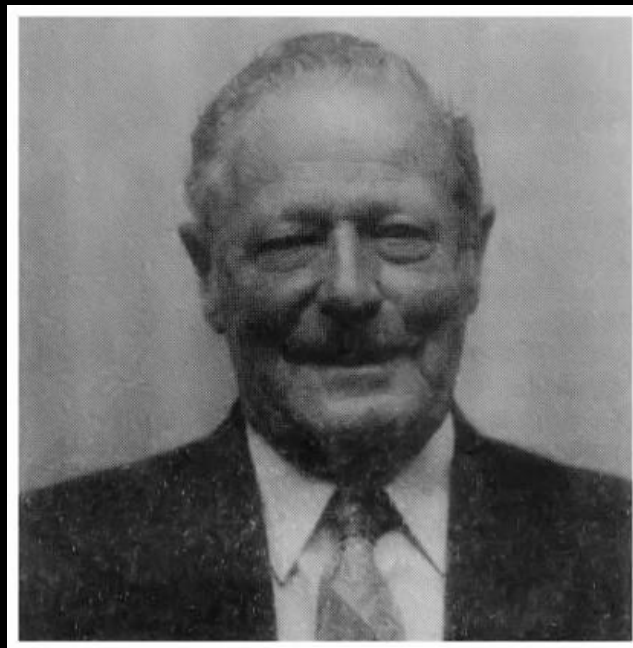




Southern Football Netball League

Hall of Fame



JIM MENEILLY

EASTERN SUBURBS CHURCHES FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- Bentleigh Methodist Football Club President 1975-79
- Eastern Suburbs Churches Football Association Committee Member 1975-80
- Eastern Suburbs Churches Football Association Vice President 1981-82
- Eastern Suburbs Churches Football Association President 1983-89
- Eastern Suburbs Churches Football Association Life Member
- Southern Football Netball League Senior Football Grand Final Best on Ground Medal is named the 'Meneilly' medal

The Jim Meneilly medal honours perhaps the most influential person in SFNL history.

Across all three divisional Grand Finals, the medal is presented to the player on the field that best represents Meneilly's contribution and achievements. To walk off the field with the Jim Meneilly medal is truly special.

Meneilly's influence on the league dates back to the 1960s. With help from people at his church, he built Bentleigh Methodist Football Club in 1965. The club's aim was to provide an engaging, positive activity for his sons and other youth. Meneilly loved sport and getting the boys involved.

Under Meneilly's presidency the club thrived. In three short years, Bentleigh Methodists won their first Grand Final by 98 points. Jim continually wanted to inspire his team, organising people like Dick Reynolds and Tom Hafey to speak at the club.

Fairness was very important to Meneilly. He loved to see good spirited football, which was echoed by his team. Contests with clubs like Donvale United in the '70s were always great matches with terrific skills. The era saw generally rough football, yet the crowd was always treated to great sportsmanship when the two clubs played.

Meneilly's efforts saw the club travel up through the divisions in the Churches league. In 1975 Jim was invited to join the leagues committee. His attention shifted to all the clubs, rather than just his own.

He was a regular fixture at many club game days, joined by a team of volunteers. Mending woolen jumpers, preparing food for spectators, the organiser always had great help.

Meneilly was league President by 1983. His style of management benefitted all the people around him – encouraging his colleagues whilst challenging them. Working as an investment group manager, Meneilly had many skills that benefitted the league.

Needing a place to meet, the committee hired a building. When it went up for sale, Meneilly suggested they buy it. The committee explained they didn't have the money. Jim replied, "I'll get you the money and I'll teach you how to pay it off."

Purchasing the building was a pivotal milestone in league history. Jim spent hours at the league office doing handiwork. He believed it was worth saving money if he could fix things himself. He added large meeting rooms, constructing much of all the timberwork himself.

President until 1989, Meneilly left the league in very capable hands.

Following his passing in 1990, the league established the medal in his honour. Every year, Jim's sons travel to each divisional Grand Final to personally award the winner with their father's medal.

The boys describe Jim as the 'fix-it' man. He led by example and looked out for everyone with a readiness to teach. He stood for fair play and good sportsmanship.

By James Raknes