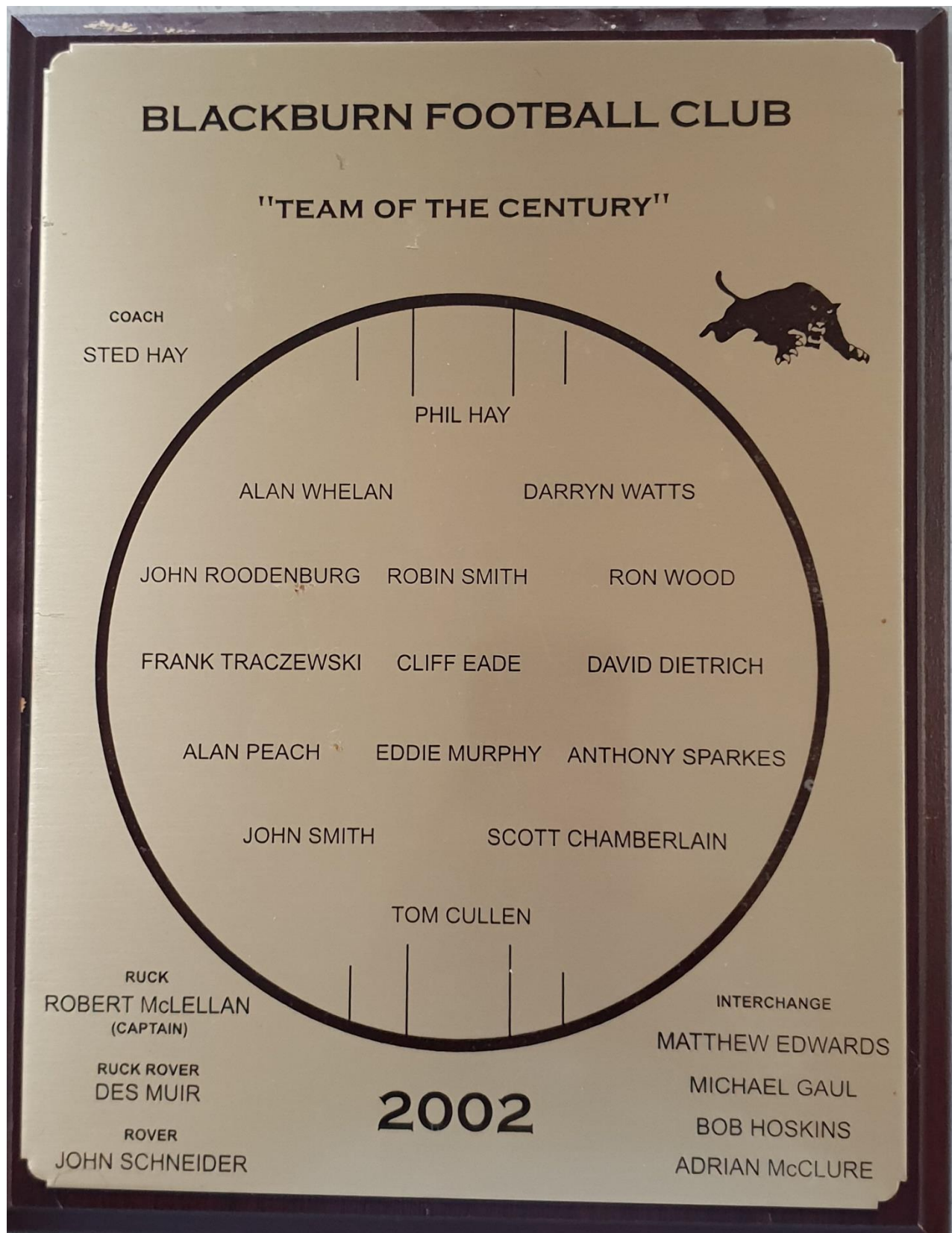


Morton Park Legends: Blackburn Football Club's Team of the Century



Proud tradition of 'workers' continues

Team of the Century – Jesper Fjeldstad

Blackburn captain-coach **Robert McLellan** gave his men a mighty spray at three-quarter time of the 1950 Eastern Suburban B Grade Grand Final. It was a fine day but his voice was gravel and his tone as dark as a mid-winter storm. Blackburn was playing East-Burwood, a neighbouring rival who was largely made up of orchardists, and Blackburn was trailing at the last break. Blackburn was the workers' club, much like Vermont & Mitcham, and it doesn't take much imagination to figure out what McLellan was telling his men. Only a goose would look around when the captain-coach spoke; McLellan was a towering ruckman and as tough as titanium.

Ron Eade, who played that day, remembers it vividly. "It was all about blood and guts and that sort of stuff back then," he said with a laugh last week. Blackburn celebrated its first flag in nine years that night. Much has changed at Blackburn over the past 100 years. The nicknames have changed. They had to. No club could be known as the politically incorrect "the blood-stained niggers" today. But that was the moniker until they became the Robins in the 1950s and the Panthers in 1968.

Blackburn held its first official annual general meeting in 1903, and the blood-stained niggers won its first flag in 1922 in the Reporter Districts Football Association. The club joined the Eastern Suburbs Football League in the 1940s before crossing to the Croydon and Ferntree Gully FL – later the Eastern Districts FL and EFL – in the 1960s.

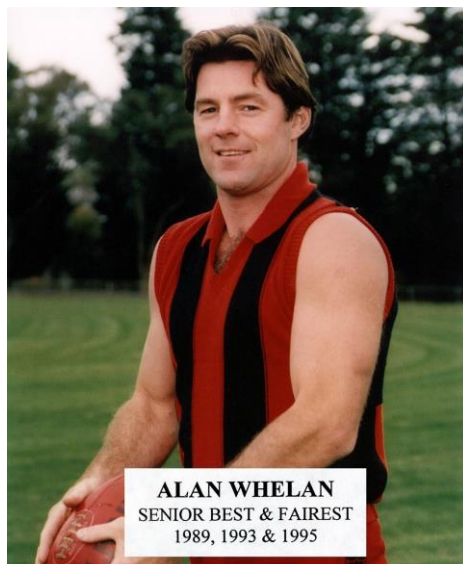
The Panthers won a second division flag in 1977 but was demoted back after finished last in Division 1 in 1988. Several league players have come from the Morton Park-based club. Among them were Bryan Wood, a tough wingman who played in three premierships at Richmond; Fitzroy rover Rod Appleton; Hawk and Tiger spare-parts man Ian Scrimshaw and Hawthorn's Gordon Anderson.

The Team of the Century was announced at a gala event at the Karralyka Centre in East Ringwood on Saturday night, July 20, 2002.

BACKS

Alan Whelan, 1978-98, 318 games

A former Blackburn junior and EFL life member, Whelan was a tough, attacking backman and onballer who was as always at the bottom of packs. He won 3 B&Fs in 1989, 1993 and 1995.



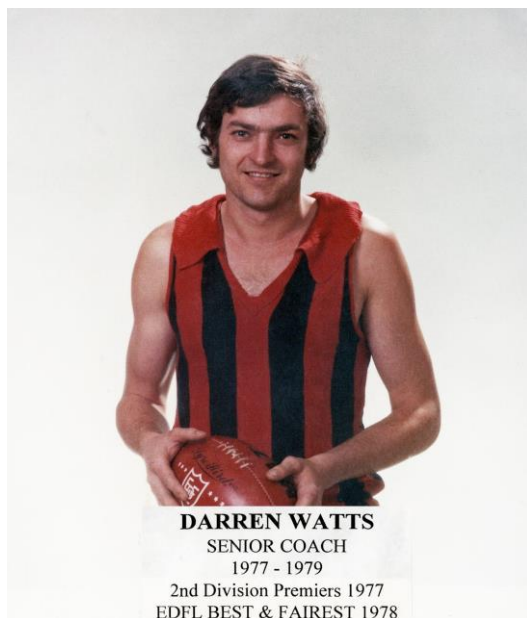
Phil Hay, 1967-69, 57 games

Hay, an ex-Hawthorn premiership player in 1961 and runner up in 1964 Brownlow Medal, was an impassible backman / midfielder who was never beaten. He was a tremendous mark and kick, and was arguably the best player to have played in the competition. Hay was unassuming and was a top teammate. He won 3 consecutive B&Fs in 1967, 1968 and 1969.



Darren Watts, 1977-81, 63 games

A league best and fairest strong-marking ruckman, Watts was a great reader of the game and an excellent tap ruckman. He set up play by feeding the ball off to the smaller players. He was captain-coach from 1977 to 1979, including the premiership in 1977. He also won the EDFL Division 1 Comp B&F Chandler Medal in 1978.



HALF-BACKS

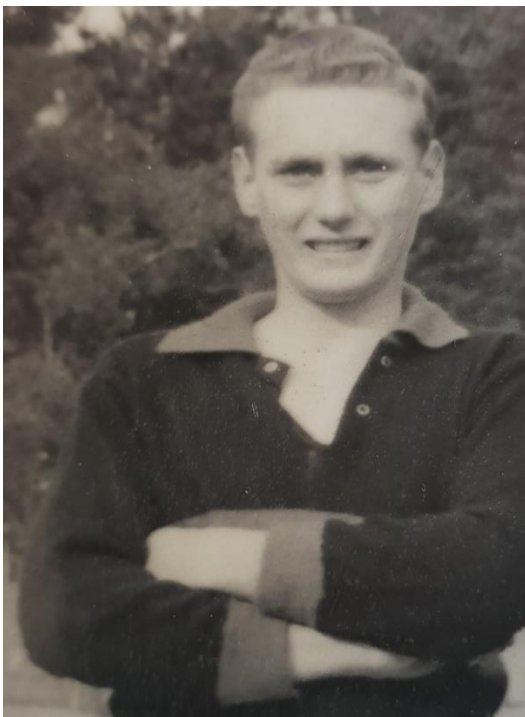
Ron Wood, 1967-84, 184 games

Wood was a tough, fearless backman who made the forwards' life a nightmare. He had a straight-through running style and a long probing kick and was always picked in any Blackburn side. Wood was a dual B&F winner in 1972 and 1979.



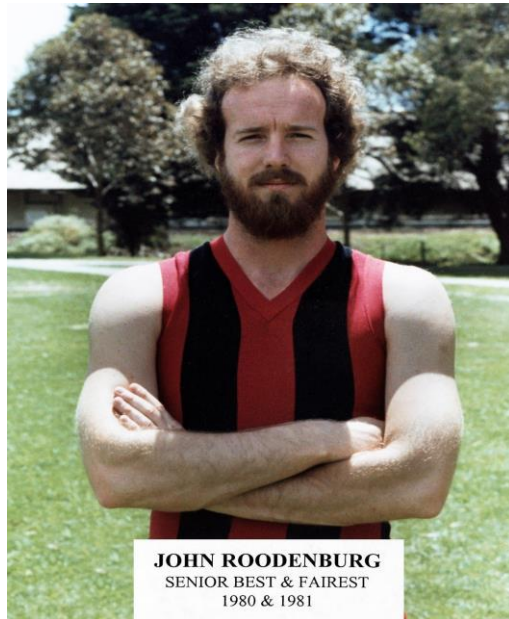
Robin Smith, 1958-74, 185 games

Smith was a standout centre half back with a great mark and long kick. He was a regular EDFL representative and blanketed Kevin Coverdale in a memorable rep game against Hawthorn. One of Blackburn's greats on and off the field, Smith won 3 B&Fs in 1962, 1964 and 1965.



John Roodenberg, 1978-1985, 118 games

Roodenberg was a great reader of the game who brought a new attacking running style to the club from North Melbourne's under-19s. He was a strong mark, good kick and a professional dependable defender. He won back to back B&Fs in 1980 and 1981.



CENTRES

Frank Traczewski, 1980-87, 95 games

Traczewski was a tall, lean wingman that was always taller and faster than his opponent. He was a marking target for full-backs kicking out and seldom let them down.



Cliff Eade, 1949-52, 62 games

A skilful player on either side of the body, Eade had excellent disposal and could kick long to position. He won the 1950 best and fairest and later played a senior game for Richmond. Cliff also played 125 games (63 goals) for Box Hill from 1953 to 1961, and was selected in their Team of Champions on the half back flank.



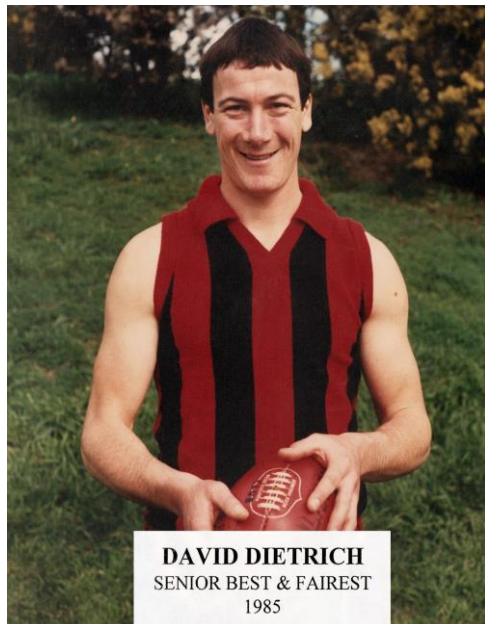
1950 – Cliff & Ron Eade



Cliff in 1950 Premiership Team

David Dietrich, 1980-98, 308 games

Dietrich, an EFL life member, was a picture of perfection charging out of the centre. The left-footer was a forwards' dream with his pinpoint disposal and silky ball skills. He also won the B&F in 1985.



DAVID DIETRICH
SENIOR BEST & FAIREST
1985

HALF-FORWARDS

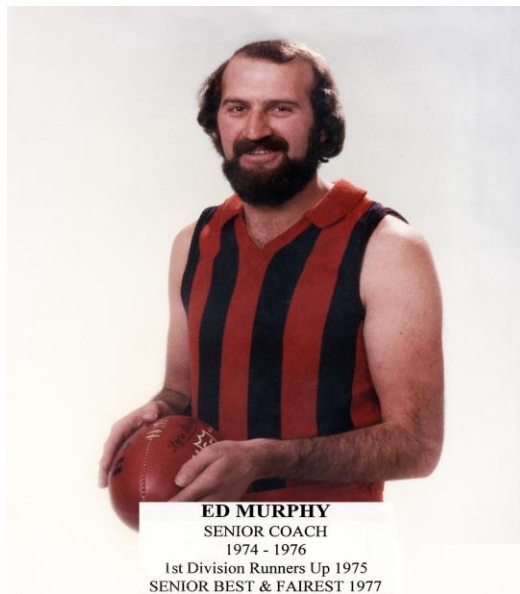
Anthony Sparkes, 1984-98, 266 games

Sparkes was nicknamed "Skills" for his unique ability in all aspects of the game. He was always a main target up forward and just as good in the air as on the ground. Sparkes kicked goals from a long way out, and was the EDFL Division 2 leading goalkicker in 1989.



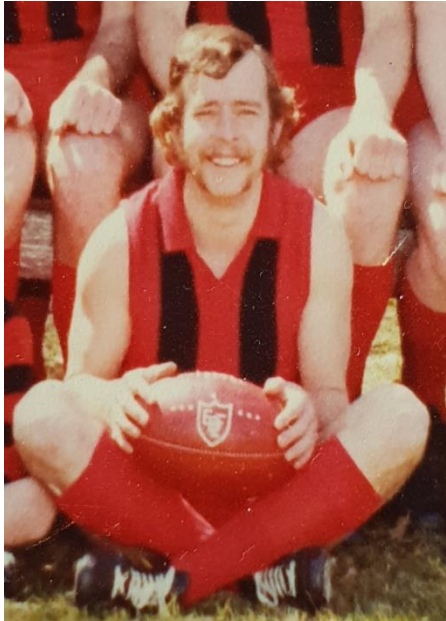
Eddie Murphy, 1974-1982, 101 games

The former Richmond player brought great professionalism to the club. He was a great thinker with a strong mark and a reliable kick. Murphy was always the oppositions' first priority. Captain-coach from 1974 to 1976, he also won the B&F in the 1977 premiership year.



Alan Peach, 1964-1982, 200 games

Peach was a highly skilled footballer who could kick as well either foot. He was a great mark for his size and his disposal was spot on. Peach was also a great clubman and secretary for many years while playing at Prahran.



FORWARDS

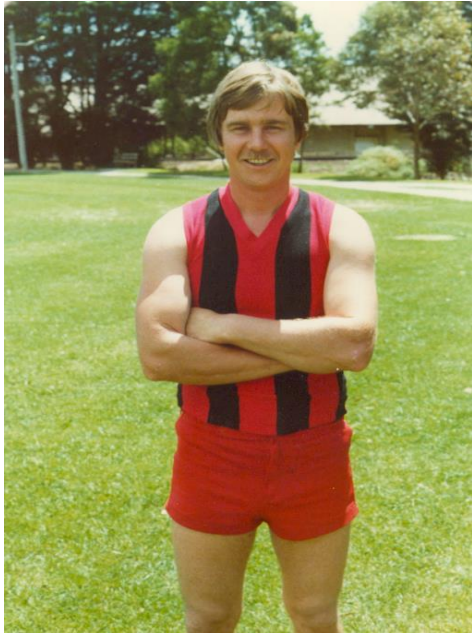
John Smith, 1973-82, 101 games

An EDFL Division 1 Chandler Medal B&F in 1976, a triple Club B&F winner in 1973, 1974 and 1976, Smith was as strong as an ox. He was probably renowned as a backman but showed his versatility by kicking seven goals in the 1977 grand final. Smith was almost impossible to out-mark and a long, probing kick.



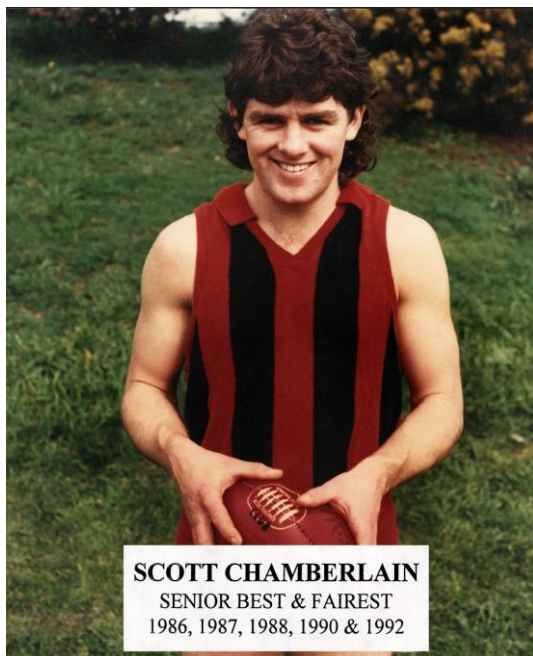
Tom Cullen, 1969-88, 227 games

Cullen was the leading EDFL goalkicker in both first and second division. He was a fast-leading full-forward with an accurate kick and bagged over 750 goals. He loved kicking goals from in front of the grandstand.



Scott Chamberlain, 1985-96, 184 games

Chamberlain was a ball magnet who rarely played a bad game. He was always driving the ball forward and had an uncanny knack of getting the ball. He was a strong-running rover who won 5 senior B&Fs, and 2 EDFL comp B&Fs – the Division 1 Chandler Medal in 1988, and the Division 2 Wright Medal in 1990.



RUCKS

Rob McLellan, 1931-50, 192 games

McLellan was a strong, physical player, a fearless straight-ahead footballer. He set an example to others with both leadership and club spirit. He won the 1948 B&F, was a premiership captain-coach in 1950, and a member of the 1933 and 1935 senior premiership teams.



1935 Premiership Team member



1950 Premiership Captain/Coach

Des Muir, 1958-64, 107 games

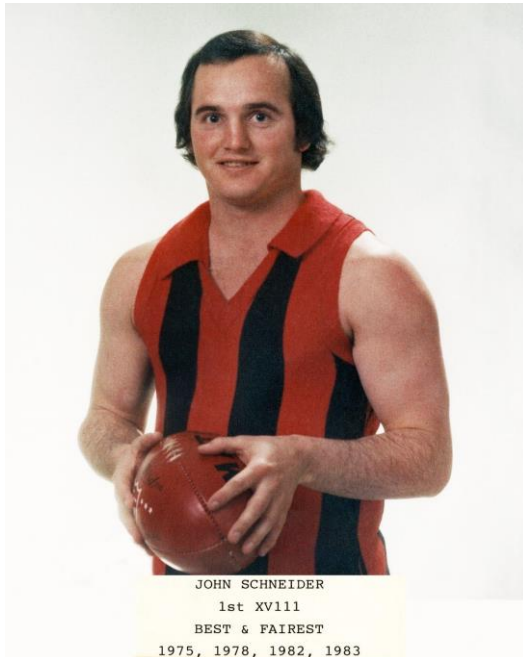
Muir was a mobile key position player equally suited as a ruckman or ruck rover. He was tough, aggressive and skilled and capable of winning a game off his own boot. He was impossible to contain when on song



- Des in 1958

John Schneider, 1975-1988, 168 games

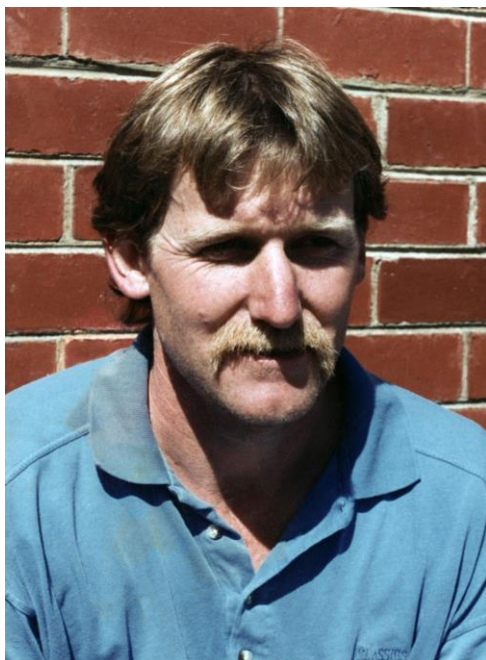
Schneider had a great ability to get the ball and always stayed on his feet. He could inspire players around him with his courage and determination. A great handballer and short but accurate kick, he represented the EDFL with distinction on many occasions. Schneider won four B&Fs.



INTERCHANGE

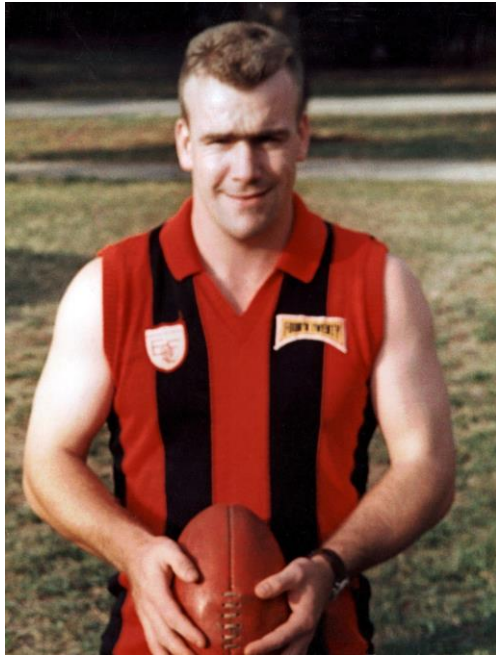
Adrian McClure, 1982-86, 49 games

McClure suffered some horrific injuries but still managed to have a great impact on the club, both as coach and player. He was a superb mark who regularly showed courage by backing into packs. He brought the modern way of playing to the club. Adrian was the club's captain coach from 1983 to 1985, and won the senior B&F in 1984.



Mick Gaul, 1988-2002, 206 games

Gaul is a tenacious onballer who never gives up. He's hard at the ball and runs all day. An EDFL Division 2 comp best and fairest in 1993 and Club senior B&F in 1996, Gaul's career has been hampered by injuries.



Bob Hoskins, 1955-60, 94 games

A tenacious rover who was first in under packs, Hoskins was very quick with his disposal, with both hand and foot. He was a terrific team man and the 1958 best and fairest.



Matt Edwards, 1995-2000, 97 games

Edwards came to the club after a successful career at Vermont and carried on his good form. He always gave 100 per cent, was strong at the bottom of packs and an inspirational leader. He won three B&Fs.



- **Matt also won the Senior B&F in 1999**

COACH

Sted Hay, 1965-70

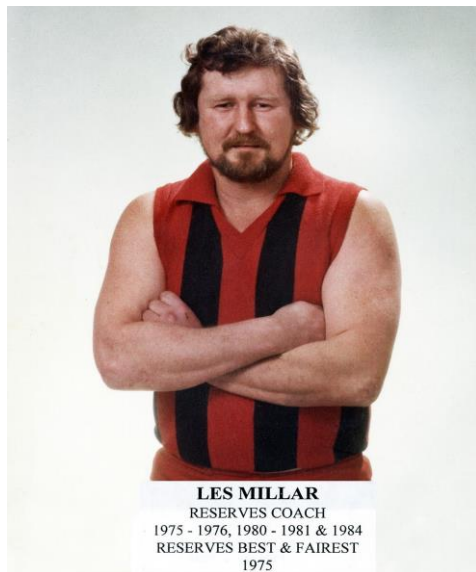
Hay was a backman in Hawthorn's first premiership team in 1961 and introduced tough, Hawthorn-style training drills with an emphasis on accountability and discipline. As a player, he was rugged and taught by example. Hay was a great leader and mentor.



A few who missed out;

Les Millar was an enterprising fellow. A legend of Blackburn Football Club, he fooled them both on and off the ground. One of his trustiest tricks was to leave the motor running on his lawn mower while sneaking into the Dorset Gardens pub across the road for a couple of quiet ales.

Millar played an astonishing 439 games for Blackburn and is the club's game record holder. He was a laid-back man who appeared lazy on the field. He wasn't, of course. He was just one of those types who looked that way. He also made it look easy. Millar was mighty stiff to miss out on selection of Blackburn's Team of the Century on Saturday night, but such is the nature of such nights.



- Les won 8 Reserves B&Fs in 1961, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975 and 1976

Ron Eade played 331 games with the club, including 2 senior premierships in 1950 and 1952. Is likely to have pushed for his own omission during the meetings of the selection panel as he is not inclined to steal the spotlight!

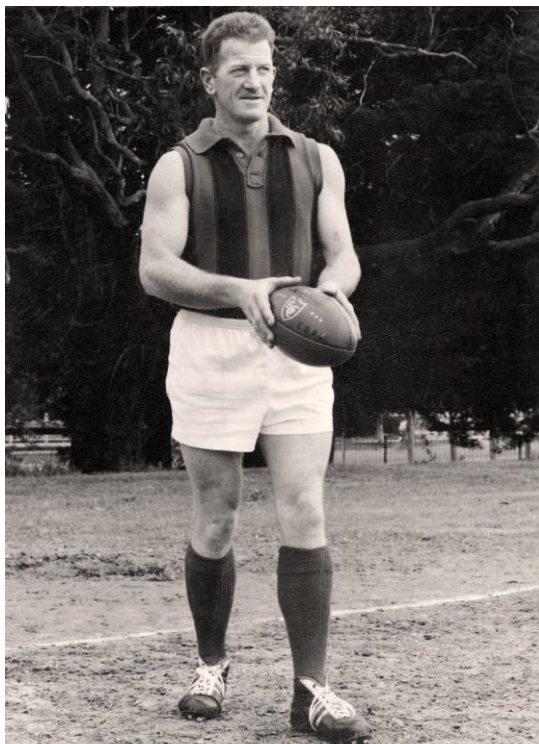
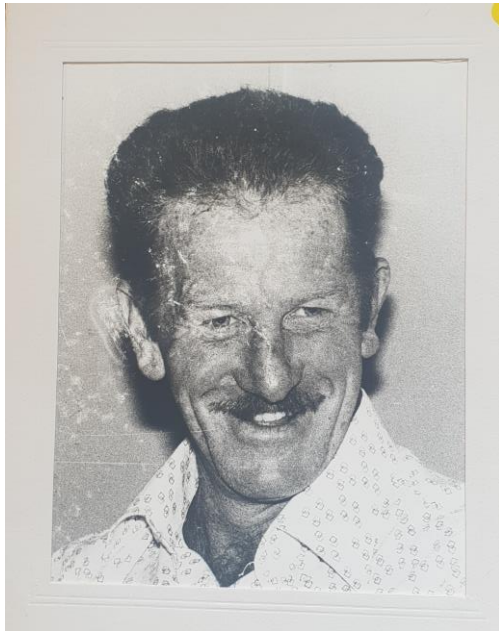


Ron in 1952 Senior Team



Ron in 1958 Reserves Team

The late **John Burn** played 337 games and was a best and fairest in both the seniors (1956) and reserves (1965). Burn, too, would've been on the selectors' mind.



JOHN BURN
BLACKBURN FC 1951 - 1972
337 GAMES

1956 First XVIII Best & Fairest	1967 Second XVIII Most Consistent
1961 Best Clubman	1968 Second XVIII Most Consistent
1963 Life Membership	1968 Best Player in Seconds Grand Final
1965 Second XVIII Best & Fairest	1969 Best Player in Finals Series
1971-1972 Senior Club President	
SECOND XVIII PLAYING COACH 1965 - 1972	
PREMIERS 1965, 1966 & 1969	
RUNNERS UP 1967, 1968 & 1970	
R.I.P	