



Ray Carr

Murrumbeena Junior Football Club player 1962-65

Federal Football League Leading Goalkicker x7 1974-79, 1981

Oakleigh District Football Club 100-goal season x3 1974, 1976, 1981

Federal Football League Senior Interleague Representative x7 1974-1980

Oakleigh District Football Club Senior Best & Fairest x2 1974, 1976

Melbourne Football Club player 1970-72



Ray Carr began his football journey as a little noticed junior player, but became a daunting challenge for opposition defenders in senior ranks.

He topped the Federal Football League goal-kicking table seven times, starting with 117 majors in his first season for Oakleigh District in 1974.

That was 12 years after Carr began playing for Murrumbeena Districts Junior Football Club, which he joined because it was near home.

“I didn’t get too many games ’cause I wasn’t all that good at that stage, and then just slowly worked my way up through the age groups,” Carr explains.

Next stop was the Ormond amateurs, where he ventured with most of those he played with in the juniors. After a couple of seasons in the Ormond Under 19s, Carr broke into the senior side, enjoying rapid success as a member of the club’s 1968 premiership side.

The next season Carr played in another grand final with Ormond, albeit with a less successful outcome for the club. But Carr must have made a favourable impression during the season.

“I got a little letter of invitation to go to Melbourne,” he says.

That was just prior to Ormond’s 1969 grand final appearance, and it didn’t take long for him to make an impact at Melbourne.

Carr debuted at Lakeside Oval against South Melbourne in Round 1, 1970. Fellow Demon Peter ‘Crackers’ Keenan ran out for his first game the same day. Although nervous before the game, Carr fondly remembers the positive influence of Melbourne’s coach.

“In the rooms before the game, John Beckwith was coaching and he gave you all the enthusiasm and all the help, and all the guys were right behind you and I was one of the lucky ones that my first kick in (VFL) football was a goal.”

On the less enjoyable side, it didn’t take Carr long to experience the physicality of VFL footy.

“I got tackled by somebody, I don’t know who it was and I really got hit hard, got flattened well and truly,” he says.

The runner was quickly on the scene, not to provide medical attention, but with a message from coach ‘Becky’. Essentially, the suggestion was Carr had best get up to show his opponent it didn’t hurt.

Upon pointing out that ‘Becky’ wasn’t the one who got hit and “it bloody hurt”, Carr may have anticipated some sympathy from the trainer. Instead, he was advised the knock would be the first of many and he’d best get up and learn.

In that first game against South Melbourne, Carr finished with three goals. A couple of matches later, he booted seven of Melbourne’s eight-goal total with The Age newspaper describing his performance that day as “extraordinary”.

Carr played 25 senior games for the Demons, kicking 55 goals.



After playing the first four matches in 1972 he requested a transfer to Oakleigh in the VFA. That was prompted by a difference of opinion with then Melbourne coach Ian Ridley.

Ridley wanted his full forward to “lead down the ground” but Carr believed he had greater success utilising his leap and high marking ability.

“I played against St Kilda. I played on Bob Murray. I led out all day. He sat five foot behind me and he took a mark every time 'cause it went over me bloody head,” he says.

Carr was cleared to Oakleigh VFA.

He polled votes in both the Brownlow Medal and in the VFA equivalent, the Liston Trophy in the 1972 season. What's more he was a member of Oakleigh's senior premiership side that year.

The next season, he again lined up in the VFA grand final. This time, Oakleigh was runner up.

Then began Carr's FFL involvement, with a move to Oakleigh District.

In his first 100 games at the club, Carr accumulated a remarkable 597 goals. He topped the 100-goal mark three times in his Oakleigh District career and once booted 22 goals in a senior game.

Carr remembers with amusement the teammate who blazed away for goal late in that game. Other District players had yelled at the player to handball to an unattended Carr, wanting to see him add a 23rd goal to his swag. The teammate was quickly labelled a 'hungry bastard', although Carr felt 22 goals was a decent day's work.

He went a couple of goals better in a reserves match after coach Darryl Nisbet dropped him for 'disciplinary' reasons, when work prevented Carr attending training. When word got around about Carr's 24-goal masterclass, Oakleigh District's chairman of selectors and coach Nisbet paid a visit.

“I said 'you dropped me. I'm having tea, I'll talk to you after',” Carr told them.

Still, being dropped was a hiccup along the way, as Carr returned to dominate at senior level. Late in his career he was still a force at full forward, leading the FFL's goal kicking table in 1981.

For opposition fullbacks, summer was likely spent devising strategies to deal with Carr. As it transpired they needn't have worried, with Carr making a stunning move to fullback.

Nisbet was still at the helm and elected to play his brother at full forward. Given his goal kicking exploits, it's fair to say Carr wasn't thrilled by Nisbet's latest moment of inspiration. But rather than sulk, Carr resolved to make a go of his defensive posting.

“Being a full forward at fullback you know what the full forward's going to do. I finished up playing pretty good football at fullback,” he says.

Asked how his replacement went at full forward, Carr responds, “Well he never kicked as many as I did.”

In his second season in the backline, Carr suffered a career-ending shoulder injury. However, that



wasn't the finish of his involvement at the club.

Bob Bray, an Oakleigh District trainer throughout Carr's playing days there, elaborated on Carr's contribution after hanging up the boots.

"As far as I was concerned he was a great clubman in that he was associated for many years with our junior club."

Carr's involvement with the juniors began when his son Craig started playing for the club. Realising the junior coach was sometimes unavailable, Carr offered to take on the role.

He went on to coach Oakleigh District's Under 9s, Under 10s and Under 12s.

Carr also took charge of Moorabbin Saints Junior Football League sides in interleague matches. He did not lack interleague experience, having represented the Federal Football League over seven years.

During his playing career at Oakleigh District, Carr twice won the club's senior best and fairest award and he was named in the club's Team of the 20th Century.

His contributions to Oakleigh District's senior and junior clubs have been recognised with life membership of both.

Carr is richly deserving of his place in the SFNL Hall of Fame and reflects on the significance of his induction.

"Very overwhelmed in a way, but quite pleased and quite happy about the whole thing. To get nominated was fantastic to start with. To get the ok and to be inducted was great."

By Andrew Paloczi

