue and white hoops.

Glenhuntly or Glen Huntly entered a team in 1909 in the inaugural year of competition, missed the next three years then returned for 1913, 1914 and 1915. After WW1 they played at Koornang Park for seasons 1920, 1921 and 1922 then transferred to the

fledgling Junior U/21 C.O.D.F.L. where they stayed for the next three years. In 1926 they joined the Amateurs as the Glenhuntly Amateur Football Club until 1941, going into recess during WW2. In 1946 a club called Glen Orme joined the Federal League after playing for three years in the Sub-District Competition. The club played at Koornang Park for the 1946, 1947 and 1948 seasons and I suspect it was a combination of the two Amateur clubs Glenhuntly and Ormond who were both in recession. Ormond re-joined the Amateurs in 1946 with Glenhuntly Amateurs returning in 1948, continuing until 1973 then folding. Glen-Orme reappeared in the B Grade section of the E.S.F.L. for seasons 1951, 1952 and 1953 then disappeared. It is difficult to ascertain but the club may have been the forerunner of St.Kevins Ormond F.C. as the St.Kevins primary school and church is located in Glen-orme Ave., Ormond. In 1945 another Glenhuntly club, based at Glenhuntly Park played in the underage sections of the C.O.D.F.L. and continue to do so until 1953. They also fielded a senior team in the E.S.F.L. 1950, 1951 and 1952. In 1953 the senior side transferred to the C.O.D.F.L. staying until 1959 then transferring to the Federal in 1960. Although never winning a Premiership they were runners-up on five occasions 1961, 1962, 1964, 1965 and 1967. The club folded in 1976. Club colours were red, white and black panels.

Frankston Football Club only played the first season 1909. As there was already a club of the same name in the Peninsula Football Association (1908-1933) their relationship, if any is unknown. Local newspaper reports do have them playing at Frankston Park.

Oakleigh Football Club played for one season, 1915 at what is now Warrawee Park. They were expelled from both the Amateurs and the Melbourne District F.A. a number of times between 1906 and 1920. Eventually cleaning up the club by riding itself of its bad elements they went on to join the V.F.A. in 1929, folding at the end of 1994.

Elsternwick Amateur Football Club, playing at Elsternwick Park spent two years in the Federal 1909 and 1910 then transferred to the Melbourne District F.A. for 1911 and 1912. A number of clubs in the Federal refused to play away fixtures against Elsternwick due to transport problems, however they did return for the 1913 season before entering the Amateurs the following year where they remain today.

The Victoria Brewery Football Club only played three seasons 1910, 1911 and 1912, (see earlier notes). A Murrumbeena Football Club entered for two seasons 1915 and 1921 and then appeared in the Amateurs in 1922. Before moving to Murrumbeena Park in 1924 the club played on the grounds of 'Belgrave House' and on the 'Frogmore Estate' both of which remain today. Hampton Football Club had one season, 1920. The information that I have from the Federal records lists Hampton as 1920 Premiers. With the compliments of the Brighton Historical Society I have a photograph of the Brighton District F.C. taken in 1921 which, as part of the heading shows them as Premiers 1915, 1920 and 1921. They were Minor Premiers in 1920 but were defeated in the second semi-final by Hampton and according to press reports 'challenged' them, as was their right to a rematch. The game was to be played the following Saturday at Cheltenham however due to severe weather and torrential rain the game was postponed to the following Saturday. By this time it was the second week in October and the last press report I have found states that the Association was having trouble finding a suitable venue. I have been unable to find any scores or reports on the rematch, if it actually took place which it may well have as an early report in 1921 has Hampton unfurling their 1920 Runners-up flag. Perhaps the Brighton District club was using a little bit of license in their photograph or the rematch did take place and it won.

Parkdale Football Club competed for seasons 1930, 1931 and 1932 using the Gerry Green Reserve. They transferred to the Amateurs in 1933 staying there until 1955 when they returned to the Federal. In 1982 they joined the S.E.S.F.L. eventually merging with Mentone Amateurs to become Parkdale Vultures in 2004. Original colours were wide dark blue and navy blue hoops.

The Highett Football Club first joined the Federal in 1929 and played for many years as a Junior U/21 team. Their first senior side played in 1945 at the Highett Reserve. They joined the S.E.S.F.L. in 1982, merged with Highett West Football Club in 1989 becoming Highett Districts then went back to the original Highett in 1997 and continue today in the S.F.L.

A club called Glen Waverley played for one year, 1931 then reappeared in the E.S.F.L. in 1933 and then the C.O.D.F.L. in 1939 playing at the Central Reserve, Glen Waverley.

Carnegie played at Koornang Park for many years as a junior team before entering the Sub-District League then came to the Federal for the 1932, 1933 and 1934 seasons. A Carnegie club also played in the Amateurs from 1936 to 1938. In 1937 they entered a junior team in the C.O.D.F.L. eventually fielding a senior side. The Vermont Football Club played for one year, 1936 and then moved to the E.S.F.L.

Edithvale Football Club played at Regents Park from 1921 to 1930. Aspendale Football Club played at the Aspendale Park racecourse from 1924 to 1930. In 1931 the two clubs merged to become Regents Park from 1931 to 1934. Another name change in 1935 created the Edithvale-Aspendale club playing as a junior team until 1941 when they entered a senior side. When football resumed after the war the club reverted back to Aspendale for 1945 and 1946 and then changed again to Edithvale-Aspendale continuing until transferring to the M.P.F.L. in 1956 where they remain today.

When the Scoresby & District F.L. disbanded after 1930 East Burwood, premiers that year decided to join the Federal league for the next season instead of the Ringwood District F.L. They considered it to be a higher grade competition and an easier area to travel to for away games. Playing from 1931 to 1937, then only with a junior side in 1938 they moved to the E.S.F.L. East Burwood Reserve remains their home.

The Naval or Naval Depot Football Club, which I assume is H.M.A.S. Cerberus played for one year 1959. Springvale played for many years in the Berwick F.A. and the Dandenong District F.A. From 1915 their home ground was the Springvale Reserve. During the 1930s they had one team in the Dandenong competition and another second string team in the C.O.D.F.L. In 1952 they joined the C.O.D.F.L. and left for the Federal after winning the Premiership in 1956 remaining until 1981 then were accepted into the V.F.A.

Clayton Football Club followed a very similar path to that of Springvale and played in the Federal from 1954 to 1981 initially at the Dixon Street Reserve then at the Clayton Reserve, transferring to the S.E.S.F.L. until the end of 1984 when they joined the E.D.F.L. returning to the S.F.L. in 1999.

The Dandenong Football Club which joined the Federal in 1951, having played previously in 1934 and 1948 was one of at least four clubs in the area.

These clubs are difficult to identify as they cover the Federal, C.O.D.F.L., Berwick & Dandenong Leagues and Churches competitions. By 1954 the now amalgamated clubs informed the Federal League that they intended to and had been invited to join the V.F.A. once they could show that the clubs had been unified. This took a few years to accomplish at which time in 1958 they joined the V.F.A. The first four seasons were at the Dandenong Showgrounds before moving to the upgraded Shepley Oval in 1962. By the early 1990s the club was in serious financial trouble and disbanded in 1993 only to return for one more year as the Dandenong Redlegs then folding.

Playing at the Robinson Oval, Doveton joined the Federal League in 1972 and left at the end of 1976.

The Heatherton Football Club, playing at the Recreation Reserve first entered the Federal for the 1920 and 1921 seasons. Returned in 1927 and 1928 and again reappeared for the 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949 and 1950 seasons. In 1952 the club was heavily sponsored for two years by a local engineering company, Freighters Limited and the name was changed to Freighters Football Club. The club reverted back to its original name in 1953 and moved to the C.Y.M.S. then to the Amateurs in 1975 before joining the S.F.L. where they play today.

The Middle Brighton Football Club played in the Federal in 1913 and 1914 then later in 1927 (William Street Reserve). With the introduction of zoning in 1915 they became Brighton District Football Club and continued after WW1, 1919, 1920, 1921 and 1922. Both Clubs were actually Brighton V.F.A. reserves wearing a red jumper with a white sash and playing at the Brighton Beach Oval. After 1922 the North Brighton Junior Football Club played in the Federal Junior Grade in 1924 and 1925 before changing to Brightonvale 1926, 1927, and 1928 then fielding a senior team for one year in 1929 as a second team to the main A Grade Amateur side. North Brighton reappeared in 1929 staying until 1932 as the junior grade for Brightonvale. Both Clubs played at Hurlingham Park which was then in North Brighton.

McKinnon joined the C.O.D.F.L. in 1936 and played until 1953. In 1954 they transferred to the Federal where they remained until going into recess in 1978. The home ground was always McKinnon Reserve. Club colours were a saxe blue jumper with a white V.

The Darling Football Club played at both Darling Park, opposite the railway station and Waverley Oval. After many years in the C.Y.M.S. and Sub-District competitions they joined the Federal in 1934 but disbanded at the end of 1940. Club colours were light blue and red wide hoops.

In 1934 a group of influential Malvern businessmen who were keen to have a 'Senior Grade' team in their City generously put their hands in their pockets and established the East Malvern Football Club based at Waverley Oval in Malvern Road adjacent to the East Malvern Station. A few hundred pounds was spent on the old pavilion which they turned into a grandstand and also had the oval and grounds enclosed. The Club entered the E.S.F.L. where they remained until 1941. That competition went into recess due to the World War and with the club only having enough players for under age football entered the C.O.D.F.L. which was still operating as a junior under age league. They eventually entered a senior team in 1946 being Premiers that year. The club was not happy with the direction that the C.O.D.F.L. was taking or with the standard of football so joined the Federal league in 1962. They had a short but spectacular twelve seasons winning four Premierships before folding in 1973. The club originally wore a navy blue jumper with a red V changing to royal blue and red vertical stripes when they joined the Federal.

Carrum-Chelsea was as the name suggests a combined team which played from 1911 to 1914 in a paddock in Breeze Street Bonbeach. After WW1 Carrum Football Club stood on its own playing in the M.P.F.A. for three years then entering the Federal in 1922 playing at Keast Park. The club disbanded in 1928 then re-joined the Peninsula District F.A. in 1932. The club folded in 1996 but since 2013 has played as the Carrum- Patterson Lakes F.C. in the S.F.L. The Chelsea Football Club started in the Federal league in 1919 continuing until 1926 when internal problems saw a breakaway club formed called Wells Road which played for three seasons when at which time the problems appear to have been solved. Chelsea played as Chelsea City from 1927 until 1931 then dropped the 'City'. They continued to play at the Chelsea Recreation Reserve until joining the M.P.F.L. in 1959 where they remain today.

When the Dandenong District F. A. folded at the end of the 1954 season Noble Park joined the Eastern Suburban Football League with one senior side staying for that season only. In 1955 they

joined the C.O.D.F.L. where they had fielded an Under 18 team the season before. In 1959 a merger was organised with the Harrisfield club who had been playing in the local area junior grades. Noble Park-Harrisfield continued in the C.O.D.F.L., then stayed for one season in the new S.E.S.F.L before transferring to the Federal League in 1964, remaining until 1981. The Harrisfield was gone by the 1970s. Following the Federals demise they returned to the South-East and formed part of the S.F.L. in 1992. They now play in the E.F.L. Originally wearing a black jumper with a yellow sash they changed to royal blue and gold when they entered the Federal.

A Mt.Waverley club played in B Grade from 1934 to 1937 and appears to be the forerunner of the club which fielded a senior team in the C.O.D.F.L. in 1938. The records show that they played on an oval near the corner of Springvale Road and High Street, Glen Waverley probably sharing with Glen Waverley or perhaps the two clubs were one in the same.

The Black Rock & Sandringham District Football Club played in the Federal from 1912 to 1918 at the Beach Road Oval. The Sandringham Amateur Football Club who also used the Beach Oval played in the Melbourne District League on and off for a number of years before joining the Federal in 1915 returning for 1919 and 1920 before going to the Amateurs where they remained until folding in 1935. The Hampton Amateur Football Club at Ludstone Street played for one season, 1920 then joined the Amateurs until 1928, transferred to the Metropolitan Juniors then returned to the Amateurs in 1931 as the Hampton Rovers Football Club. The Black Rock Football Club emerged in 1920 from the original 'District' team. They joined the Federal for the 1920 and 1921 seasons, sharing the Beach Road Oval, had one year in the Amateurs as Black Rock Amateurs then returned to the Federal from 1923 to 1926. Having been expelled from the Amateurs due to continual brawling by both players and spectators they met the same fate and were expelled from the Federal for the same reasons. A change of administration and a clean out of undesirable players allowed an application to re-join the Amateurs being accepted for the 1927 season which was granted under the very strict proviso that any unsportsman like behaviour would not be tolerated. Eventually expelled in 1930 for unruly crowd behaviour they returned to the Federal dropping the Amateur from its name in 1931 and there they remained until going into

recess in 1972. Reforming in 1976 they played in the Y.C.W. Association, transferred to the E.S.C.F.A. in 1980 then to the S.E.S.F.L. in 1986. They remain today in the S.F.L.

A so called amalgamation of the Sandringham, Black Rock and Hampton Amateur clubs was the basis for the creation and entry in 1929 of the Sandringham Football Club into the V.F.A. By taking one colour from each of their 'strips', gold, black and blue their present club jumper was created. The three clubs continued in their own right as feeders to the senior grade team. Up until at least 1940 the Sandringham Amateurs and Black Rock continued to use the Beach Road Oval for fixtures where possible and also played at the Spring/Tulip Street reserve which eventually became Black Rocks home ground. The original pavilion built in the early 1950s remains today and some remnants of the enclosing perimeter fence also can be seen.

The Oakleigh Districts Football Club joined the League in 1964 from the C.O.D.F.L. remaining until 1981 then joining the S.E.S.F.L. A foundation member of the S.F.L. they remain in that league today. The club originally played at the Police Paddocks in Park Road, Oakleigh moving to the Edward Street Reserve in 1953 and 1954, then moving back to the Police Paddocks until 1965 when the following year they relocated to a new facility at the Princes Highway Reserve, East Oakleigh. Always a tough and competitive side a senior Federal premiership eluded them being runners-up on five occasions. Losing the 1969 Grand Final against East Malvern by two points was probably their most heart-breaking defeat by kicking 6.20.56 to 8.10.58. They originally wore a jumper with black and white vertical stripes then changed to a black jumper with a white sash around the time that they moved to the Federal.

The Cheltenham and Mentone Football Clubs were foundation members of the Federal League. These two clubs played continually, almost without exception until 1981 before moving to the S.E.S.F.L. in 1982. Cheltenham remain today in the S.F.L. with the clubs colours remaining unchanged, red, black and yellow panels. Mentone who originally wore a black jumper with a yellow sash amalgamated with St.Bedes O.C.F.C. in 1993 and now play in the V.A.F.A. as the St.Bedes/Mentone Tigers Amateur Football Club. The Cheltenham and Mentone Reserves were used frequently for home fixtures by other clubs as well as hosting numerous Finals series.

